

A. FIRST SESSION
ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PREACHERS' SEMINARY
IN ZINGST AND FINKENWALDE
APRIL 26–OCTOBER 16, 1935

1. From George Bell to Birger Forell^[1]

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22nd May 1935

My dear Forell,

I wrote, after our talk, to the German Ambassador,^[2] and I had a kindly reply from him in which he stated that my comments and criticisms had been communicated to competent quarters in Berlin. Dr. Oldham^[3] was in Berlin and Hannover the week before last and last week. He saw Koch and other Confessional leaders at Hannover,^[4] and reported that they thought that at the present

[1.] LPL BP, vol. 27, 416; typewritten carbon copy; in original English, including errors. Birger Forell, a friend of the Confessing Church, was tirelessly active as an intermediary with the ecumenical movement.

[2.] On June 20, 1935, Joachim von Ribbentrop, the German ambassador to London, and Bishop Bell struck up a conversation in the Athenaeum Club; see Boyens, *Kirchenkampf und Ökumene, 1933–39*, 132–33.

[3.] A British ecumenist, Oldham was responsible for preparing the themes that would be on the program of the World Church Conference at Oxford in 1937.

[4.] There was a conference in Hannover on May 13–14, 1935, to prepare the thematic program of the Oxford conference. Apart from Karl Koch, Oldham's dialogue partners from the Confessing Church included Hans Asmussen, Hanns Lilje, Max Diestel, and also Bonhoeffer, who had been summoned from Finkenwalde by telegraph; see *DB-ER*, 472–73.

moment it would not be desirable that Bishop Ammundsen^[5] and I should go to Düsseldorf to meet any of them privately. We discussed the whole German church situation at Paris.^[6] I was instructed to keep a watch on behalf of the Committee but it was clear that it was not deemed expedient that anybody should go immediately to Germany.

40 Somewhat to my surprise therefore I was rung up on Saturday night, just after my return from Paris, by Bonhoeffer, who had flown over from Berlin at the special request of Koch to see me.^[7] He said that Koch was now rather sorry that he had advised against my coming there, and wanted me to write him a letter through the open post in view of the meeting of the whole Confessional Synod today and tomorrow.^[8] So I did this and had a full talk with Bonhoeffer.

[5.] Danish bishop Ove Ammundsen, an ally of the Confessing Church, was president at that time of the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches.

[6.] This was a meeting of the administrative board of the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work (so designated since 1930) in Paris on May 15–17, 1935.

[7.] Concerning Bonhoeffer's surprising visit on May 18, 1935 (see his mention of an "airplane trip," 1/2, p. 000), see *DB-ER*, 463: "Bonhoeffer was summoned on 12 May by telephone to Berlin (following the Gestapo's first raid on the Dahlem office of the Council of Brethren [on May 11]). From Berlin he was sent by church president Koch to see Bishop Bell in England"; *DB-ER*, 474–75: "But Koch had some new requests to make of Bell in connection with the major assembly of representatives of the 'destroyed' [disrupted] regional churches, scheduled for 22–23 May in Gohlfeld. This event was being kept strictly secret as a precaution against police interference, who by then were accustomed to breaking up all assemblies. Koch hoped that the chairman of Life and Work [Bell] would send a message to Gohlfeld and also, if at all possible, attend the upcoming Reich synod of the Confessing church in Augsburg [June 1–6, 1935]." [In the German Church Struggle the "disrupted" churches were those regional churches in which there was an ongoing battle for control of church governance—in essence the Church of the Old Prussian Union, which included the regional churches of Rhineland, Westphalia, Berlin-Brandenburg, and the church provinces around Berlin. As a result of the July 1933 church elections, German Christians held key posts in regional churches throughout Germany. In most regional churches the presiding bishops were favorable toward the movement, and the German Christians encountered little resistance. In the three Lutheran churches (Hannover, Bavaria, and Württemberg), the structure of Lutheran hierarchy, particularly the greater power of the presiding bishops, meant that their influence could be contained (these churches were the so-called intact churches). Only in the "disrupted" churches of the Old Prussian Union (primarily because of differences in the governance structures and laws in those churches) were the German Christians able to challenge church leadership, and it is for this reason that the Confessing Church arose within the Old Prussian Union church to contest control of those churches. After the Dahlem synod, the Confessing Church set up its own educational and governance bodies; the Finkenwalde seminary was the direct outcome.—VB]

[8.] The meeting in Gohlfeld on May 22 and 23.

He thought that the situation was rather dangerous^[9] and that any moment a time might come when it would be of great service that I should go over suddenly to Berlin, so that I might possibly be sent by Koch. I asked Bonhoeffer to give me the names and addresses of people whom it would be useful to see supposing I did go. He wrote them down and sent them by post, but unfortunately failed to give the addresses. So I have two requests to make of you. One, could you give me the addresses of the following persons (I mean their official offices): Dr. Frick,^[10] Dr. Gürtner (Justice),^[11] von Neurath,^[12] von Reichenau of the Army,^[13] and Rosenberg?^[14] Also what are the private addresses in Berlin of Koch, Asmussen, Niemoeller, and Jacobi? What is your own private address? Then it is of little use my going unless I can go with somebody who speaks German. I wonder what your movements are in the near future.

Hitler's speech yesterday^[15] was of such a very encouraging kind that I personally think that the situation is far less dangerous than it was last week, and I very greatly hope that no necessity may arise for a special visit. This is only in

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[9.] See also *DB-ER*, 472, concerning how "matters were beginning to look very serious for the church: Peter Brunner and two other pastors from Hesse had been interned in the Dachau concentration camp for more than a month."

[10.] As Reich minister of the interior, at the time Wilhelm Frick was considered to be approachable in matters of concern to the church.

[11.] Franz Gürtner was Reich minister of justice; from June 1933, Bonhoeffer's brother-in-law Hans von Dohnanyi worked as personal advisor to the minister and from October 1934 as director of the minister's office of the Reich Ministry of Justice; see Chowaniec, *Der "Fall Dohnanyi" 1943-1945*, 10.

[12.] Foreign Minister Konstantin von Neurath.

[13.] Probably Walther von Reichenau, one of the leading generals in the German Armed Forces; cf. *DB-ER*, 663.

[14.] Alfred Rosenberg, a Nazi theorist who advised Hitler on "worldview questions."

[15.] On May 21, 1935—the Reich cabinet passed the new German Armed Forces law (after introducing universal military service on March 16, 1935)—Hitler delivered a speech to the Reichstag outlining the principles of his foreign policy and "peace program" in thirteen points. "If the present Germany advocates peace, it does so neither owing to weakness nor to cowardice. It advocates peace from another standpoint regarding people and State, namely from the standpoint of National Socialism." [From the authorized English translation of Hitler's speech, reprinted in Baynes, *Speeches of Adolf Hitler*, 3:1218.—VB] On May 22 in England, Bell could not possibly know anything yet about the "Reich Defense Law" that emerged from this speech (Hitler transferred effective power in the case of war to the Reich Minister of War as commissioned by the head of state; Hjalmar Schacht was appointed "General Plenipotentiary for the War Economy," "in order to engage all economic resources on behalf of the war").

case of need that I ask you these questions, and I hope we may meet before you go back.^[16]

Yours very sincerely
[George Cicestr]^[17]

2. To Karl Koch^[1]

Zingst, June 4, 1935

Dear President Koch:

Permit me to send to you the enclosed brief draft for developing the Confessing Church's participation in ecumenical work. I take the liberty of doing so in connection with our last conversation in Hannover.^[2] It seems to me that more and more depends on this work being properly implemented. At the same time, permit me to include an account of my own expenses.

Respectfully yours,
Bonhoeffer

I hope that Brother Niemöller, to whom I recounted my discussions with Chichester on the twenty-first, passed on this information. He was just on his way to see you.

42 [Enclosure:] Suggestions for Developing an Ecumenical Office of the Confessing Church.

(1) Headquarters: Berlin. Regular administrative duties directed by two theologians in an auxiliary office.

(2) A traveling secretary commissioned by the church to ensure ongoing mutual exchange of information. Very important!

(3) Members who correspond with one another.

Experts in foreign church affairs (England, Scandinavia—USA—Holland—German southeast!^[3]—Greek Orthodoxy—)

[16.] Bell probably means Forell's return to Berlin from Sweden.

[17.] As bishop of Chichester, Bell generally signed his name thus (or simply as "Cicestr"). The copy of this letter in the Bell Papers lacks a signature.

[1.] LKA EKvW, Bestand 5,1, 767/II; typewritten letter with four enclosures, handwritten signatures and addendum. Cf. NL, A 46, 1 (1). Previously published in GS 1:224-26.

[2.] At the conference on May 13–14, 1935, with Oldham and Schönfeld; see *DB-ER*, 472–73.

[3.] That is, churches in countries to the southeast of Germany itself, e.g., in Austria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Bulgaria.

Experts from ecumenical work—Stockholm^[4]—World Alliance^[5]—Lausanne^[6]—world Lutheranism^[7]—Mission.^[8]

Experts from ecumenical youth work: YMCA—Christian Student Association—World Alliance—young women.^[9]

(4) Theological and ecumenical working group to prepare ecumenical conferences.

(5) Regular invitations to ecumenical delegations for special conferences and synods of the Confessing Church.

(6) Development of an exchange program for students and candidates with England and Sweden—engagement of our own preachers' seminaries for this purpose. Send representatives to the ecumenical seminar in Geneva!^[10]

(7) Attempt to consolidate existing ecumenical associations, which have largely become inactive, through the Confessing Church—
(Stockholm. World Alliance. Lausanne).

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(8) Confessing Church to send representatives to ecumenical conferences.

(9) Annual ecumenical conference for specialists to review guidelines.

Bonhoeffer

[Enclosure:] German congregations in foreign countries

(1) Their maintenance to be kept separate from ecumenical work.

(2) A circular is to be sent to all German congregations in foreign countries directing them to submit to the Provisional Administration or to join the Confessing Church. Those congregations did not understand the first such directive sent by the Provisional Church Administration in this sense.^[11]

[4.] The ecumenical Christian Council for Life and Work was founded in 1925 at the Universal Christian Conference in Stockholm.

[5.] World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches, founded on August 1, 1914.

[6.] The ecumenical movement Faith and Order was founded in 1927 at the World Conference in Lausanne.

[7.] The Lutheran World Convention met for the first time in Eisenach in May 1923.

[8.] The establishment of the International Missionary Council in 1921 went back to the World Missionary Conference in Edinburgh in 1910.

[9.] The parallel organization to the Young Men's Christian Association was the Young Women's Christian Association. Bonhoeffer himself had come into contact with the ecumenical movement through the youth work of the World Alliance for Promoting International Friendship through the Churches; see *DB-ER*, 189–90.

[10.] Bonhoeffer added this sentence by hand.

[11.] [As pastor to two German congregations in London from 1933 to 1935, Bonhoeffer had firsthand experience with this issue. For more on his confrontation with

(3) An information and education service would have to be associated with these efforts, especially in the Balkans, though also in England; south-west Africa is already quite favorably disposed toward us. Lack of information in Brazil has generated extraordinarily difficult circumstances.

(4) This work is also particularly urgent because it has been previously incorrectly viewed as the only intact service remaining to the Reich Church.
Bonhoeffer

[Enclosure:] Personal matters: The regular participants in ecumenical work should include Asmussen, Riethmüller, Lilje, Wolff,^[12] and Sasse.

To my knowledge, Menn does not belong to the Confessing Church (?).

Lecturer Wendland sided with the group around Heckel^[13] in Fanø.

44 I would like to see the following persons involved more closely with this work: legation secretary H. von Haefthen–Dahlem is quite interested in this matter, has already contributed much time to it, and is completely on our side. Professor Delekat, Dr. Hildebrandt.^[14] And, of course, I am also completely at your disposal.

Bonhoeffer

[Enclosure:] Expenses associated with ecumenical work.

For the translation of a lengthy Swiss expert opinion concerning the German church question^[15] at the urgent request of the Lord Bishop of Chichester; because of time constraints, I was unable to finish this document myself and had to engage outside help. February 1935, 80 reichsmarks.

Airplane trip to London on May 18, 1935,^[16] 265 reichsmarks.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Reich Church authorities during his time in London, see *DBWE* 13, 1/48, 1/56, 1/65, 1/73, and 1/74. Under Bonhoeffer's leadership, his London congregations joined the Confessing Church; see *DBWE* 13, 1/159, 1/160, 1/167, 1/173, 1/185, and 1/186.—HGB]

[12.] The reference is probably to Professor Ernst Wolf.

[13.] Concerning the role of Bishop Theodor Heckel at the Fanø conference on August 22–30, 1934 (where in the long run he undermined the Confessing Church's chances for full participation in the ecumenical movement), see *DB-ER*, 383–84. [See also *DBWE* 13, 1/140, ed. note 2. The documents from the Fanø conference are in *DBWE* 13.—HGB].

[14.] The latter three—Hans Bernd von Haefthen, Professor Friedrich Delekat, and Franz Hildebrandt—were not considered later.

[15.] This document remains unknown.

[16.] Cf. 1/1.

3. Interrogation Protocol concerning the Worship Service on June 2, 1935^[1]

On Sunday, June 2 of this year, I preached in the Zingst church instead of Pastor Krause. As a pastor of the Confessing Church, in accordance with the directives of the Confessing Church, and after previous arrangements with Pastor Krause, I announced the offering of the Confessing Church, which on this particular Sunday was collected to cover work associated with the emergency work of the Confessing Church.

According to the directive of my church superiors and immediately prior to this, I had asked the congregation for its intercession on behalf of our fellow clergy who were imprisoned in concentration camps; after the announcement of the offering, I pointed out that part of the offering was to be put toward aiding these colleagues in need and their families. In my concluding prayer, I briefly requested an intercession on behalf of these associates. The offering came to about 33 reichsmarks.

[1.] Wojewódzkie Archiwum Państwowe w Szczecinie 433 (11 970); typewritten. Cf. NL, D 17. The interrogation took place on June 6, 1935, in Zingst. [According to DBW 14 editor Jürgen Henkys, Bonhoeffer was interrogated by an official of the local Gau (governing district), not by the Gestapo; the archival material is in Wojewódzkie, Poland. Additional information about the Zingst Sunday service and the interrogation is in Andersen, Bethge, and Vibrans, *So ist es gewesen*, pp. 159 and 163. Cf. also the Zingst sermon text (3/1).—HGB]

45 **4. Candidates' Poem Requesting Support
for Their New Preachers' Seminary^[1]**

A Humble Request from the Candidates
of the New Preachers' Seminary

A preachers' seminary was recently
established on the isle of Zingst,^[2]
where the Confessing candidates
now prepare for new action.
Yet only for a few weeks
did we have a home on the Baltic beach;
now we intend to move "for good"
to Finkenwalde near Stettin.
An old estate house stands empty there
to be the dwelling for us all.
But it is completely empty, just imagine:
only a few beds and cabinets to be
found in the house's halls.
Hence it would please us greatly
and is our great desire
to see the furniture there multiply,
and for us to get a bit of help,
for most people know
that in this world our church
sorely lacks money.
If we may suggest just one thing to you,
please become a godparent to our house!

[1.] EZA, Berlin, Bestand 611 (15,5); typewritten hectograph; previously published in *Mündige Welt*, 5:168–69. Letter in humorous rhymes written by Winfried Maechler, a candidate in the first session. Probably composed before June 7, 1935, in Zingst. [See *DB-ER*, 426–27 for details on the request and the responses from congregations and individuals.—HGB]

[2.] On April 25, 1935, Bonhoeffer received permission in Düsseldorf to use the retreat facilities of the Rhineland Bible School in Zingst on the Baltic Sea for his seminary's work until the beginning of the summer season in mid-June. The candidates began to arrive on April 26. See *DB-ER*, 417. At this time, Zingst was no longer really an "island" but rather (since 1872) part of the peninsula Fischland–Darss–Zingst.

Certainly the best way
is if the district and city undertake
to furnish just one room in a worthy fashion,
and to that end to reimburse us
the appropriate amount of money.
(Of course, do not forget
not to set the sum too low,
then you may count on our gratitude,
which will be visibly demonstrated
in engraving the name of your town
quite nicely on the room
which you so cordially furnished.)
Yet a not-inconsiderable joy for us
would be simple items in good condition
such as tables, chairs, and shelves,
also lamps to work by for us all,
bedcovers, which during retreats
might also give joy to guests;
mattresses, which may serve as couches,
would certainly please us as well.
In short, we would gratefully accept anything
we might use in this house,
and anything, you can imagine, dear friends,
that might please our old Adam.
Two things in the meantime
we beg you certainly not to forget:
Please send these things with freight prepaid,
as soon as possible and we are will already be delighted.
And so we hope, dear ones,
that we have not written you in vain.
And when everything is tip-top and fine
you can certainly then be our guests!
Hence resolve to perform good deeds!
Greetings from the candidates.

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On behalf of the candidates, Maechler

4a. To Ernst Cromwell^[1]

June 8, 1935

Dear Ernst,

It's now been three weeks since my weekend^[2] visit to you—and unfortunately you haven't repaid unkindness with kindness, but answered silence with silence—that's a pity.

¶When I arrived in Croydon on Monday, dead tired, there was neither a taxi nor a bus, so I had to walk to the airport.^[3] I got there at 12:30 a.m. and just wanted to fall into bed, but was told everything was full and I would have to sleep in an easy chair^[4] in the billiards-and-beer room. So the last I knew of London was the smell of spilled beer and cold smoke. The next morning at 11 a.m. I was back in Berlin. I was there two days for discussions and then came on back to my people here.

¶Awaiting me here, besides a lot of work that had been left undone, was all sorts of more or less invigorating business with the authorities, whom we

[1.] Literary estate of Ernest Cromwell; letter in possession of Mrs. Toni Burrowes-Cromwell; handwritten letter, two sheets written both sides. This and the following letter were written from Zingst, the first temporary location of the Finkenwalde seminary. One of Bonhoeffer's confirmands during his London pastorate was Ernst Cromwell, son of a nonobservant Jewish father and a Protestant mother of Jewish descent from Nuremberg who had emigrated to England in March 1934. Born March 30, 1921, Ernst was baptized Protestant and before emigrating attended a Protestant school. In England, encouraged by his mother, Ernst was prepared for confirmation by Bonhoeffer and confirmed on February 24, 1935. Caught up in the internment of "enemy aliens" in spring 1940, he was released to join the Pioneer Corps of the British army, studied after the war at Keble College, Oxford, and became a lawyer. He kept the Bonhoeffer letters because he was impressed by Bonhoeffer as a person; they were discovered in 2010. Bonhoeffer had written three previous letters to Cromwell in March 1935 [in the period covered by DBWE 13], dealing with a planned hiking trip with Cromwell to Scotland and with his visits to Anglican theological colleges, particularly Kelham and Mirfield, in preparation for his work at Finkenwalde. The full set of letters will be published by SPCK Publishing (UK), edited by Stephen Plant and Toni Burrowes-Cromwell, and in the original German in Dietrich Bonhoeffer Jahrbuch 6. The letters, handwritten in German, were transcribed by Jelena Beljin, Ralf Wüstenberg, and Ilse Tödt and edited by Clifford Green, who also provided the first draft of the notes; additional contributions to the notes came from Victoria Barnett, Toni Burrowes-Cromwell, Keith Clements, Ernst Cromwell, Stephen Plant, and Ilse Tödt. The English translation was done by Isabel Best. No letters from Ernst Cromwell to Bonhoeffer have been found.

[2.] "Weekend" is one of several English words used by Bonhoeffer in this letter.

[3.] Combined from two smaller airports dating from World War I, Croydon Aerodrome in South London opened in 1920 as the main London international airport serving Paris, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam. Flights to Tempelhof in Berlin were added in 1923.

[4.] "Easy chair" in English in Bonhoeffer's original.

have recently come to know quite well and who, one might say, have become part of our establishment.^[5] A remark I recently made on a Sunday about “our brothers in the camps”^[6] provoked a storm in a teacup and was apparently very salutary, and a lesson learned for us out here. The perceptive ones wanted to carry it out immediately, but that was deterred, probably more by the economic interests of a resort town that depends on visitors than by concerns about beliefs. Nevertheless, we could get away with that sort of thing again. Moreover, it’s wonderful how it takes only *one* word, these days, to divide people’s opinions,^[7] winning over many, with fewer taking offense. Our community is holding together more firmly than ever. That too is something gained.

¶So you can imagine that I haven’t had much time to write. I would have been happy to hear a word from you, but the three weeks weren’t up yet! Meanwhile, we are enjoying splendid summer weather, the sea, and innumerable lilies of the valley in the woods. We are working hard but have declared four days’ holiday as of today, since tomorrow is Pentecost. We are all looking forward to it. It’s a very fine thing to celebrate these festival days in a community like this, where we are all of one mind. And you can understand that Pentecost has a special meaning for us. The Spirit of which it speaks is the spirit of our community; not an earth spirit from below, nor even the spirit of comradeship or friendship, but rather the spirit of brotherly love,^[8] of obedience, of discipline, and of unshakeable joy. Spirit from above, Holy Spirit, mercy—truth from above, righteousness, courage—that is what we pray for.^[9] I have rarely celebrated Pentecost with so much joy and hope. It is becoming more and more clear to me that everything will depend—in human terms—on forming such groups of people,^[10] who cannot be destroyed by any means in the world, and who allow themselves to

[5.] [The ironic comment about “more or less invigorating business” referred to his interrogation by local *Gau* officials; see the following note.—VB]

[6.] The reference is to the imprisonment of some Confessing pastors in concentration camps. See Bonhoeffer’s sermon at Zingst on June 2 (*DBWE* 14, 3/1) and the excerpt from Gerhard Vibrans’s letter, ed. note 1 of 3/1. Following the sermon Bonhoeffer was interrogated by the police because they had taken up an illegal collection for the Confessing Church; cf. *DBWE* 14, 1/3.

[7.] Perhaps an allusion to 1 John 4:1. The German is “die Geister sich scheiden,” literally “to separate the spirits.”

[8.] See *DBWE* 5:27–47 on “Community.”

[9.] See *DBWE* 5:38–47, on the distinction between a psychic (*psychische*) and a spiritual (*pneumatische*) community.

[10.] At least from April 1932, Bonhoeffer had been talking about forming an intentional Christian community, focused on the Sermon on the Mount, with a group of his

be led by this Spirit. From afar, I count you as belonging to this group, and we have already been experiencing, in the last few weeks, how one after another invited his friends to join us for a few days, and so the circle grows.

¶So you see that the work here is very satisfying and fulfilling and indeed makes each of us happy, even though it often does not come without considerable renunciation^[11] for a while. I believe and hope also that in this way we are performing a real service to the church and to Germany—for how long is not in our hands.

¶How are you? What are you up to these days, and what are all the others doing? My warmest greetings to all, and especially to you!

Write to me again sometime.

Yours as ever, Dietrich Bonhoeffer

4b. To the Cromwell Family^[1]

June 8, 1935

Dear Cromwells,

I am sorry that it has taken me until now to thank you for your hospitality. Again, it was a lovely two-day visit,^[2] and I must ask you to forgive me for being a bit restless. The time just before had been rather hectic.^[3] The next time I come will be more peaceful, at least for me personally. It's true that otherwise the signs do not point in that direction. It will be appropriate to keep the situation of your guest^[4] under consideration for a while.

¶Next week we shall probably be moving from here, to a place near Stettin, an attractive manor that used to belong to the Kattes,^[5] simple but on

students as the core. See, for example, *DBWE* 11, 3/7, p. 434, as well as his conversations in London in 1934 with Hardy Arnold of the Bruderhof community (*DBWE* 13, 1/114a, 158–60).

[11.] On “renunciation,” see *DBWE* 4:101–3.

[1.] Literary estate of Ernest Cromwell; letter in possession of Mrs. Toni Burrowes-Cromwell; handwritten on one side of one sheet; from Zingst. It appears that this letter, which is addressed to the extended Cromwell household, accompanied another one dated in the same way, which was addressed to Ernst.

[2.] Bonhoeffer refers to his short visit to London beginning on May 18, 1935.

[3.] The word *hektisch* is implied but missing in the German original.

[4.] The reference is unclear.

[5.] See the editor's introduction to the German edition (*DBW* 14:7, ed. note 15).

a grand scale, near the forest. I am more comfortable in the east than in the west.^[6]

I must close, the post is just being collected!

I'll write again soon.

All best wishes to all of you!

Yours as ever, D. Bonhoeffer

5. To Max Diestel^[1]

June 24, 1935

My dear, esteemed Superintendent Diestel:

Many thanks for your postcard. I also had just received Henriod's invitation^[2] along with the travel expenses and am now really wondering whether I will be able to make it. I would, of course, very much like to be there because of the C.O. question;^[3] on the other hand, I would very much like to take a church information-gathering trip through Pomerania with several other seminary brothers so that our work and engagement might be more effective. I consider that quite important. As soon as I have reached a decision, I will write you again.^[4]

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The work has gotten off to a good start, and I am quite satisfied with it. At the moment, we are unfortunately still somewhat hindered by problems associated with the move itself and with furnishings. The circle of brothers is, I think, an especially good and cheerful group. In any event, we are all glad to be here together. Perhaps you might come visit us sometime. In gratitude and respect,

Yours truly,

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

[6.] At that time the eastern regions of Germany were more sparsely populated and rural. Although Stettin (today the Polish city of *Szczecin*) was a big port, and its wider forested hinterland in Pomerania was very pleasant. Bonhoeffer enjoyed natural settings.

[1.] NL, Anhang A 7 (9); handwritten, photocopy; from Finkenwalde.

[2.] Invitation to the youth conference in Chamby on August 1–8, 1935.

[3.] The abbreviation "C.O." refers to "conscientious objection." In 1935, not encoding it this way would have meant risking one's life. In a January 29, 1935, memorandum to the ecumenical youth commission of the World Alliance, Bonhoeffer had proposed that the question of conscientious objection be discussed at an international youth conference; see *DBWE* 13, 1/199. See also *DB-ER*, 476 ("Indeed, the theme of conscientious objection came up briefly at the 1935 Chamby youth conference").

[4.] Bonhoeffer ultimately declined, excusing his absence in Geneva with an official trip to England at the beginning of August; see *DB-ER*, 475–76.

6. Assessment by Hans Schönfeld for the Ecumenical Advisory Committee of the Provisional Church Administration^[1]

An Unspoken Concluding Statement

48 (1) Dr. Bonhoeffer's assertion that one might now address the questions at issue here only from the perspective of a theology that comes from the church,^[2] and that Dr. Oldham and the Research Department^[3] represent a different theology or take a different theological point of departure seems all the more remarkable because it is precisely in connection with the unceasing efforts of the Research Department and with Dr. Oldham's support that all the preparations for the 1937 World Conference are being undertaken, based on the very foundation of the church, and that despite all opposition the work on fundamental questions has become an essential part of the overall work. If the reference here is to a theology that declares itself to be absolute, then it will hardly be possible to discuss it in the context of our ecumenical studies.

(2) Although it is certainly with the utmost sympathy and interest that we view the "front" where the church's struggle in Germany is taking place, and although we are constantly learning from this struggle,^[4] the suggestion that

[1.] LKA EkvW, Bestand 5,1 (592/1); typewritten carbon copy; previously published in *Mündige Welt*, 5:244–45. Cf. NL, A 46,1 (2); photocopy of the transcription of the first meeting of the Ecumenical Advisory Committee of the Provisional Church Administration on June 27, 1935, previously published in GS 1:227–29; it was at this meeting in Berlin that Dr. Hanns Lilje presented Schönfeld's assessment to the participants.

[2.] Schönfeld is referring to the position Bonhoeffer took in Hannover on May 13–14, 1935, concerning the preparations for the 1937 World Conference on Church, Community, and State in Oxford. In Oldham's presence, Bonhoeffer had declared that the preparations for Oxford could not be shared jointly with the Reich Church (represented here by Heckel), and the Confessing Church. Moreover, he stated that the Confessing Church expected an unequivocal statement from the Research Department of the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work in Geneva (Schönfeld was head of that department) concerning the resolutions of both Barmen and Dahlem, that the Confessing Church was the only legitimate Protestant church in Germany, and that the preliminary work for Oxford could emerge only from a theology supported by a real church; see also *DB-ER*, 472–73.

[3.] [This was Hans Schönfeld's office, the Ecumenical Research Department of the ecumenical offices in Geneva. Regarding the difference in perspectives on the ecumenical meeting between Bonhoeffer's view and that of Oldham and Schönfeld, see *DB-ER*, 472–74.—VB]

[4.] Despite Schönfeld's assertion of being truly engaged on the issue, it is clear here that he retains his observer's position.

the work of the Research Department is actually taking place in “stages” gives a false impression of the actual situation. As has been already alluded to above, the Research Department has for the past five years been engaged in an ongoing struggle, albeit on a different “front,” one that in many respects might sooner be compared to an advanced position in the foreground between the main battle fronts. It has carried on this struggle at the risk of its very existence, and there was indeed a time when the Research Department in Geneva was not expected to be around much longer, precisely because it persistently adhered to this battle line in the dispute with an optimistic illusionism and internationalism, with a secularized social gospel perspective, and with syncretistic “social ethics,” until there was a breakthrough and the overall work was finally and fundamentally oriented toward the question of the church itself.

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(3) Throughout this discussion, the incessantly repeated inquiries, as to whether the Research Department was informed at all about the Confessing Church’s situation and the larger conflicts involving that church’s struggles, illustrate the obvious ignorance about how the Research Department in recent years has been unceasingly engaged, often with its entire resources and exceeding the capacities of its staff, in trying to ensure that the deeper meaning of the German Church Struggle be better understood.

You will understand that from this perspective, that is, using the analogy of the battlefield, many of the queries and presumptions give the impression that here on the front one is being shot at from behind, from one’s own lines. I point this out solely because I feel obligated to respond to all the unjustified charges made against Dr. Oldham, who is no longer present,^[5] and to prevent unnecessary difficulties from affecting future work.^[6]

[5.] Here Schönfeld seeks cover behind Oldham, though Bonhoeffer had made no charges at all toward the latter and indeed thought a great deal of him. His criticism was directed exclusively at the Geneva headquarters and its allegedly equal treatment of the Confessing Church and the Reich Church. In fact, a partisan position supporting Heckel emerged during the preparations for the Oxford conference. See Boyens, *Kirchenkampf und Ökumene, 1933–39*, 135–36.

[6.] The reaction of participants to Schönfeld’s opinion was not unanimous, as is revealed in the shorthand notes of the official protocol, previously published in *Mündige Welt*, 5:242–44. See *DB-ER*, 474 (“Given the general uncertainty, it was clear to Bonhoeffer after this meeting that he would have to speak out in public”) and Bonhoeffer’s essay in this volume titled “The Confessing Church and the Ecumenical Movement” (2/6).

6a. To Ernst Cromwell^[1]

July 2, 1935

Dear Ernst,

I don't know how many weeks it has been since I last wrote. In any case it's been a long time, and since then I have received two letters from you, along with a few words from your mother, which I appreciated very much. The past few weeks have been entirely taken up with moving and getting our new house in order. We also fitted in a few days in Greifswald, where a united effort by all of us got the students and professors stirring a bit; they were sound asleep there!^[2] Despite [. . .]^[3] a few clashes, the overall result was quite satisfying, and during these days we ourselves also grew into much more of a community.

¶Then we managed to put the house here in order by ourselves, without outside help, and to equip it, for the time being, for our work. Farms in the countryside have been sending us all sorts of food supplies. We could have made good use of your help these days! Now we have a great cook, aged seventy-eight, and two unemployed fourteen- or fifteen-year-old boys to help her. That, at such low cost, is very nice. How would you like to have a job here?^[4]

¶During this same time I had to do a lot of work on journal articles,^[5] and people tell me I have grown quite thin! Can you imagine that!

[1.] Literary estate of Ernest Cromwell; letter in possession of Mrs. Toni Burrowes-Cromwell; handwritten on both sides of one sheet.

[2.] [See *DBWE* 14, 1/24, esp. ed. notes 10 and 11. The German Christians controlled the theological faculty at Greifswald. Given its proximity to Finkenwalde, Bonhoeffer devoted much energy to supporting the theological students who were committed to the Confessing Church.—VB]

[3.] Word deleted, illegible.

[4.] Ernst Cromwell believes it unlikely that this invitation was ever seriously intended by Bonhoeffer. His Jewish ancestry would have made it imprudent in the extreme to work in an illegal seminary even in 1935.

[5.] See Bonhoeffer's article for *Evangelische Theologie* (August 1935, 245–62), "Die Bekennende Kirche und die Ökumene," written between the end of June and the middle of July (*DBWE* 14, 2/6, ed. note 1). At this time Bonhoeffer corresponded with Hodgson about whether he would attend the conference at Hindsgaul, Denmark, depending on whether there would be representatives of the Reich Church present. The conference was a meeting of the Faith and Order Continuation Committee, which was to begin preparing for the next World Conference on Faith and Order (Edinburgh 1937); see *DBWE* 14, 1/6, 11, 12, and 14.

¶My summer plans aren't firmed up yet. What's certain is that I shall have to come to London at some point to break camp, but I don't know when or for how long. During that time I'll be less interested in making visits than in taking a breather, by which I mean playing tennis, swimming, and reading. So perhaps I'll go to Torquay^[6] or Cornwall^[7] for eight to ten days. If I have enough money and you'd like to come along, I'll invite you—most likely it would be the last time for quite a while. It's really very kind of your mother to offer me special status as a guest in your home. But I think it's really time for some peace and quiet at your house.^[8] I'll have plenty to do in Forest Hill during those few short days.

¶The rest of the holidays I want to use for further exploration of Pomerania, with a site for our plans for a House of Brethren in mind.^[9] This is a real need. So I won't be able to go to Montreux^[10] for the conference. This will make my representative^[11] that much happier.

¶The work here is going well. I think often of you all and the congregations. But I cannot see coming back anymore; the need here is too great. It's now just about a year since I first visited your family!

My very best regards to your parents, and to you.

Yours as ever, Dietrich

[6.] A popular summer seaside resort in Devon in the southwest of England, nicknamed the English Riviera.

[7.] The most southwestern county of England, adjacent to Devon.

[8.] Ernst reports that the Cromwell family home in Wimbledon was a virtual "open house" for visitors, a center for friends and family and anyone who came from Germany. Each child had a room but was expected to double-up to make room when space was needed.

[9.] See the subsequent memorandum written on September 6, 1935, and sent from Finkenwalde to the Council of the Church of the Old Prussian Union, *DBWE* 14, 1/24.

[10.] The Youth Conference of the World Alliance, August 1–8, in Chamby sur Montreux (*DBW* 14, app. 1, 1044).

[11.] The ironic reference to his representative (*Vertreter*) is not to Martin Böckheler, pastor of the German Lutheran congregation in Hull, and later his successor in the London congregations, but to Bishop Heckel who attended and must have been delighted that Bonhoeffer was not there; cf. *DB-ER*, 475.

7. From Günther Harder^[1]

Fehrbellin, July 4, 1935

Dear Brother Bonhoeffer,

At the request of the candidates,^[2] I have decided to send a bed, a bedstead, and a mattress in good condition. My colleague Oestreich in Lentzke near here will be sending a desk.

I have prompted colleagues in Prignitz to take up a collection, and we recently came up with 50 [reichs]marks; the other colleagues, who did not take part in the Prignitz meeting recently, will doubtless also be contributing. Moreover, I will also prompt colleagues in the Havel and Ruppín districts to take up a collection.^[3] Unfortunately, this and the furniture shipment cannot take place until the beginning of August, since I am about to leave on vacation. Might I be permitted to ask a question? How much does a simply furnished room cost? Perhaps we might collect enough to furnish one room. In any event, I would like to do my part to ensure that those in the preachers' seminary are not like those "poor people, where the father has to sleep in the coal bin with the *Lokalanzeiger* as his cover."^[4] It seems things are almost that way at present.

Warm greetings and best wishes for your doubtless arduous but wonderful work.

I remain yours,

G. Harder

You know, Zimmermann^[5] has been sick for fourteen days now, first with some sort of shingles, with a temperature, was in the Charité^[6] for a few days for observation because no one knew what was wrong with him. I'm quite worried about him. Such tall people are often not very stable. Harder

[1.] EZA, Berlin, Bestand 50 (587/92); typewritten carbon copy. Cf. NL, A 45 (1). Previously published in *Mündige Welt*, 5:169.

[2.] See 1/4 (Maechler's "Humble Request" at the beginning of July 1935).

[3.] Harder was the district pastor for the Confessing Church in these church districts. His administrative district corresponded to that of a general superintendent.

[4.] A Berlin slogan. Between the wars, the *Lokalanzeiger* (Local advertiser) was a widely read newspaper published by the Scherl Company.

[5.] Wolf-Dieter Zimmermann had been a student in Bonhoeffer's Berlin circle in 1932; during the summer of 1935, he worked as a vicar for Harder.

[6.] The university hospital in Berlin where Karl Bonhoeffer worked; Bonhoeffer's pupils were often his father's patients.

8. To Martin Niemöller^[1]

Finkenwalde, July 5, 1935

Esteemed Pastor Niemöller:

We would like to send our heartfelt thanks to both you and your congregation for your donation of money to our seminary.

We are so delighted that the Confessing Church congregations are helping us establish our preachers' seminary and support our work, and we certainly realize that the cheerful willingness of parishes and parishioners to sacrifice is one of the most important building blocks of our seminary.

With grateful and warm greetings to you and your congregation,

The members of the Finkenwalde Preachers' Seminary

Konrad Bojack

Bonhoeffer

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8a. From Heinrich Lebrecht^[1]

Pastor Lebrecht
Groß-Zimmern/Hesse
July 5, 1935

Dear Colleague:

A year ago I contacted you while you were still in England and asked whether it might be possible to secure a position in a German congregation in England that was not subject to the Reich Church. The church struggles then made me put those plans aside. Now that things have quieted down, however, I am renewing those efforts because as a person of non-Aryan lineage I must find a new home for my children. I for my own part could probably manage, since the Confessing Church is intervening on my behalf.^[2] Even though I have been on leave since November, was later reassigned as punishment, and have been prohibited from drawing a salary, I have continued my ministry almost as before.^[3] For my children, however, though they are still quite young, the situation is hopeless.

Hence I would like to ask you once more whether there are German congregations in England where one might secure a position. Who would be the person

[1.] LKA EKvW, Bestand 5,1 (431/II); handwritten by Konrad Bojack, personally signed by Bonhoeffer. Cf. NL, A 45 (2). Previously published in GS 2:447.

[1.] Typescript in the possession of Marianne Lebrecht, edited by Hans Pfeifer. Previously published in Dietrich Bonhoeffer Jahrbuch 2003, 17.

[2.] See Lebrecht, *Verschweigen oder kämpfen*, 39–40.

[3.] *Ibid.*, 38–39.

to contact? Might you give me some addresses? Would it be advisable to take a trip there oneself?

I found your new address in *Junge Kirche*.

With collegial greetings,
and most respectfully

9. From Leonard Hodgson^[1]

9th July 1935

Dear Pastor Bonhoeffer,

Many thanks for your reply to my letter. Please do not let Dr. Winterhagen^[2] trouble himself with the translation. When I did not hear from you I assumed that my letter must somehow have gone astray, and have found a translator over here, who has already done the work.

If you could come to Hindsgaul, we should certainly be willing to pay your expenses, since we are extremely anxious to have the advice of all branches of the Christian Church before finally deciding on our programme for 1937, and we are able to make a few such grants in order to secure the presence of men whose advice we need and could not otherwise obtain.

[1.] LKA EKvW, Bestand 5,1 (767/II); typewritten with handwritten signature next to the words “not personally signed”; from Winchester, with letterhead “World Conference on Faith and Order Continuation Committee,” “From the General Secretary: Canon L. Hodgson” (Bonhoeffer sent the letter on to President Koch). Cf. NL, A 46, 1 (3). Letter is in the original English, including errors. Previously published in GS 1:230–31. This letter was preceded by an initial correspondence of which we have only a notation in the archives of the World Council of Churches (file location “Geneve archiv[e] countries I”) reading as follows: “Correspondence between Canon Hodgson and Pastor Bonhoeffer relative to the participation of the German Churches in the work of the Movement. 1. On June 17th, 1935, Canon Hodgson wrote to Pastor Bonhoeffer inviting him as a visitor to attend the 1935 meeting of the Continuation Committee. In his reply of July 7th Pastor Bonhoeffer wrote: ‘I thank you very much for your kind invitation to come to Denmark in August. I should very much like to attend the meeting. But there is first of all the question if representatives of the Reichskirchenregierung [Reich Church Government—HGB] will be present, which would make it impossible for me to come.’ 2. Extract from letter from Canon Hodgson to Pastor Bonhoeffer, dated 9th July 1935. ‘I heard from Dr. Krummacher . . .’”

[2.] [The reference is to Jürgen Winterhager, a colleague of Bonhoeffer’s, not Winterhagen.—HGB] Winterhager had been a member of the World Alliance since 1931; he worked with Bonhoeffer in that organization’s Youth Secretariat and often represented Bonhoeffer at its meetings.

I heard from Dr. Krummacher^[3] a little while ago that he and Bishop Heckel expect to attend the meeting. I think you will understand our position when I say that we cannot, as a Movement, exclude the representatives of any Church which “accepts our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour.”^[4] Right from the start there has been a general invitation to all such churches, and we cannot arrogate to ourselves the right to discriminate between them. We are extremely anxious, as I said above, to be guided in our deliberations by all possible sections of Christian thought, and are especially anxious that Germany should not be represented exclusively by the Reichskirche.^[5] We have made it clear to the representatives of the Reichskirche that we cannot regard them as representing German evangelical Christianity as a whole, and it is largely in order to prevent any semblance of that that I have been moved to send you the special invitation,^[6] which I still hope you may find it possible to accept.

With many thanks for your expression of interest in our work, Yours sincerely,
Leonard Hodgson

Dictated by Canon Hodgson but not personally signed owing to absence.

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10. To Günther Harder^[1]

Finkenwalde, July 10, 1935

Dear Pastor Harder:

Many thanks for your letter^[2] announcing your donation for our seminary.

You asked how much a simply furnished room would cost. We have two kinds of rooms here: simple studies and rooms functioning as both study

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[3.] As an official in the Church Foreign Office, Friedrich-Wilhelm Krummacher attended the August 1934 meeting in Fanø.

[4.] Here Hodgson is citing the unanimously adopted preamble of the World Conference for Faith and Order on August 20, 1927.

[5.] [German is in the original.—HGB]

[6.] Hodgson's interest in having Bonhoeffer attend derived from a recommendation from Brilioth, who at the time was a professor in Lund. Hodgson had asked his old friend Adolf Deißmann for information about Bonhoeffer and received the following response (published in *Mündige Welt*, 5:246): “The participation of our Berlin lecturer Pastor Dr. Dietrich Bonhoeffer would, of course, be a very good idea. He is twenty-nine years old now and is one of the preeminent representatives of our really younger generation.” Concerning this entire correspondence between Hodgson and Bonhoeffer, see esp. *DB-ER*, 480–82.

[1.] EZA, Berlin, Bestand 50 (587/92); handwritten by Konrad Bojack with handwritten additions by Bonhoeffer. Cf. NL, A 45 (3). Previously published in *Mündige Welt*, 5:169–70; published later in GS 6:360–61.

[2.] See 1/7 (Harder's letter of July 4, 1935).

and bedroom. A simple study includes two work tables with drawers that lock, a bookshelf, and perhaps a sofa or a comfortable chair, also curtains. Just how much that would cost—well, if I had to estimate, probably 80–120 marks. The other rooms would also include a wardrobe and chest of drawers—we really don't have enough of these now—and two mattresses. Such a room would cost about 50 marks more.

All of us are extremely delighted and grateful that our request [has] prompted such resonance in the churches of the Confessing Church. How differently would we be faring in our new home and in our work if we did not enjoy such extensive support?

Warm and grateful greetings to you and your colleagues from
The brotherhood of the seminary. Konrad Bojack

Many thanks and warm greetings. Even if we are not really covering ourselves with the *Lokalanzeiger*,^[3] we are nonetheless sleeping more or less on the bedsprings—and we are grateful that you have taken our misery to heart! Otherwise, however, things are going quite well indeed. How is our friend Dieter Zimmermann? Please extend to him our warm regards. Yours sincerely,

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

10a. To Helmut Goes^[1]

Dear Brother Goes,^[2]

It was a great pleasure to hear from you. I had already learned that you are among our not-too-numerous friends in your region and your greeting was

[3.] [Here Bonhoeffer is responding to a specific reference in Hodgson's previous letter. See 1/7.—HGB]

[1.] Private papers of Helmut Goes, in possession of Markus Peter Goes, Heilbronn; postmarked: "Finkenwalde, July 10, 1935"; handwritten. First published in Dietrich Bonhoeffer Jahrbuch/Yearbook 2007/2008; editorial notes by Hans Pfeifer. Helmut Goes, the elder brother of Albrecht Goes, got to know Bonhoeffer during their studies in Harnack's seminar (see DB-ER, 67–68) and participated in the celebration of Harnack's seventy-fifth birthday (May 7, 1926), for which the group explored "'Joy' in Early Christianity" (DBWE 9, 2/11). Goes cofounded the Württemberg "Church-Theological Society" with Hermann Diem and Paul Schempp. He spent six weeks in prison in 1935 because of a satirical poem about the National Socialists and was released due to the intervention of Justice Minister Franz Gürtner. In 1938 he was the only pastor in his district (Kirchheim/Teck) who refused to swear the oath to Hitler. See Goes, *Mutiges Leben, sanftest Sterben*.

[2.] Handwritten address: "To Pastor H. Goes, Ohmden above Plochingen, Württemberg." Postcard from Finkenwalde; the date on the postcard cannot be deciphered.

important encouragement for me. Particularly because here, too, the committee's friends^[3] are now pouncing on me, and there are always very few indeed who see clearly. Incidentally, amid all the challenges of the situation I was delighted to read the Harnack biography by his daughter.^[4] You must do that as well. One gulps this world down with a secret—certainly very sarcastic—love. The seminary work continues to be very rewarding. It is a fine thing to work toward the future in this way. Accept our greetings and with best wishes for your ministry.

In brotherly fellowship
Your Dietrich Bonhoeffer

11. To Leonard Hodgson^[1]

Finkenwalde, July 18th 1935

Reverend and Dear Sir,

I beg to express my thanks for your letter and for the kind invitation to Hindsgaul which you have again sent to me. I am well aware of the great distinction and responsibility implied therein. Can there be anything finer and more promising to a Christian pastor and teacher than to co-operate in the preparation for a great oecumenical synod which views the final task of hearing the Word of our Lord Jesus Christ together; of being obedient in the faith of the wonder-working power of the Holy Spirit; and of praying, even in this world, for a visible unification of disrupted Christendom. Should not the responsibility and the belief in the prophecy of “unum omnes”^[2] forbid us to cherish pharisaical pretensions and to pronounce impulsive judgments on any church, nay, on any brother in Christ? Should not the message of Jesus Christ lead everyone of us, first of all, to repentance and thus command him to listen to the words of every brother in Christ and perhaps submit his own opinion to the correction of his brother? For it cannot be considered to be of ultimate importance that any man

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[3.] [This is a reference to the Kerrl-appointed church committee to oversee the Prussian churches.—VB]

[4.] Zahn-Harnack, *Adolf von Harnack* (1926).

[1.] WCC Archives, Faith and Order, Correspondence by Countries, Germany 1935–1947; typewritten with handwritten concluding sentence and signature. There is a typewritten carbon copy without the handwritten conclusion (sent on to Westphalian church president Koch) in LKA EKvW, Bestand 5,1 (262/I). Cf. NL, A 46,1 (3). Letter is in original English, including errors. Previously published in GS 1:231–34.

[2.] “That they may all be one” (John 17:21).

or any church should maintain their views and doctrines by persisting in their “right” attitude. The only thing which really matters is our Lord Jesus Christ, that He may prevail and His title remain unviolated in spite of all our human wisdom.

I am writing all this as a member of the Confessional Church in Germany. At the same time I must state that, with regard to the German Reich Church, the position of my Church is fundamentally different from its attitude towards all other Churches of the world, as the Confessional Evangelical Church in Germany disclaims and wholly contradicts the Reich Church to accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour. There may be single representatives of the Reich Church (and possibly Bishop Heckel among those) who propound a theology which is to be called a Christian theology and seems to be more biblical and falling in with the teachings of the Confessional Church than the doctrines of several other churches. But the teaching as well as the action of the responsible leaders of the Reich Church has clearly proved that this church does no longer serve Christ but that it serves the Antichrist. Obedience to the only heavenly Lord Jesus Christ continues to be co-ordinated, nay, subordinated to obedience towards worldly masters and powers. The Reich Church thereby continues to betray the only Lord Jesus Christ, for no man can serve two masters; he will hold to the one and despise the other.^[3] The Confessional Church has therefore (at the Dahlem Synod, last autumn) declared that the Reich Church government has dissociated from the Church of Christ.^[4] This solemn declaration has been given in full power and in obedience to the Word of Jesus Christ; it states clearly that the Reich Church government can no longer claim to compose the Church of Christ in Germany nor any part of it.

No member of the Confessional Church (and much less one of her ministers) can thus recognize in the Reich Church a church which pays homage to our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour; he must rather beseech God that He may confound the Reich Church government as an instrument of the Antichrist. Being a minister of the Confessional Church I cannot attend a[n] oecumenical conference unless it either excludes the Reich Church or ventures openly to charge both the Reich Church and the Confessional

[3.] Cf. Matt. 6:24.

[4.] Declaration of the Confessing Synod of the German Evangelical Church on October 20, 1934, III.1 (K. D. Schmidt, *Bekenntnisse, 1934*, 158): “We find: The constitution of the German Evangelical Church has been shattered. Its legitimate organs no longer exist. The men who have taken over leadership of the church in the Reich have through their actions dissociated themselves from the Christian Church.”

Church with responsibility. This, however, means actually to interfere in their conflict and effectively to pronounce a judgment based upon allegiance to the Word of God and duly established in the name of God's whole Communion.

The fight which we are bound to fight is not for subtle reasonings nor opinions of particular groups which might become reconciled through a certain amount of good-will. Nay, the fight is being fought for "dividing asunder the spirits"^[5] for drawing the line between Life and death, between obedience and disobedience to our very Lord Jesus Christ. Our disruption from the Reich Church would be spurious and godless indeed if ours were not the same strong faith which Martin Luther's once was: that we have to fight for the sake of the true Church of Christ against the false Church of the Antichrist. Fighting in this faith we derive no small power from considering the fact that we are fighting for Christianity not only with regard to the Church in Germany but in the whole world. For everywhere on the earth are to be found those pagan and anti-Christian powers which have appeared openly in our field. All churches may be attacked by the very same powers one day or another.

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The weapons of the Gospel which have been sharpened anew through our fighting and suffering are to all Christendom the only safeguard. So the decision having been found in Germany is a call of ultimate warning to all the churches—all over the world.

If now the oecumenical movement, and in particular the Faith and Order Movement were complying with that decisive question and taking the challenge seriously in obedience towards Jesus Christ and His Word, an inward regeneration and a new unification might well [be] bestowed upon all Christendom—however great the difficulties are and however painful the way of obedience appears to be. On the other hand, if the oecumenical movement were to leave this question out of sight, it might bring in its own verdict and lose the power of speaking and acting in the name of Jesus Christ.

I should like to ask you to consider these lines not to be an impracticable entanglement of the proper work in the oecumenical field but a contribution to this work equally applicable as fundamental in its bearing.

Thanking you once more for your great kindness I remain, dear Sir, yours very sincerely

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

[5.] 1 Cor. 12:10: "discernment of spirits."

12. To Karl Koch^[1]

Finkenwalde/Stettin, July 24, 1935

Dear President Koch:

57 I received the enclosed invitation to the preparatory conference in Lausanne a few days ago and responded to it with the similarly enclosed letter.^[2]

I thought it best to inform you of this matter since it does involve a fundamental issue. Attending the meeting of the ecumenical council,^[3] where I have been a consultative member for one year,^[4] poses the same difficulty.^[5] Might I ask whether you, esteemed President, will be attending yourself, or whether you believe that neither of us should go, which is what I would consider the best solution. I merely want to avoid explaining my own reasons for declining differently than you yourself plan to do.

With sincere regards I remain faithfully yours,
Bonhoeffer

[1.] LKA der EKvW, Bestand 5,1 (767/II); typewritten with handwritten signature. Cf. NL, A 46,1 (3). Previously published in GS 1:234–35. [Koch was president of the regional Westphalian church.—HGB]

[2.] See 1/9 (Hodgson's invitation of June 17, 1935, renewed on July 9, 1935, for Bonhoeffer to participate as a "visitor" at the meeting of the Continuation Committee of the Movement for Faith and Order in Hindsgaul, Denmark) and 1/11 (Bonhoeffer's reply of July 18, 1935).

[3.] In Chamby, August 18–22, 1935.

[4.] Since the Fanø meeting, where on August 30, 1934, Bonhoeffer and President Koch were co-opted as advisory members; see DB-ER, 383–84: "That same day the assembly, using its right of co-optation, ostentatiously elected Dietrich Bonhoeffer and absent leader of the Confessing synod President Karl Koch 'consultative and co-opted members' of the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work."

[5.] This is a reference to the decision not to participate in any ecumenical conference to which representatives of the Reich Church had also been invited.

12a. To Heinrich Lebrecht^[1]

Pastor Dr. Bonhöffer^[2]
 Finkenwalde/Stettin, Waldstraße 5
 July 24, 1935

Dear Brother Lebrecht,

The reason I have put off answering for so long is that I wanted to inform myself once more concerning the possibilities in England. Unfortunately, my findings are extremely negative; that is, at the moment absolutely nothing is open.^[3] My own former position was filled by a Württemberg colleague in accordance with the special wishes of the parish. Another position, however, will probably come open next year in London. Your best course of action would be to stay in contact with Pastor Rieger or Böckheler in London, although I must already advise you not to get your hopes up in that regard. I will be there again in August myself and will bring the matter up. You doubtless also know, however, that Prof. Piper^[4] is in the same situation as you because of his wife and has long been looking for a similar position without success. To that end, he is often there.

I am quite sorry that my news is not more positive, but the number of positions there is quite limited. It goes without saying that if I do hear of anything, I will notify you immediately.^[5]

With collegial greetings

Yours truly,

[handwritten] Bonhoeffer

[1.] Typescript with handwritten signature, in the possession of Marianne Lebrecht; edited by Hans Pfeifer. Previously published in Dietrich Bonhoeffer Jahrbuch 2003, 18–19.

[2.] Incorrect spelling of name, presumably because of a typing error: in original “o” was written over with an “ö.”

[3.] See in this regard Lebrecht, *Verschweigen oder kämpfen*, 50.

[4.] Otto Piper. See also 1/116, p. 000, and *DWBE* 13, 1/200.

[5.] Apparently Bonhoeffer continued to intervene on Lebrecht’s behalf in England. Lebrecht did not accept Bishop Bell’s invitation because he had in the meantime been reinstated in his old church (on November 1, 1935; cf. Lebrecht, *Verschweigen oder kämpfen*, 52), which he did not want to abandon in such a situation (73). Pastor. H. Lebrecht, who as a “first-degree half-breed” had to do forced compulsory labor under Operation Tödt, died on February 5, 1945, of wounds received during a bombing raid. [Operation Tödt, headed by Fritz Tödt, was a forced labor battalion during the war; many of the “mixed non-Aryans” were assigned to it.—VB]

13. To Martin Böckheler^[1]

Dear Brother Böckheler,

Well, I am coming to preach on August 4.^[2] Will you still be there? Will Mr. Henne and Mr. Voigt also be there?^[3] Or will they perhaps be away then? Then I would really be sorry for coming at so unfavorable a time! Many thanks for your recent greeting! I am really looking forward to London. Though it will really be a farewell, I am pleased to be handing the work over to you.^[4] I cannot leave here anymore. It simply will not work. I will tell the congregation straightaway. Perhaps you could arrange a meeting so that I can tell them! Any time will do.

In haste, sincerely yours
Dietrich Bonhoeffer

14. From Leonard Hodgson^[1]

26th July, 1935

Dear Pastor Bonhoeffer,

Thank you very much indeed for writing to me so fully and frankly. I very much appreciate the trouble you have taken to explain so carefully the situation as you see it and to give me so illuminating an insight into the very distressful conflict in which you are engaged. Such letters make one realize the more our common loyalty to our one Lord and Master, which transcends all national boundaries and leads us to more earnest prayer for God's blessing on those of our fellow Christians in other lands who are striving for His truth.

[1.] NL, A 45 (4); handwritten, photocopy; postmarked Finkenwalde, July 25, 1935.

[2.] The official reason for the trip to London was to inform Bishop Bell, at the behest of President Koch, that the Confessing Church would not be sending any representatives to the Chamby conference in August if Bishop Heckel were to appear at that conference with a delegation.

[3.] Gottlieb Henne, a Swabian-born butcher, was a member of the congregational council of St. Paul's as an elder, chair, and treasurer; Mr. Voigt filled the corresponding position in the Sydenham church (communication from Pastor Böckheler in a letter to *DBW* editor Otto Dudzus, August 8, 1989).

[4.] See in this regard *DB-ER*, 475–76. In March 1935, Bonhoeffer had taken a temporary leave of absence from his London churches for six months. During the visit in August 1935, he relinquished his London duties once and for all.

[1.] LKA EKvW, Bestand 5,1 (262/I); typewritten with handwritten signature; from Winchester (Bonhoeffer sent it on to President Koch). Letter is in the original English, including errors. Cf. NL, A 46,1 (3). Previously published in GS 1:235–39.

I should like on my part to repay your courtesy by explaining in rather more detail how the matter appears from the point of view of our Movement.

For 400 years or so the divided Christian bodies have drifted further and further apart from one another. In the early years of the present century God's call came to certain Christian leaders in different churches bidding them seek to draw together the divided Christian bodies. This led to different methods of approach to the work. One obvious method was to see how far the different Christian bodies could join together in seeking to christianise the conduct of human life without compromising the principles for which each church stood. Those who received the call to follow this method promoted the Stockholm Conference of 1925 which issued in the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work.^[2]

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But it was realised that such fellowship between churches in united activity could not result in a full healing of the breaches in divided Christendom unless the cooperating churches should also discuss among themselves the principles for which each stood, with a view to discovering whether these were indeed such as to require them to remain disunited in faith and order. Hence came the Lausanne Movement.^[3] If I may put the matter pictorially, in the first case the churches were so to speak forming a circle standing shoulder to shoulder facing outwards towards the world; in the latter case they were forming a circle facing inwards seeking to know and understand one another better. It is because both tasks are necessary and because it is important that both should be carried on simultaneously and neither lost sight of that it is best to have two independent movements in friendly relations with one another. Those of us who are charged with the responsibility of conducting the business of the Faith and Order Movement realise that the whole *raison d'être* of the Movement is to provide opportunities for the different churches to meet and learn to understand one another better. It has been clear from the outset that we must not attempt in any way to act *on behalf of* the churches, either by way of forming schemes of reunion or of making pronouncements to the world in the name of the churches. We must not so to speak turn round and cease to face inwards. The reason for this is as follows. Our work being to draw the churches into conversations with one another and out of their isolation, it is necessary for us to guarantee to every church, when we invite it to send representatives, that it will not find itself in any way compromised by action taken by the conference at which it is represented. If this were to happen churches would withdraw from the Movement and relapse into

[2.] On the organization, principles, and leading personalities in the Universal Christian Council for Life and Work, see Boyens, *Kirchenkampf und Ökumene, 1933–39*, 15–16.

[3.] On the goals and leading personalities in the Faith and Order movement after the 1927 Lausanne conference, see Boyens, *Kirchenkampf und Ökumene, 1933–39*, 18–20.

the isolation from which we exist to draw them. It may be the duty of the Life and Work Movement to run the risk of this—that I cannot express any opinion. But for Faith and Order to do so would be to be false to its own vocation.

60 The one and only qualification that needs to be made is this. From the start the Movement has confined itself to those churches which “accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour.”^[4] But the Movement has never taken upon itself to decide which churches conform to this definition and which do not. The invitation to participate in the work of the Movement is issued to “all Christian bodies throughout the world which accept our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour,” and it is then left to the churches themselves to decide whether or not they can honestly accept it. I can illustrate this from a particular example with which we are concerned at the present time. The question has been raised whether the Czechoslovakian National Church is a Trinitarian church which can rightly participate in our work or a Unitarian church^[5] which must remain outside. What the decision on this question will be I cannot say; it is at present *sub judice*.^[6] But it will have to be decided by the Czechoslovakian Church itself; we shall not take it upon our shoulders to exclude it if it holds that honestly it can come in.

If I understand your letter correctly the present situation in Germany is that the Confessional Church denies the right of the Reichskirche to be regarded as a church which accepts our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour. But I understand that this would be denied by members of the Reichskirche itself; I gather this for example from a little pamphlet by Dr. Wobbermin^[7] which he has just sent me.

[4.] Cited from the preamble of the 1927 conference; see 1/9 (Hodgson’s letter of July 9, 1935).

[5.] “Unitarian” churches deny the divinity of Jesus and, accordingly, also the dogma of the divine Trinity. Today’s Unitarian Church is a member of the International Association for Liberal Christianity and Religious Freedom. During Bonhoeffer’s era, Unitarians were active in major European cities as well, including Prague; hence their influence on the Czechoslovakian national church during the 1930s.

[6.] “Under advisement.”

[7.] Georg Wobbermin was certainly not the best guarantor of Hodgson’s argumentation here, since he was considered to be a rabid advocate of the Reich Church’s anti-Jewish laws [i.e., the “Aryan paragraph”—HGB]. He dismissed as “premature and misleading” the criticism by a number of theologians against the resolutions of the General Synod of the Old Prussian Union in Berlin on September 5, 1933 [again, the reference here is to the introduction of the “Aryan paragraph” by the German Christian delegates to that synod—HGB]. In his view, the law designed to exclude non-Aryan pastors from ministry in the church was both “proper and justified,” nor could any exceptions be tolerated, “since with that the church would endanger the unity of German culture, which it is so imperative to secure at the present time, above all in the Protestant church” itself (cited according to *DB-ER*, 319).

Whatever may be the truth about this, I do not see that it can ever be the duty of the Faith and Order Movement to decide the question. Let us consider for a moment what it would mean if we were to undertake such a responsibility. Quite clearly we could not pronounce any such judgment without a full hearing of both sides. It would mean that we should have to hold a prolonged meeting of the Continuation Committee which should consider the evidence produced by the Confessional Church and the Reichskirche. This would be to divert the Continuation Committee from the work which it exists to perform—and we have to remember that the members of our Movement are drawn from churches all over the world and not from Europe only. Churches in North and South America, in South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, China etc. send their representatives for the purpose of explaining what they stand for and learning what others stand for. Having invited them to come together for this purpose with a definite guarantee that they will not be asked to sit in judgment upon one another, how can we then ask them to spend their time in taking any such action?

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If we once begin doing this kind of thing, would there be any end to it? Suppose for example one of the churches in America accused another church there of being so infected by *Humanism*^[8] as no longer to possess any effective faith in Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, should we then have to ask all the churches of Europe and the rest of the world to take up the task of arbitrating between them? The more I think of it the more I feel certain that such action must be taken either by churches themselves or possibly by some other oecumenical movement which is not charged with the particular task that we have to perform.

And might I as a result of all this suggest that possibly you have not quite clearly realised what participation in our Movement involves. I gather from your letter that you feel that to take part in our Movement together with representatives of the Reichskirche would mean that by cooperating with them in a common work you would be disloyal to your membership of the Confessional Church. But does not this depend on the nature of the work which the Movement is doing? We are not (like the Stockholm Movement) seeking to engage in a common activity wherein we stand shoulder to shoulder as brothers; we are seeking to meet and to explain ourselves to one another, and when representatives of different churches meet at a Faith and Order Continuation Committee meeting or World Conference, they do so without any prejudice to the convictions of the churches to which they belong. If for example at any of our gatherings a representative of the Reichskirche were to explain the sense in which his church accepts our Lord Jesus Christ as God and Saviour, it would be quite in

[8.] [The German term is in the original.—HGB].

62 order for a representative of the Confessional Church to point out that from the point of view for which he stands such acceptance could not be regarded as being satisfactory. It would not necessarily follow that either church would as a result be excluded from the Movement; it would have been made clear that progress towards unity between the two of them was improbable in the near future.

It is one of our fundamental principles that we are not to seek unity by compromising or glossing over the differences which divide us; we are not a conference of Christian bodies whose differences “might become reconciled through a certain amount of goodwill.” No; we realise that the differences between us are much more deeply seated than that, and are often genuine differences of conviction, and that the only way towards mutual understanding is for each quite honestly to “speak the truth in love,”^[9] even though it be unacceptable to others who are present.

Forgive me for having inflicted so long an epistle upon you. I do think it is most important that we should understand one another as clearly as possible. As I said before I am most grateful to you for having written to me as you did, and I hope you will accept what I have written as being written in the same spirit in which you wrote yourself.^[10]

Yours very sincerely,
Leonard Hodgson

[9.] Cf. Eph. 4:15. The Greek text translates literally: “But let us attest the truth in love” [NRSV: “But speaking the truth in love”]; the Nestle edition Luther text: “Be truthful in love.”

[10.] Bonhoeffer’s correspondence with Hodgson was one important factor prompting his essay “The Confessing Church and the Ecumenical Movement” in June 1936 (2/6). In March 1939, Bonhoeffer resumed contact with Hodgson, with a long visit for the purpose of gaining Hodgson’s understanding of the concerns and claims of the Confessing Church, though the results were no different than during the correspondence of 1935; cf. *DB-ER*, 641–44.

15. To Susanne and Walter Dreß^[1]

July 27, 1935

Dear Suse and Walter,

What a wonderful surprise it was to receive your card recently. I had already imagined all sorts of things, and at such a distance one is, after all, always a bit worried. But then your card made all that disappear, and I thought of all of you again with joy and gratitude and a lighter heart. Now I hope things will move quickly and you will soon be home again. I actually wanted to write immediately, but you can hardly imagine how much there was to do here during the past week, and I did not want to write a letter in haste. The first weeks here have been especially full, but it is also quite nice. You cannot believe how glad I am that everything went well and that you now have a little boy.^[2] When will he be baptized?^[3] I really would like to be present. I am especially pleased that you want me to be a godparent. We will now have to see one another much more often and in a new way. During the past few years, things were not really as they should have been—and it was, as I clearly recognize, my own fault. But all that has passed, and I am looking forward to seeing you again and to the baptism.

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Things are going well here. Although there is a great deal to do, it is wonderful work, and I am very grateful for it. Although things do not look very rosy in the outside world, one should be grateful for each day when one can work, live, and be together. That situation in its own turn certainly recalls the New Testament and for that reason is a very promising one. On the second^[4] our vacation period begins. Unfortunately, I have to go to England.^[5] When I return, though, we will definitely see one another, and I am already looking forward to it.^[6]

Best wishes and warm greetings from your faithful
Dietrich

[1.] NL, Anhang A 13 (1); handwritten, probably from Finkenwalde. [According to information from DBW editor Jürgen Henkys, the original handwritten copy was found in November 1992.—HGB]

[2.] Michael Dreß, born on July 9, 1935.

[3.] See 1/30 (letter to Susanne Dreß in mid-October 1935).

[4.] That is, on August 2.

[5.] Bonhoeffer stayed in London for almost two weeks.

[6.] Apparently in response to this letter, Walter Dreß visited his brother-in-law from July 31 to August 1, 1935, in Finkenwalde (according to entries in the guestbook).

1/15a. To Ernst Cromwell^[1]

Dear Ernst,

This will just be a brief hello. Thank you for your letter. There is a great deal to do here, and I don't have time to write. My plans for August have changed; I'm probably only coming 4–18 VIII,^[2] and with scarcely any time to travel because I have so much work. So if you have other possible plans, as you say in your letter, don't make them dependent on my coming. I am sorry, but there's no other way. I do hope to see you though. Please give my regards to your parents and everyone in your house!

Yours in haste,
Dietrich

64 16. Invitation to a Retreat for Theology Students^[1]*Retreat for Theology Students*^[2]

at the preachers' seminary of the Confessing Church in
Finkenwalde/Stettin (Waldstraße 5; 15 minutes from the Finkenwalde
train station) from July 30 to August 2, 1935

Topics of morning Bible study:

1. Christ in the Psalms.^[3]
2. The Story of Peter.

[1.] Literary estate of Ernest Cromwell; letter in possession of Mrs. Toni Burrowes-Cromwell; handwritten, written one side of one sheet, undated. Written in July 1935, prior to Bonhoeffer's visit to London in August; see 1/20a. In his letter of July 27 to Susanne and Walter Dreß (1/15), he proposes holidays beginning August 2.

[2.] In fact the visit was from August 3 to August 12 (*DBW*14, app. 1, 1044). The "VIII" is written above the line.

[1.] LKA EKvW, Bestand 5,1 (117); typewritten hectograph; presumably composed in mid-July 1935, from Finkenwalde.

[2.] These were theology students from Greifswald, at the time under the supervision of Gerhard Krause, who had requested this retreat because they felt abandoned by their own theological faculty with respect to church politics; see *DB-ER*, 433–34.

[3.] Bonhoeffer himself delivered the paper "Christ in the Psalms" (see 2/5). This study simultaneously addressed questions raised by the candidates in connection with the extended Psalm readings during the morning and evening devotional periods at the seminary itself.

Topics of afternoon reports:

1. Theological Studies and the Church.
2. *Volkskirche*—Free Church.
3. The Life of the Church-Community in the World.

Discussion of these reports will be continued each evening. Each day will begin and conclude with devotions. After breakfast each day, a half hour will be set aside for meditation, and before lunch three-quarters of an hour for communal singing.^[4]

The retreat will begin at midday on July 30 and conclude during the evening of August 2 or the morning of August 3.

The total cost is three reichsmarks. Those unable to pay this fee are requested to indicate such on their registration; this should not jeopardize their participation.

Please bring with you: Luther Bible, Greek New Testament, hymnal, and, if possible: *Der helle Ton* and/or *Das neue Lied*.^[5] Please also bring a sleeping bag.

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We urge you to register for the retreat ahead of time and to indicate your time of arrival.

In the name of the seminary I extend this cordial invitation to you,
Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Pastor

17. To Martin Niemöller^[1]

Finkenwalde/Stettin

My dear Niemöller,

Many thanks for your letter and invitation.^[2] I am quite pleased that you are once again sounding the trumpets for action. This time, however, we need

[4.] This as well as all subsequent retreats for outside participants were always fully integrated into the daily routine of the seminary.

[5.] Hymnals for young Protestant men and women. *Ein neues Lied* (A new song) was published by the Reich Protestant Association for Young Women (Evangelischer Reichsverband weiblicher Jugend), and *Der helle Ton* (The clear tone) was published by the National Federation of Protestant Young Men's Associations (Evangelisches Jungmännerwerk Deutschlands). Both hymnals are nearly identical in content and primarily shaped by Otto Riethmüller.

[1.] LKA EKvW, Bestand 5,1 (431/II); typewritten copy; presumably July 1935. Cf. NL, A 45 (5). Previously published in GS 2:205.

[2.] "Invitation" to the signing of the July 30, 1935, manifesto "To Our Brothers in the Ministry!" (see 1/18).

to make real progress.^[3] I think it is about time to create an Emergency League within the Emergency League,^[4] in connection with which Matt. 22:21^[5] will require a substantially different interpretation than previously. I hope that on this point we can arrive at a statement and a decision, and in case no one has yet expressed an interest in speaking on this subject, I would like to request such an opportunity today.^[6]

I think you have truly once again found the right moment, for which I am extremely grateful to you.

I and the entire seminary extend our warmest greetings to you.

In brotherhood,

Bonhoeffer

66 18. Manifesto “To Our Brothers in the Ministry”^[1]

Berlin-Dahlem, July 30, 1935

To Our Brothers in the Ministry!

God’s grace has prompted the church of Jesus Christ in Germany, under pressure and tribulation, to listen anew to God’s word alone and to renew our obedience to the solely valid will of our heavenly Lord. May we ask that God not abandon the work of his hands.

So let us greet our colleagues while giving thanks to the Lord our God for having enabled us to issue a common statement in *Barmen*, for having guided us since the Dahlem synod 1934, such that the Councils of Brethren have emerged

[3.] In articulating the position of the Confessing Church about governmental intrusion into the institutions and freedom of the church, as described in the manifesto.

[4.] In September 1933 Niemöller had called for voluntary commitment to the Pastors’ Emergency League; cf. *DB-ER*, 309–11.

[5.] “Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (NRSV).

[6.] Bonhoeffer is possibly thinking here of a new synod.

[1.] NL, A 45 (5); flyer (printed by Eisemann Printers in Steglitz). Previously published in GS 2:205–9. The measures cited here ended the government’s attempt to gain control of church affairs with the help of German Christians. Henceforth the state was viewed quite openly as the adversary. Bonhoeffer received this manifesto just in time to take it with him to London on August 3, 1935, and deliver it to Bell. With this flyer in hand, at the World Alliance conference in Chamby on August 18–22, 1935, Bell was able to contradict Heckel’s euphemistic assertion that with the “legal aid” of the state (i.e., the finance departments, legislative authority, and Reich Ministry of Church Affairs), the unrest in the Evangelical Church in Germany was now subsiding once and for all; see *DB-ER*, 479.

as regulatory centers amid the chaos. Church leaders, pastors, congregations, and elders have been willing to assume great burdens and to make enormous sacrifices. To our amazement and shame, it is primarily the servants of the word whom the Lord of the church has put in the position of resisting this on the evil day.

We are in danger, however, of losing God's gifts through our own unfaithfulness. Hence we must ask our colleagues to determine with us whether we are prepared for the coming battle. We must state, in all soberness and openness, how we see the situation. We believe that a new and perhaps the most difficult struggle is still to come for the church-community. All the recently implemented measures (finance departments, legislative authority, cost-sharing stipulations, establishment of the Ministry for Church Affairs with continued restrictions and expulsions) can be viewed only as intending to resolve the church question in *opposition to Barmen and Dahlem*.^[2] We must earnestly entreat the brothers to dispense with any interpretation of the church situation as harmless and to gird themselves with their congregations for the approaching decision.

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During the past few months we have experienced one disappointment after another while waiting for our church leadership to attain a decisive victory and state recognition of the Confessing Church. In the process, many of us have become tired and discouraged. We must confess that our own unbelief has seduced us into placing our hopes in human beings; and, indeed, have we not fostered and nourished such hopes both among ourselves and among others?

God's word, however, tells us: "*Therefore prepare your minds for action; discipline yourselves; set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when he is revealed*" (1 Peter 1:13). Because we have come up short on this point, it hangs over our Confessing Church like a curse; the spirit of doubt and anxiety has made its nest among us; we lack clear guidance; our theological youth no longer knows whether it is jeopardizing its own future by pursuing its education, examination, and ministry in the Confessing Church.

We have incurred this curse through our own actions by denying what God entrusted to us at Barmen and Dahlem. Both synods have summoned the church under the sole dominion of our Lord Jesus Christ; Barmen did so such that the church's proclamation and doctrine, and Dahlem such that its form and institutions, were all to be oriented solely toward the one word of God's revelation. This should have thwarted any thought of compromise in us. Let us turn around

[2.] [The reference is to the confessional clarity at the Barmen synod and its critique of the German Christian ideological corruption of Christian theology and the subsequent clarity at the Dahlem synod with respect to church law, particularly with respect to the education and ordination of clergy and the necessity that these conform to the theological position established at Barmen.—VB]

and commit ourselves anew to these resolutions. Then we will once more be given clear guidance. Let us not lose heart because the future of the church is shrouded in impenetrable darkness as far as our own vision is concerned; let it suffice that we know what we have been commanded.

What we have been commanded is a clear, uncompromising *No* to any attempt to resolve the church question in contradiction to the resolutions of Barmen and Dahlem. May God help us—when the time comes—to *confess this No in unanimity and joy!*

What we have been commanded is to continue the assembly and formation of the Confessing Church independent of any vacillations in church politics and faithful to the guidance of Barmen, Dahlem, and Augsburg. We do not have the right to surrender or abandon the initiative entrusted to us.

68 We rejoice in the fellowship that binds us in the Confessing Church and its ministry, transcending all boundaries. We give thanks to God for having granted us a communal statement for the entire German Evangelical Church in the three German Confessing synods. Let us not forget, however, that this unity does not suspend our obligation to our—differing—confessions.^[3] On the contrary, it is precisely this common confession that raises the question concerning the different confessions with new seriousness. This question can be resolved only in brotherly struggle between those who have had to confess together. In this dialogue, the brotherhood of the Confessing Church is divided according to the confessional affiliation into Lutheran, Reformed, and United.

What we have been commanded is first and foremost to ensure in our own ministry and in our own church-community *that the Confessing Church lives solely from the word, from grace, and from faith*. The main focus of all our work, especially of our theological reflections and the concomitant purification of the church, is found in our church-communities and our synods as the locus assigned to us for our work. Ultimately the decision is made where repentance and faith are awakened through God's word and Spirit. The word binds us together; it preserves us from abandoning one another and drives us to render our ministry with and for one another, for it places us within the loving brotherhood of Christ. Such is the nature of the renewal needed by our pastoral brotherhoods and congregations, a renewal that we urge you to undertake and that we trust will come from God's word.

Christ is the one consolation that will be left to us.^[4]

[3.] [E.g., the Lutheran, the Reformed (Calvinist), and the United confessional traditions that emerged from the Reformation.—VB]

[4.] Forty-nine names follow, including "Bonhoeffer–Finkenwalde."

19. Report of the Pomeranian Members of the Preachers' Seminary^[1]

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Report of the Pomeranian Members of the Preachers' Seminary
(first session) to the Brotherhood of Pomeranian Assistant Pastors
and Vicars of the Confessing Church
Finkenwalde, August 5, 1935

Dear Brothers,

Last spring in Pomerania, when we were assigned to the preachers' seminary in Düsseldorf, all of us believed that we would be attending the last intact, old preachers' seminary of the Old Prussian Union (we had no idea we would first have to arrange and furnish our new home). Because the attorney, Dr. Holstein, advised against using the building in Düsseldorf (Dr. Niesel^[2] and Director Bonhoeffer had one and a half days to find lodging for twenty-three candidates), we landed in Zingst, where on April 26 we were greeted by rather raw spring winds. But after walking half an hour through impenetrable darkness and finally reaching the "Zingsthof," and once we had steaming fried potatoes on the table before us, once we had had our first communal devotion with communal reading of the Psalms, readings from the Old and the New Testaments, and had sung some hymns, we knew we would be well taken care of in Zingst. Admittedly, Pastor Bonhoeffer—as he recently divulged to us—was at first a bit uneasy at the sight of so disparate a group.

We worked out the curriculum together. We all agreed that we would not conduct the sermon exercises the way they are usually conducted at universities and the way that was already familiar to us, for example, from the inquisitions at the cathedral seminary.^[3] A sermon that has just been delivered should not be picked apart by one's peers.^[4] In our ongoing practical classes, we have three circles in which one candidate always works out an entire sermon while the others present a sermon draft. After the full sermon has been read aloud, we try to determine its structure and also articulate to the candidate whatever we have to say about it. Then we work up a draft or concur to whatever degree possible with one of the drafts that has been presented. At the end, Director Bonhoeffer delivers his own extensive sermon draft. Up to now we have dealt with texts that

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[1.] NL, D 22; typewritten hectograph, photocopy.

[2.] In the Council of Brethren of the Old Prussian Union, Wilhelm Niesel was responsible for theological education; cf. *DB-ER*, 422–23.

[3.] The seminary associated with the Berlin Protestant cathedral (Berliner Dom) was the most prominent preachers' seminary in the Old Prussian Union church.

[4.] [The word used here is *Korona*, which is old German slang for peer group.—HGB]

focus on the cross: Rom. 3:25; I Cor. 1:18; Gal. 3:10–13; Isa. 53:2; 2 Cor. 5:19–21; Heb. 4:15–16. After the vacation, we will examine texts from I Cor. 15, texts on the resurrection, and will try to determine what kind of proclamation the church should present on days such as Memorial Day, Labor Day [May 1], and Thanksgiving. Various candidates have already preached in the Zingst parish and at the Stettin synod. After summer vacation, we will be responsible for conducting worship in Finkenwalde each Sunday for the Confessing congregation in the seminary. The actual church space—a former gymnasium—has been renovated by the sculptor Wilhelm Groß^[5] with the help of several candidates.

Apart from the sermon exercises, each week we also have a communal class in homiletics in which Pastor Bonhoeffer presents the doctrine of preaching in outline form and then discusses it with us.

We also have smaller groups for practical catechetical exercises in which one candidate works out a catechesis, the others outlines; everything is then brought together, and we work out something together. At the end, Pastor Bonhoeffer or Inspector Pastor Rott then works out a complete outline. Themes to date have included Christ the Lord, righteousness, merit, faith, conscience, reconciliation, redemption, grace, love. These practical exercises are complemented by a class in catechetical principles. The lack of a pedagogical class has not been a problem because all the candidates have had the opportunity to give instruction as vicars. The primary subject alongside homiletics, then, is catechesis.

At the beginning of the semester, we addressed the question of the pastoral office [Amt], ordinances [Ordnung], and government in the church. We also drew from the confessional writings in discussing the doctrine of the church, along with the concomitant issue of the *Volkskirche*,^[6] the question of the power of the keys, excommunication, and church discipline. Discussions were continued and enhanced during discussion evenings.^[7] Introductory reports familiarized us with the material.

In our Old Testament studies, we are examining various individual concepts such as sin and faithfulness and are trying to come to an understanding of what the law meant for the prophets. In two half-hour sessions, we have cursory Old Testament readings in smaller groups.

[5.] Wilhelm Groß from Oranienburg, a member of the Berlin-Brandenburg Council of Brethren.

[6.] [The institutional form of the German Protestant church; literally, “church of the people” (see *DBWE* 16:526, ed. note 104).—VB]

[7.] Concerning the significance of these discussion evenings, see *DB-ER*, 430–33.

The course that has probably made the strongest impression on us is: Discipleship in the New Testament. Dr. Bonhoeffer presents an exegesis of the call stories, of Jesus's statements concerning discipleship, and currently also of the Sermon on the Mount. Probably no one is unaffected by the seriousness with which these New Testament findings have drawn our attention to the phenomenon of discipleship. Discipleship is the unconditional, sole commitment to Jesus Christ and thus to the cross, a commitment whose content cannot wholly be articulated. The place to which the church is called is the cross, and the only form in which the church can exist is discipleship. A church in a worldly form of existence, of *iustitia civilis*,^[8] is no longer the church of Jesus Christ. The multitude assembled around the word and sacrament is visible; the city on Golgotha cannot be hid.^[9] We are reading the book of Revelation under the guidance of Pastor Rott.

Voluntary working groups discuss apologetic and liturgical problems. Each day we also come together for singing, and under the guidance of Brother Kanitz we have already learned a great many chorales that we previously did not know. During this hour before our meal, we also practice polyphonic pieces for worship services and just for our own enjoyment.

Because we generally spend our free time together, we got to know one another very well from the beginning. The primitive circumstances and the proximity of the sea in Zingst allowed us to dispense with all superfluous rigidity; after all, at the beach and in youth hostels one is inwardly more loose and easy in dealing with one another than is the case in normal life. In Finkenwalde many of the brothers have continued to maintain their communal sleeping quarters. The others live and work in pairs in a single room. Pomeranian Confessing Church communities made it possible for us to furnish the building in Finkenwalde—a former private school.

After spending several busy weeks cleaning and setting things up, we were finally able to accommodate a larger number of guests for the first time on July 29. The Emergency League pastors from the Stettin region held their monthly meeting here. The exegesis and sermon drafts on Matthew 9:35–38 and Luke 16:1–12 showed us that one must engage in serious and thorough work of this sort even when practicing ministry; this experience put these texts into the

[8.] "Civil justice."

[9.] See Matt. 5:14.

[10.] [The German Evangelical Church was a *Volkskirche*, organized as a "peoples' church," supported by its members through their church taxes, which were paid to the

proper light. The lively exchanges were also quite profitable. We are glad that these brothers will be returning on September 9.

72 From July 30 to August 2, we had the first student retreat. Nine brothers from the region right around Stettin came. The presentation “Studies and the Church” immediately confronted the group with the questions that are currently of such concern to us. We also discussed the question of the *Volkskirche* and the free church.^[10] Pastor Bonhoeffer led the Bible study “Christ in the Psalms.”^[11] The concluding presentation was “The Life of the Church-Community in the World.”

Now we are dispersed to every corner of Germany.^[12] We will have to see whether each of us will be able to preserve “in an honest and good heart” the loving brotherhood bequeathed to us.^[13] Each morning and evening remind us of our hours of shared devotion. By avoiding exegesis in our evening devotional each day, Pastor Bonhoeffer made the biblical word even more precious to us in its objectivity. Probably not a single one of us would want to do without these devotionals in precisely the form in which we became acquainted with them at the seminary.

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts . . .”^[14]

signed by Heinz Dufft Fritz Onnasch Helmut Voelz Robert Zenke

state. The “free churches” in Germany were the smaller Protestant denominations—Methodists, Baptists, etc.—and were organized similarly to denominations in the United States. They were supported financially by the voluntary contributions of their members and to varying degrees by the main denominational office of their churches.—VB]

[11.] See 2/5.

[12.] Summer vacation lasted for the entire month of August. Lectures began again on September 3, 1935, after the vacation.

[13.] Luke 8:15.

[14.] Col. 3:16.

20. To Baron Bruno Schröder^[1]

London, E[ngland] 1
August 12, 1935

Dear Baron Schröder:

The time has now come for me to say farewell to London. In Germany I have been entrusted with one of the most wonderful and indeed responsible tasks in the Confessing Church, namely, with training the next theological generation in a preachers' seminary. For all my love for my two London congregations, I cannot decline such a commission.

The past two Sundays, I took leave of my congregations,^[2] and I would now like to send along a farewell greeting to you as well.

During my service here I, as well as my congregation and everyone entrusted to our care, have much to thank you for.

During my absence, you have been extraordinarily gracious in regularly helping several needy Germans through Pastor Boeckheler.^[3] This has been a very great comfort to me. Now—as I have learned—the deadline you set for this aid and support ran out last week, and those concerned have not yet found a way to earn their own support. Hence their needs are again the same or have actually become even more unbearable through the passage of time. I asked my own congregations once more yesterday and have succeeded in securing enough help for at least the next few weeks. Those in need did not even have enough money left with which to buy hot meals. Nor can they ever return to Germany. The responsibility now falls to us Christians; we cannot knowingly let people go hungry.

Hence I would like to entreat you to intervene once again, my esteemed Baron.^[4] I am convinced that we are faced here with an ultimate responsibility.

May God protect you and give you the strength you need for your work. In respect and gratitude

Yours sincerely,

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

[1.] NL, Anhang A 35,1 (17); photocopy of the original, which is in the Schroder Bank [the official British spelling of “Schroder” omits the umlaut—VB] archives, London; typewritten with handwritten signature; letterhead: “German Evangelical St. Paul’s Church (Founded 1697 in the Savoy Palace).” Apparently the English typewriter Bonhoeffer used did not have any keys for German umlauts.

[2.] In worship services that Bonhoeffer held on August 4 and 11, 1935, in the congregations of Sydenham and St. Paul’s.

[3.] Usually Jewish émigrés, to whom the following request also refers.

[4.] See 1/27 (Schröder’s reply of September 24, 1935).

1/20a. To Ernst Cromwell^[1]

London, August 13, 1935
 London & North Eastern Railway
 Continental Services via Harwich
 RMS “Prague”^[2]

Dear Ernst,

It was a terrible crossing last night the worst we could possibly have,” my steward^[3] said. Nevertheless, the unheard-of did happen. The decision I made yesterday not to get seasick was a success, with the help of a whiskey and of course fatigue, and despite the most awful noise from the neighboring cabins. I got up this morning very proud, and seem to have earned the respect of my steward!—Now the train is about to leave!

All my best wishes to you, and to everyone
 Yours as ever, Dietrich

[1.] Literary estate of Ernest Cromwell; letter in possession of Mrs. Toni Burrowes-Cromwell; handwritten, on both sides of small notepaper of the London & North Eastern Railway, with a picture of the “Prague” above the printed letterhead. Above this line the name “Ernst Cromwell” has been added with a stamp.

[2.] The *Prague*, built in 1930, was one of many ships owned by the railway company and served the Harwich–Hook of Holland route. Below this line is a stamped date, “10. Aug. 1935,” added presumably by Ernst Cromwell. This date does not comport with the information in *DBW*14:1044, which indicates that Bonhoeffer’s trip to London was from August 3 to August 12, and that he preached his farewell sermons on two Sundays, at St. Paul’s on August 4 and at Sydenham on August 11. On Monday, August 12, Bonhoeffer wrote a farewell letter to Baron Schroder (*DBWE* 14, 1/20), and this suggests that he took the train from London later that day and the overnight ship from Harwich that night, writing his note on the ship’s stationery the following morning, Tuesday, August 13, before boarding the train. (Bethge’s comment about a “farewell sermon on 10 March 1935” (*DB-ER*, 416) refers to the beginning of Bonhoeffer’s six-month leave of absence from the London congregations.)

[3.] In the original Bonhoeffer writes “Stewart,” apparently a Germanization of “steward,” the English name for a cabin attendant on a ship.

21. Entry in the Vibrans Family Guestbook^[1]

From August 24 to 26^[2] on our return trip to Finkenwalde with my colleagues Vibrans, Bethge, Beckmann^[3]

Ecclesiasticus 9:15^[4]

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

22. From Hans Thimme^[1]

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Bad Oeynhausen, August 30, 1935

Dear Brother Bonhoeffer,

During the past few days during the German Evangelical Week in Hannover,^[2] I have spoken with quite a few representatives and leaders of the brotherhoods about the shape our work must take from now on.^[3] We all concluded that it would be advisable for the heads of the various regional and provincial brotherhoods to come together for several days of ongoing discussions to clarify both fundamental and practical issues. We came upon the idea of possibly having this conference in Finkenwalde and of incorporating it into the normal routine there. I think it represents a good opportunity to take steps relating to the discussion that the two of us had in Hauteroda.^[4] What do you think? I am especially interested in hearing whether you are willing in principle to participate in and

[1.] Guestbook in Annarode, in the possession of the Vibrans family (Andersen). In January 1936, Bonhoeffer and Eberhard Bethge wrote an entry in the guestbook: "3-4 January while traveling by auto. Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Eberhard."

[2.] In 1935, following the retreat for the brotherhood of assistant pastors and vicars of the Provincial Saxon Confessing Church in Hauteroda.

[3.] [Gottfried Beckmann.—VB]

[4.] Ecclesiasticus (Sirach) 9:15 (NRSV 9:10): "A new friend is like new wine; when it has aged, you can drink it with pleasure."

[1.] LKA EKvW, Bestand 5,1 (431/II); typewritten copy; letterhead: "Reich Brotherhood of Young Theologians." Cf. NL, A 45 (6). Previously published in GS 6:361.

[2.] From August 26 to August 30, 1935. This and the following two German Evangelical Weeks in 1936 and 1937 were so successful that the state police ended up prohibiting the series. [The Evangelical Weeks were a predecessor and model for the German *Kirchentag*. For a history of the Evangelical Weeks, see Littell, *German Phoenix*.—HGB]

[3.] Concerning the Reich Brotherhood of Young Confessing Church Theologians, see *DB-ER*, 434 and 461.

[4.] On August 23, 1935, Bonhoeffer had delivered an address there titled "Contemporizing New Testament Texts" (2/7). Concerning the meeting in Hauteroda, see *DB-ER*, 440.

contribute to the meeting of this group of brotherhood heads. Whether we can then convene in Finkenwalde, at the earliest in the second half of September (!), is another question entirely. One could doubtless find a different, perhaps more centrally located site, but all things being equal we would, of course, all be extremely pleased if we might be able to discuss brotherhood in a place where such brotherhood is genuinely lived.

Looking forward to your response, I remain yours in brotherhood,
Thimme

75 **23. To Hans Thimme^[1]**

Finkenwalde, September 3, 1935

Dear Brother Thimme,

Many thanks for your letter. I would be glad to participate in the anticipated meeting, though I can genuinely commit only if you really do have the meeting here. I think it would be enormously profitable for all participants if we could gather together here. Let me encourage you to work toward that end. Although there might indeed be more centrally located sites, no site would be more pleased to host your meeting than would we. It would mean a great deal to us to have you here, and we extend our most cordial invitation to you to do so. Please do not let an extra hour of train time dissuade you, and instead do us this fine service. Our house is open to you at any time in September. So, please do come!

With all good wishes and in fellowship,
Yours,
Bonhoeffer

The area surrounding the seminary includes a beautiful leafy forest as well as a lake and a boat!^[2]

[1.] LKA EkvW, Bestand 5,1 (431/II); typewritten copy. Cf. NL, A 45 (7). Previously published in GS 6:362.

[2.] Bonhoeffer added this sentence to the original letter by hand. For Thimme's response (on September 19, 1935), see 1/26.

24. To the Council of the Evangelical Church of the Old Prussian Union^[1]

Finkenwalde/Stettin, September 6, 1935

Re: Establishment of a House of Brethren in the Finkenwalde Preacher's Seminary

- I. Basic Considerations
- II. Practical Tasks
- III. Concrete Requests

I. For several years now I, together with several younger brothers whose names appear below, have considered establishing a Protestant House of Brethren in which we wish as pastors to lead a communal Christian life.^[2]

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The following considerations and experiences have prompted this decision:

1. Pastors, especially young pastors, suffer from isolation. The burden of proclamation is especially heavy today for individual pastors, who are ministers of the church, not prophets. Both in terms of the content and the actual way they preach, they need the help and fellowship of their brothers. As a result, the years of Church Struggle have witnessed the emergence of pastoral brotherhoods in every place where the responsibility for the ministry has been taken seriously. These initiatives for more brotherhoods are now pressing for more clearly defined forms. Newly emerging tasks include not only theological working groups and occasional worship communities but also a more fixed, ordered, and regulated life in community. A proclamation that derives from a community that is lived and experienced in a more practical fashion will, in its own turn, be more objective and imperturbable and will be less likely to run aground.

2. The question of Christian life has arisen anew among young theologians. One can no longer credibly respond to this question with slogans such as “Enthusiasm”^[3] or “un-Lutheran behavior”; such responses are merely viewed as excuses.^[4] The response to the question, however, can no longer be abstract and instead can be articulated only by actually living and reflecting together on the commandments in a concrete, objective fashion.

[1.] NL, A 47,1 (1); typewritten carbon copy; previously published in GS 2:448–52.

[2.] Concerning the earlier history of this plan, see *DB-ER*, 460–62.

[3.] [*Schwarmgeisterei*, a reference to the radical Reformation.—VB]

[4.] [Bonhoeffer's Finkenwalde experiment was widely viewed as “un-Lutheran” and too Catholic.—HGB]

77 The vague sense that something is not quite right in the life of the ministry can be articulated more clearly only through the shared practical attempt to practice obedience toward the commandments. The fact that the credibility of our own proclamation has suffered through our own lives and through a lack of clarity concerning what Christian life really is obligates pastors to reflect anew and to attempt a new practical application.

3. A group of completely free, committed pastors is needed in order to preach the word of God for the sake of decision and discernment of the Spirit in the present and future struggles of the church, a group prepared for immediate service and proclamation whenever new emergency situations might arise. They must be prepared to make themselves available wherever their services are needed, under any circumstances, and without consideration of any financial or other privileges otherwise associated with the ministry. By being able to come from and return to a brotherhood, they will always have the home and the fellowship [Gemeinschaft] that they need for their ministry. The goal is not monastic isolation but rather the most intensive concentration for ministry to the world.^[5]

4. The pastor isolated in his office regularly needs a spiritual refuge in which he might renew his strength for his pastoral office through a strict Christian life in prayer, meditation, scriptural reflection, and discussions with his brothers. Such places of refuge must be created, whereby at the same time the question of finding a substitute can easily be addressed by the brotherhood itself. Laypersons too must have access to such places of refuge.^[6]

5. In the recognition that every young pastor today is needed for congregational ministry, and despite the difficulty of the decision to occasionally leave this ministry, it is our opinion in good conscience that the ministry of some young pastors is indispensable for this work, which extends beyond

[5.] This notion of “ministry to the world” (*Dienst nach außen*) was energetically implemented from the very outset. It included caring for the Confessing Church community in Finkenwalde, for whose worship services a devotional hall was set up in the seminary building itself, as well as regular worship services and Bible studies in the entire municipal area of Stettin and, beginning in the summer of 1936, also regular engagement in evangelization in Pomerania and beyond; see *DB-ER*, 542–45. [See 1/19 for a description of these responsibilities.—HGB]

[6.] “Supported by the House of Brethren, Bonhoeffer identified the seminary with the cause of persecuted colleagues” (*DB-ER*, 539), inviting pastor Willy Süßbach, a pastor of Jewish descent who had been beaten by the SA, to the seminary for a lengthy period of recovery; similarly also the pastors Johannes Pecina and Willi Brandenburg after their lengthy imprisonment; see *DB-ER*, 539–40.

individual parishes. In every individual case, such decisions must be made in concurrence with the provincial Councils of Brethren.

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These considerations generated the plan and idea of an Evangelical House of Brethren in the following form:

The participants in the House of Brethren will live together and organize their days strictly according to worship. Rather than ritual, it will be rather the word of the Bible itself and prayer that will guide them through the day. They will be bound through brotherly admonition and discipline and through voluntary personal confession. Shared theological and ecclesiastical reflection on the proclamation and on the word of the Bible will make them sober and objective. In renouncing everything except the simplest necessities of life, they will commit to living together. The director of the House of Brethren will assign individual tasks. Here the guiding model is that of a deaconesses' mother house.^[7] The brothers who live in and are sustained by this fixed life community commit to serve the church by following every call to them. The brothers will commit to a longer period of work in the House of Brethren but are free to leave at any time.^[8] The brotherhood decides who should be admitted to the House of Brethren. The numbers should not be too large.

II. The practical work of the brothers would be approximately as follows:

The Finkenwalde preachers' seminary needs a core of brothers that preserves the inner continuity of the sense of Christian brotherhood we have found here. Given the quick turnover, it is impossible for the director alone to create and maintain this sense of fellowship. The newly found sense of Christian brotherhood can be carried forward only by the brotherhood itself. Alongside the attention given to newly arrived candidates, the sense of fellowship must also be maintained with those who leave the seminary, through regular circular letters, reports, sermon meditations, and retreats.^[9] The seminary director, rather than being overburdened by the House of Brethren, will instead have his burden lightened.

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[7.] [The German Evangelical Church offered orders for women who wished to serve in various social, educational, and charitable ministries, somewhat similar to the Catholic religious orders.—VB]

[8.] Albrecht Schönherr, Joachim Kanitz, and Winfried Maechler, for example, left the House of Brethren soon after the end of their session to marry, although they still maintained their close ties with the House of Brethren.

[9.] Each new session experienced the significance of this "inner continuity" from the very first day, not least because as a rule the beginning of each new session generally coincided with the retreat for a previous session. These retreats acquired considerable significance through Bonhoeffer's own presentations, through shared examination of

Moreover the preachers' seminary itself will also gradually and quite naturally acquire a central position for the provincial brotherhoods of pastors, candidates, and students in Pomerania. Our service to the clergy of the Pomeranian church has already begun in the form of retreats and will be energetically continued. One important focus is our work with students at Greifswald, which has already commenced in the form of a mission week that our seminary conducted there in June and in the form of a short retreat here at the beginning of August.^[10] By mutual agreement with the professors (who as teachers of the church are naturally those primarily responsible for this work) and as an extension of their work, House of Brethren members should work regularly with the young theological students in Greifswald to hinder any lack of clarity about church decisions and prevent them from returning to the consistory.^[11] House of Brethren members are particularly well suited for this since they are closer in age to the students and have greater experience. And finally our members should also try to lend support to the promising beginnings of a brotherhood of theological students in Greifswald. We have already made contact with the

texts, and through the conversations with one another. Bonhoeffer also maintained contact with alumni through generous invitations and by accepting requests for visits whenever such were made. The Finkenwalde "circular letters" regularly sent out by the House of Brethren, often with accompanying letters from Bonhoeffer to former members, provided a spiritual tie from the very outset for the ca. two hundred pastors dispersed throughout half of Germany. Recipients were able to participate in the seminary's continued work and drew strength and comfort at their own outside posts through information about the path that the church was taking, about synodal decisions, about the fate and well-being of individuals, and through a rich offering of intellectual and spiritual nourishment (including meditation texts from which many pastors regularly drew strength; sermons and sermon drafts; exchanges of sermons; transcriptions of larger lecture sections from the current semester).

[10.] This work with the Greifswald students included first of all the establishment of a group, consisting not only of theologians, which understood itself as part of the Confessing Church. Then there were also retreats, genuine theological course offerings with professors of the Confessing Church (Bonhoeffer himself ultimately drove to Greifswald every week to give lectures), and finally the establishment of a small preparatory seminary (*Konvikt*) for Confessing Church students led by Albrecht Schönherr; see *DB-ER*, 529–31.

[11.] [The German Christians had considerable influence in the theological faculty at the university in Greifswald; hence Bonhoeffer's commitment to them. The reference to preventing people from "returning to the consistory" refers to the "legalization" that the official church had begun to offer Confessing Church theological students and pastors. Legalization offered them greater job security but required that they retake their theological and ordination exams under the German Christian-directed commissions of the official church. See in this volume documents 1/41, 1/119, but see especially *DBWE* 15 for the documentation of the extensive debate that took place after 1937.—VB]

brotherhood of candidates and are planning a retreat with them for the beginning of October.^[12]

Moreover, the members of the House of Brethren will also be engaged for longer or shorter periods in church regions that are in particular crisis and will also stand in for younger colleagues in their congregations when these brothers, feeling the need for theological community or wanting to prepare for examinations, wish to enter our community for a time.

We are already negotiating with the Pomeranian Council of Brethren and Superintendent Wick of Podjuchy concerning the ministry to the Confessing Church communities in Finkenwalde and Podjuchy.^[13]

A thorough plan has already been worked out concerning the theological work in which the brothers will be engaged.^[14]

III. We hereby request from the Council of the Evangelical Church of the Old Prussian Union a fundamental recognition of our plan and permission to put the requisite rooms in the seminary, of which there are several, at the disposal of approximately six brothers free of charge. In this regard I am restricting myself to one and a half rooms. Some modest funds are already available from private sources for supporting the brothers,^[15] and we are hoping that the Pomeranian Council of Brethren in Podjuchy and Finkenwalde will be able to provide a firm position for one of the brothers, and so on.

(The names of the brothers who wish to be accepted in the House of Brethren follow.)^[16]

[12.] The reference is to the conference of the Pomeranian Brotherhood of Assistant Pastors and Vicars led by Günter Besch and Gerhard Krause on October 811, 1935, at which Bonhoeffer conducted his Bible study "King David" (3/7).

[13.] The Council of Brethren assigned Winfried Maechler to the Confessing Church community at Finkenwalde and Fritz Onnasch to the Confessing Church superintendent of Podjuchy, both as "assistant pastors."

[14.] Eberhard Bethge, Joachim Kanitz, and Albrecht Schönherr each accepted responsibility to offer refresher courses alongside other duties within the seminary.

[15.] See *DB-ER*, 468: "Room and board were covered by pooling the very unequal stipends of the ministers and assistant preachers, who were paid (or not, as the case might be) by their respective Councils of Brethren. The highest contribution came out of Bonhoeffer's own pocket."

[16.] The typewriter carbon copy does not contain any names at the end. The first six members of the House of Brethren were Eberhard Bethge, Joachim Kanitz, Horst Lekszas, Winfried Maechler, Fritz Onnasch, and Albrecht Schönherr. Some conflicts arose due to the special responsibilities within the House of Brethren itself and the willingness to be available for service in emergency situations elsewhere as well; see 1/88 (letter to Staemmler of June 27, 1936).

81 **25. To George Bell**^[1]

Finkenwalde, September 8, 1935

My dear Lord Bishop,

This is to introduce my colleague and friend Pastor Ernst *Gordon*, who would very much like to see you and to have your advice. He is one of the few non-aryan pastors and has suffered much for this reason.^[2] He will be coming to London in order to inquire about possibilities of a position there. He has been working in the Confessional Church from the very beginning of the struggle and was ordained only last year.^[3] Being himself [a] very active and able young man he feels his situation all the more intolerable.

I feel that he should come in contact with the ecumenic movement and with its leaders. Could you think of any possibility for him in the British Home mission?

In any case I should be very thankful to you if you would grant him a conversation and give him your kind advice and help.^[4]

[1.] In the possession of Ernst Gordon; typewritten with handwritten signature. This letter, which Bonhoeffer dictated (apparently with the German version of the date), was typed by Ernst Gordon. The letter is in Bonhoeffer's English.

[2.] As soon as the Nazi Party caught sight of Gordon, the police immediately expelled him from the parishes where he was working; he was imprisoned several times for brief periods.

[3.] After his second theological examination in July 1934, Gordon was denied ordination because of his "non-Aryan" ancestry. It was only after the establishment of the Confessing Church, following the resolutions of the Dahlem Confessing Synod of October 20, 1934, that the Council of Brethren of the provincial Confessing Synod for Brandenburg ordained him on December 9, 1934 (in the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church in Berlin, by Gerhard Jacobi with the assistance of Martin Albertz), doubtless one of the first of the "illegals" ordained in the Confessing Church.

[4.] Around September 8, 1935 (Bonhoeffer's dating of this letter), Gordon spent three days as a guest in Finkenwalde at Bonhoeffer's invitation; his entry into the guest-book reads "Real brotherhood! Thank you!" Upon returning to Berlin, he was surprised by the opportunity to work as an assistant pastor in the congregation in Schönwalde/Spreewald, which is why he never sent Bonhoeffer's letter to Bishop Bell (he also kept it later). He continued to work in Schönwalde after November 1935 until the National Socialists expelled him from there in March 1937. Because the risks to him in Berlin were increasing, he fled to Switzerland in November 1937, where he was able to function for only a brief, temporary period, e.g., as a substitute for sick pastors; the Swiss authorities renewed his residence permit for only three months at a time. On December 27, 1938, he received an invitation initiated by Bishop Bell to come to England, where he fled on January 13, 1939. In 1940 he became a priest in the Anglican Church.

I am sorry I could not see you in Germany. I hope you have had a restful and pleasant time.^[5] 82

With all good wishes I am yours ever
Dietrich Bonhoeffer

26. From Hans Thimme^[1]

Bad Oeynhausen, September 19, 1935

Dear Brother Bonhoeffer,

Let me thank you on behalf of the Reich Brotherhood for your cordial invitation of September 3 to Finkenwalde. I have in the meantime contacted the representatives of various brotherhoods and found that all are utterly and completely in agreement with our plan. The only problem is that various considerations make it impossible for us to meet during September. We would have to wait till the end of October or even the beginning of November, so let me inquire with you now whether we might arrive there at that time. The question of financing has also created problems. Although I will try to secure whatever funds I can from the Provisional Church Administration, perhaps from the surplus left over from the German Evangelical Week, I do not know whether and to what extent I might count on support from those quarters. Hence it would be marvelous if any sources of funding might emerge from your own side. In any event, I concur with you that we should spare no efforts in arranging a meeting of the heads of the various brotherhoods, and to do so if at all possible in Finkenwalde itself. 83

With cordial greetings to the brothers there as well,

Yours,
Thimme

[5.] Bonhoeffer knew that Bell and his wife were spending two weeks' vacation in Austria beginning on August 22, 1935, and, if possible, then wanted to spend some time in Germany as well (according to a letter Bell wrote to Koch on August 14, 1935, published in *Mündige Welt* 5:246). George Bell came to Germany later in September 1935 and met with Koch, Asmussen, and Lilje (on September 12; see Boyens, *Kirchenkampf und Ökumene, 1933–39*, 134 and 342–43). There he also had conversations with politicians such as the Führer's representative Rudolf Hess (on September 20) and Reich Minister of Church Affairs Hanns Kerrl (on September 28), where he emphasized the relationship between the ecumenical movement and the Confessing Church. Cf. *DB-ER*, 475–76.

[1.] LKA EKvW, Bielefeld, Bestand 5,1 (431/II); typewritten copy. Previously published in GS 6:362–63.

27. From Baron Bruno Schröder^[1]

London, September 24, 1935

Dear Professor Bonhoeffer:

After a longer absence I returned to find your letter of August 12. Let me thank you for your communication and extend to you my warmest congratulations regarding your new sphere of activity; may your present task bring you a wealth of satisfaction!

Pastor Böckheler sought me out yesterday with regard to the three Germans in need who are now seeking their fortune here. Although I have once again made a contribution covering one month, after that one of the following corporate entities:

Society of Friends of Foreigners in Distress
King Edward VII British-German Foundation
German Benevolent Society^[2]

will need to take care of further support. I have informed Pastor Böckheler accordingly and do not doubt that he will succeed in securing the requested support for those in need from one or the other of these groups.

With cordial greetings and best wishes for your welfare,

Yours respectfully,

BS

[1.] NL, Anhang A 35,2 (18); photocopy of the typewritten carbon copy with handwritten initials; original located in the archive of the Schröder Bank in London.

[2.] [These organizations are listed in English in the original letter.—HGB]

28. To Wolfgang Staemmler^[1]

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Finkenwalde, October 15, 1935

Dear Brother Staemmler,

Enclosed I am sending to you the reports regarding the brothers from Saxony.^[2] Please send us more such students. They were truly useful individuals.^[3]

With cordial greetings,

Yours,

Bonhoeffer

29. To Hans Thimme^[1]

Finkenwalde/Stettin, October 16, 1935

Dear Brother Thimme,

When will you actually be coming to visit us as announced? The vacation is just now starting.^[2] Would it be possible toward the end of November or in December? The beginning of November is less favorable because we will just be getting our new arrivals. In any event, however, I am very much looking forward to your coming.

With cordial greetings also from the brothers here,

Yours,

Bonhoeffer

[1.] Archiv der Provinz-Sächsischen Kirche [Archives of the Provincial Saxon Church], files of the Council of Brethren regarding "Office of Education and Collective Pastorates"; typewritten carbon copy with handwritten signature. Cf. NL, A 47,6 (1).

[2.] The minutes of the meeting of directors of the educational offices and preachers' seminaries of the Evangelical Church of the Old Prussian Union on April 27, 1936, published in *Mündige Welt* 5:200, contains the following under point 4, "Examinations": "Be it resolved that if at all possible the directors of the preachers' seminaries are to send the grades to the Office of Education eight days before the end of the semester, so that the various offices can consider these results in assigning vicars to positions. These grades are to be viewed as expert opinions rather than graded results." The resolution apparently can be traced back to Bonhoeffer, who had used this method earlier. Cf. as examples 1/66 and 1/67 (expert opinions for Alexander von der Marwitz and Christoph Harhausen, dated March 15 and 20, 1936).

[3.] Along with Eberhard Bethge and Gerhard Vibrans, this group also included Wolfgang Dell and Gottfried Beckmann.

[1.] LKA EKvW, Bielefeld, Bestand 5,1 (431/II); typewritten copy. Cf. NL, A 45 (9). Previously published in GS 6:363.

[2.] The first session participants left Finkenwalde on October 17, 1935.

85 **30. To Susanne Dre** ^[1]

Dear Susi!

I was just in Berlin briefly and am now sitting in the train on my way to Friedrichsbrunn. Just before I left, I received your postcard and invitation to the baptism,^[2] for which I would like to thank you both. I have two questions: Will this date remain the same even though Walter has to go to the Grenzmark,^[3] where, by the way, I almost would have met him, though I declined when I heard that the retreat was in such good hands. I do need the vacation for a few days of quiet work and preparation.^[4] It would have been really nice if we had met there. But now, if I understand correctly, Walter will not be coming back till Saturday.

Second, could you not delay the baptism for eight days? I know this is a shameful request, but since Christel^[5] told me today that she, too, had expressed it, I would like to add my voice. At the end of the week, I am expecting some friends from Saxony to visit me in Friedrichsbrunn^[6] and am loathe to cancel their visit and can do so only with some difficulty. On the following Sunday,^[7] however, I would be in Berlin in any case. And I would be extremely sorry if I could not attend the baptism. I really do want to be there. So, please reconsider, also with regard to Christel's request. Would a weekday not perhaps do after all? Please write and let me know soon.

86 Pastor Rott is traveling with me to Friedrichsbrunn. He wrote Walter a few days ago. Could you ask him whether he can do anything in the matter^[8] and then also write and let me know?

[1.] NL, A 44,1 (1); typewritten with handwritten signature. Previously published in GS 6:364–65. Presumably written soon after the conclusion of the first session, hence after October 17, 1935; composed in the train to Friedrichsbrunn in the Harz Mountains (where the Bonhoeffer family had a summer home).

[2.] See 1/15 (letter to Susanne and Walter Dreß, July 27, 1935). The anticipated date of the baptism ceremony was Sunday, October 27, 1935.

[3.] Between the two world wars, the *Grenzmark* was part of the noncontiguous territory of the Prussian province of Posen-Grenzmark-West Prussia with the regional capital of Schneidemühl.

[4.] Bonhoeffer had to prepare his lectures for the second session, especially “The Visible Church in the New Testament” (2/8).

[5.] Christine von Dohnanyi.

[6.] Eberhard Bethge, Gerhard Vibrans, and Bernhard Riemer visited Bonhoeffer on October 26–27, 1935.

[7.] November 3, 1935. The following Monday was scheduled as the day of arrival for the second session.

[8.] Not identified.

Finally, Walter inquired whether I might review a book for his periodical.^[9] Although I would like to, I simply cannot get to it now. So I would like to ask him whether he might give a “promising young man” among us the opportunity to earn his scholarly wings, a young man who knows this very material quite well indeed. He is a vicar, and his name is Albrecht Schönherr.^[10] If the author of the book to be reviewed is an extremely venerable scholar, this would probably not work. But if that author is a younger scholar, perhaps it would be fine. I would be very happy for Schönherr. But, of course, it is not absolutely necessary. Otherwise Pastor Rott is also always glad to do reviews of this sort.

My view of the church situation is rather bleak. I fear that many will be leaving us now, and I believe the path to the free church is now simply prescribed and necessary. I also consider any concurrence with Kerrl’s suggestion to be impossible.^[11]

Best wishes to you all; I hope things can be arranged so that I can be with you at the baptism.

Warm greetings,
Yours,
Dietrich

31. From Hans Thimme^[1]

Spenge in Westphalia, October 21, 1935

Dear Brother Bonhoeffer,

Many thanks for your cordial admonitory letter of October 16. It’s good for me to be prodded sometimes. At the moment, however, I am so busy with my move to an independent pastorate and with the preparations for my imminent wedding that I have neglected my correspondence somewhat. I suspect it will be December before we can hold our conference, and I will send you precise information at the appropriate time. Such a conference remains as necessary now

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[9.] Since 1933, Walter Dreß had coedited the periodical *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte* (Periodical for church history).

[10.] The issue was that of personal confession. Albrecht Schönherr’s book, *Lutherische Privatbeichte*, was published in 1938.

[11.] Hanns Kerrl was trying to unite the “hostile church groups” through the church committees, under the directorship of the former general superintendent of Westphalia Wilhelm Zoellner; see *DB-ER* 493-96.

[1.] LKA EKvW, Bielefeld, Bestand 5,1 (431/II); typewritten copy. Cf. NL, A 45 (10). Previously published in GS 6:363–64.

as before so that the crumbling remnants of the various brotherhoods might be reconstituted on a new foundation. The sad spectacle that we now see is that even the brotherhoods of the younger generation are being drawn into the general process of disintegration of the Confessing Church with which they are, after all, connected for better or worse,^[2] and I confess that my own view of the future is quite bleak, nor do I expect too much to come of our conference in Finkenwalde. We must, however, make the attempt under all circumstances.^[3]

With collegial greetings,

Yours,

Thimme

32. From Julie Bonhoeffer^[1]

Leipzig, October 24, 1935

Dear Dietrich,

Although I have wanted to write you for some time now, I have just not had the necessary peace and quiet. I have already been here with Karl-Friedrich^[2] for four weeks; they have graciously taken me in at this time because there really is nothing for me to do in Berlin. Actually, I was planning to be back home yesterday, but Mama and Aunt Elisabeth^[3] wrote that it was still too early. So I am hoping the thirty-first will work out.

[2.] This process of “disintegration” varied widely in the various church provinces of the Old Prussian Union, depending on the steadfastness of the Council of Brethren involved. This was least evident in the Berlin-Brandenburg church; there very few members of the Brotherhood of Assistant Pastors and Vicars went over to the church committees.

[3.] The conference did not take place, though through no fault of Bonhoeffer’s. That it did not come about is certainly understandable since even the organizer himself did not expect much to come of it. Bonhoeffer himself considered such a meeting to be absolutely necessary, precisely in light of the precarious situation of the Confessing Church.

[1.] NL, C 2; handwritten; last extant letter of Bonhoeffer’s grandmother to him. Partially published in GS 6:300; cf. DB-ER, 490.

[2.] She was staying with the family of Bonhoeffer’s eldest brother, Karl-Friedrich Bonhoeffer; during these weeks, the family in Berlin was moving from the Wangenheimstraße to the Marienburger Allee.

[3.] Bonhoeffer’s mother, Paula, and her eldest sister, Elisabeth von Hase, viewed as the “domestic aunt” in the Bonhoeffer family.

I am enclosing a letter from Gertrud that really upset me—this fifty-four-year-old man is traveling around in the world looking for work so he can finish raising his gifted, well-behaved children.^[4] Through Gertrud's loving personality, it was one of those rare, beautiful families, and now it has been destroyed. "Tribulation cannot be greater than the helper."^[5] Our only consolation! These things are affecting everything, even down to the details of family life! Those living in Göttingen have it easier in this sense—Gerdt, twenty years younger, is able to find work that interests him^[6]—whereas everything has been undermined for Wedell.

What a wild idea, to study theology now!^[7] Where can that lead? With regard to the schools I thought of "Hahn," who was earlier in Salem and is now in Scotland.^[8] Can you advise or help us out here?^[9]

I want to let Papa^[10] read the letter from Gertrud, so I would appreciate it if you could send it back to me. Papa is under such stress that I am hesitant to burden him with even more. I hear you are coming to Friedrichsbrunn. Looking for some peace and quiet for your work?^[11] (Here where we are it is now)^[12] The children are romping about right next to me here, and yet I hope you can give some serious thought to these worrisome concerns and perhaps come up with an answer! But let me conclude now; warm greetings, and let me hear from you soon.

Your old Grandmother

[4.] Bonhoeffer's cousin Gertrud Wedell, née Bonhoeffer. She was married to Hans Wedell, a Düsseldorf attorney who lost his legal practice and had to emigrate due to the Aryan laws. [Regarding Bonhoeffer's contacts with the Wedells, see *DBWE* 13, 1/132, p. 188, and *DBWE* 15, 1/137, p. 237.—VB]

[5.] From the second stanza of the spiritual folksong (by Friedrich Räder), "Harre, meine Seele, harre des Herrn" (Wait, my soul, wait patiently for the Lord), in *Evangelisches Gesangbuch für Brandenburg und Pommern*, no. 559; the actual line reads "tribulation is after all not greater than the helper."

[6.] At this time, Gerhard Leibholz, who was married to Bonhoeffer's twin sister, was professor of international law; the couple lived in Göttingen with their two daughters.

[7.] In 1935 Wedell began studying Protestant theology in Wuppertal.

[8.] Kurt Hahn was director of the Salem boarding school near Überlingen on Lake Constance, until his dismissal from office because of his "non-Aryan" lineage.

[9.] Bonhoeffer put Wedell in contact with Bishop Bell; see *DB-ER*, 330.

[10.] Karl Bonhoeffer, Bonhoeffer's father.

[11.] See 1/30 (Bonhoeffer's letter to Susanne Dreß, October 1935), p. 000: "I do need the vacation [between the first and second sessions in Finkenwalde] for a few days of quiet work and preparation."

[12.] Sentence not completed.

1/32a. To Ernst Cromwell^[1]

Dear Ernst,

Many thanks for your letter. It's a pity you didn't send me your daily notes^[2] as you did last time. But do as you like about that. I'm always glad to hear from you.

¶I find it rather unnecessary for Mr. Goldschmidt^[3] to be pressing his cause on you, more or less. But I think you can stand up to him. I don't have much sympathy, either, for the public character of the group movement.^[4] You say that the apostle Paul preached in the street—only twice that I know of, otherwise always in synagogues. And when he did preach in the street, he never spoke about his own experiences, what he had learned, or even about his conversion, but rather quite objectively about the Old Testament and its fulfillment in Christ. The confession of one's sins, or of one's own sanctification and devoutness, truly belongs—say I, contrary to what the

[1.] Literary estate of Ernest Cromwell; letter in possession of Mrs. Toni Burrowes-Cromwell; handwritten on both sides of one sheet. Undated by Bonhoeffer, but written in another hand at the top of page one is "25/10/35"; this date may not be exact; see 1/20a, ed. note 1. Written from Finkenwalde in the interval between the first and second sessions.

[2.] The "daily notes" were notes on daily Bible readings that Bonhoeffer had encouraged Ernst to keep and which he had sent in a previous letter.

[3.] Mr. Goldschmidt was a (non-Jewish) German refugee who was at that time a teacher at the Beltane private school, which Ernst attended during his early years in the UK (1934–37). Note in the margin of Ernst Cromwell's translation of this letter: "Mr. G. was an active member of the so-called Oxford Groups not to be confused with the Oxford Movement of the time of Cardinal Newman." Nor is it connected in any way with the 1937 ecumenical Oxford Conference on "Church, Community and State." The Oxford Group, started by Frank Buchman in England in 1921, was an evangelizing moral and social movement that in 1939 reorganized in Washington, DC, under the name Moral Rearmament (after 1945, it was called the Caux movement). Staffed mainly by volunteers, and active in a number of countries, the movement was still active and influential into the twenty-first century, changing its name to Initiatives of Change in 2001. In the 1930s it targeted recruits in Oxford and Cambridge Universities and in English private schools; Ernst Cromwell was therefore a typical candidate. Bonhoeffer had good reason to be suspicious of Buchman because of his invitation to Joachim Hossenfelder, the cofounder and Reich leader of the German Christians, to attend a London meeting of the Oxford Group; see Bonhoeffer's report of the visit to Professor Siegmund-Schultze, *DBWE* 13, 1/8, p. 32. See also Buchman's praise of Adolf Hitler at the 1936 Olympics (*DB-ER*, 538), as well as Bonhoeffer's comments about the Oxford Group movement in his prison letter of June 8, 1944 (*DBWE* 8, 3/161, p. 430, ed. note 33).

[4.] In original "group movement" is written in English. See references in this volume and also in *DBWE* 4, 6, and 8.

group^[5] says—not in the marketplace but rather in the privacy of your own room.^[6] It's never good to talk too much about your own experiences; it's destructive of what you are doing. So I think your reaction was just the right one, and if you don't immediately know a right answer to something, don't give up right away. Arguments don't help very much, and especially not the ability to produce them quickly.

¶How are you doing otherwise? Write again and tell me more. You know, when I sometimes don't write for a long time, it only means that I'm extremely busy, and that I'm *twice* as happy when I get a letter from you!

¶Our work here continues, and until now without essential compromises. But of course there is a great deal of struggle. Recently I've been making myself pretty unpopular over the issue of the Jews [Judensache],^[7] but with success as well. That's the main thing. We are glad of every day that we can keep on working here as we are now. That could change to quite different circumstances. But even this doesn't frighten us unduly.

So, Godspeed—and greetings to your family.^[8]

Warmest good wishes to you

Yours as ever,

Dietrich

33. From the House of Brethren to Friends and Supporters of the Seminary^[1]

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Greetings from the Finkenwalde Preachers' Seminary

When we opened our new home here in Finkenwalde back in June, we did not know where to start. The great house was empty except for a few pieces of furniture, and even they were in bad shape, and the rooms were dilapidated. Hence we asked the congregations and pastors of the Confessing Church to

[5.] I. e., the Oxford Group.

[6.] See Matt. 6:6 in the Luther Bible, from which Bonhoeffer's original quotes "Kämmerlein" ("chamber" in the King James version). See *DBWE* 4:152–55, on "The Hiddenness of Prayer."

[7.] The reference is probably to Bonhoeffer's 1935 Bible study on King David (*DBWE* 14, 3/7), which became the subject of an attack in the Stuttgart Nazi newspaper *Durchbruch*. See *DB-ER*, 526, and *DBWE* 14, 3/7, ed. note 112.

[8.] Ernst lived with his parents Philipp (1893–1976) and Lotte Cromwell (1894–1983) and his two siblings, his sister, Luise (b. 1925), and his brother, Thomas (1930–95).

[1.] NL, A 47,1 (2); typewritten hectograph; probably composed by Albrecht Schönherr, likely toward the end of October 1935. Partially published in *GS* 2:453–55.

help us out. Our request was granted to a degree we did not anticipate. We are grateful for everything that has been donated in recent weeks and months, and also for the good wishes, in which we sensed the solidarity of faith and intercession. Our steward for thanks and our steward for books have already sent out over a hundred letters of thanks. We had hardly uttered our request before congregations and individual members of the Confessing Church began sending in what were sometimes quite generous monetary gifts. But such donations included many, many other things as well: all sorts of furniture, chairs, benches, tables, armchairs, sofas, shelves, beds and so on, curtains, tablecloths, handmade covers, coasters, napkin rings, things that we did not have and that have enhanced our house. Almost daily the postal carrier brought a package or the forwarding agent brought freight containing donated items. We received so many books that we now have a quite respectable library. It was a great joy to receive from one family the book that after the Bible is the most valuable book in our seminary: Johann Arndt's book about true Christianity.^[2] Our kitchen has also been richly supplied: we have received potatoes, bacon, ham, eggs, butter, cucumbers, sausage, and many other useful and nourishing things. For Thanksgiving we received a large basket with pears and from an unknown woman donor a ten-mark bill for our holiday roast. One Sunday a member of the Confessing Church community in Frankfurt/Oder visited us and brought a large traveling basket full of household utensils. We would also like to remember in gratitude the kindly seventy-eight-year-old lady who during the first two weeks kept house [for] us.

90 Now we want to give all those who cannot visit us a brief glimpse inside our house:

First we had to organize the three larger community rooms on the lower floor: the lecture room, the dining room, and the common room. The lecture room is quite simple. Except for the tables arranged in a U-shape—like the tables in the dining room, these were donated by the Confessing congregation in Stolp—and the chairs, the only other furnishing is a book cabinet: to the point and simple, as is appropriate for a lecture room. The dining room is significantly more becoming. Dark-stained chairs are arranged around dark tables—donated by the Confessing congregation in Köslin.^[3] The two great pictures of the apostles by Dürer hang on the wall. During the evening, light is provided by a beautiful, simple wooden candelabra. Curtains are already hanging in the windows—though most rooms do not have them yet. The dining room also func-

[2.] The *Vier [later Sechs] Bücher vom wahren Christentum* (1606/1610) by Johann Arndt (Arndt) are generally viewed as the first Lutheran book of edification for the people and as the one that exerted the greatest influence.

[3.] Fritz Onnasch's father was the superintendent there.

tions as the devotional room in which the devotionals that begin and conclude each day are held. The third among these larger rooms is furnished most beautifully of all. The showpieces of this room are two grand pianos, which belong to two of our brothers.^[4] Comfortable leather armchairs and chairs—also donations, of course—make this room the most popular room in the entire building to spend time in. It is here that we conduct our regular evening discussions and here that we also spend time together on Sunday with singing, readings, music, and games. At the farewell evening for the first seminary session on October 16, we were also able to initiate the curtains in this room.

All the other things we received as donations have been put in the individual rooms: chairs, desks, cabinets, and sometimes an armchair or sofa. Even though various items might still be lacking here or there, such as a wardrobe or a bookshelf or some other small piece, we must nonetheless gratefully acknowledge that we are lacking not a single piece of furniture that is absolutely necessary. We will now go about naming the individual rooms after the donors.

After offering thanks for all these things, we would now also like to relate something about the purpose of our life and work together here. The special character of a preachers' seminary of the Confessing Church derives from the distress into which the Church Struggle has led us. The Bible stands at the center of our work. It has once again become the point of departure and the center of our theological work and of all our Christian activity. Here we have learned once again how to read the Bible prayerfully. That is the purpose of our morning and evening devotionals in which we regularly hear the word of the Bible: After reading a psalm together, one brother reads a section from the Old Testament and one a section from the New Testament, interspersed by hymn verses and concluding with a free prayer^[5] and the communally spoken Lord's Prayer. In our daily period of meditation, we reflect on a shorter biblical text that has been chosen for the entire week. In the morning we hear lectures: homiletics, Bible study, biblical theology, dogmatics, pastoral care, and also several smaller lectures. Individual classes generally conclude with a discussion. The morning work concludes with a half hour of choral singing. In this context, we have gotten to know the hymnal and rehearsed a great many polyphonic hymns from *Ein neues Lied*, which we sing every Sunday in our worship services.^[6]

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If we are serious about living from the perspective of the word of the Bible, then here in our seminary we must also become a congregation, that is, a Christian

[4.] Bonhoeffer's own Bechstein grand piano was at the seminary's disposal for the entire period.

[5.] Bonhoeffer always spoke the free prayer himself; see in this regard *DB-ER*, 464.

[6.] [More detailed descriptions of daily life at Finkenwalde can be found in *Life Together* (DBWE 5).—HGB]

brotherhood. The common distress of the Confessing Church in which we all find ourselves, the shared building up of this seminary, and our close life together here have all contributed to this end. It is especially, however, our communally celebrated services of the Lord's Supper that have brought us together. Personal confession^[7] and the brotherly conversation are the necessary and most important preparations we undertake for the holy Lord's Supper.

92 But the service provided by our seminary consists not only in preparing us for our practical ministry but also in beginning that practical work itself, work that will be developed and expanded even more in the future. Every Sunday, the Finkenwalde Confessing congregation assembled in our small chapel. Earlier our chapel functioned as the gymnasium of the private school housed in our building. A sculptor, Mr. Groß from Oranienburg, helped us set up the chapel. Let us say only that we have a fine church now, quite simple and straightforward and yet beautiful. But even apart from the regular Sunday services, we managed to get into the congregations quite a bit. Quite often brothers have been solicited to substitute for pastors or to give lectures. At the beginning of November, one of our brothers will begin as an assistant pastor in a neighboring town.^[8] Above all, however, we would like to see our seminary become a gathering place for Pomeranian candidates and young pastors. Several retreats have already taken place here.^[9] Any colleagues from the surrounding congregations will be given the opportunity for shared, quiet reflection. If the seminary genuinely is to pursue all these goals, there must be a small core of brothers here that does not change every six months, a core that sustains the seminary's work in an ongoing fashion and also maintains contact between the members of the various seminary sessions. To that end, several brothers have decided to remain here for a longer period, and a House of Brethren will be attached to the seminary. Members of the House of Brethren will lead a common Christian life and will be available at any time for service to the church. Academic work will play a role, and a number of young pastors who can be put into service wherever required will be available. Today it is painfully urgent that pastors once again lead a pure Christian life, that they grow together into a true Christian community of brothers. Here we are taking the first necessary steps toward that goal.

[7.] The reference is to the personal confession, which Bonhoeffer managed to implement in Finkenwalde without any coercion; see *DB-ER*, 465–66.

[8.] Fritz Onnasch in Podjuchy.

[9.] Retreat for Greifswald theology students, July 30–August 8, 1935, and for the Brotherhood of Pomeranian Assistant Pastors and Vicars, October 8–11, 1935; see *DB-ER*, 433–34.

“From soon after the beginning of the world, the waves of the evil spirit [which is the ruler of the air, as St. Paul says]^[10] have buffeted this small ship called the Christian church, in order to oppress and sink that ship along with Christ and his followers. And yet the church has always been preserved against such storms amid such terror [and amid such weakness, as with the apostle here] by believing in and summoning this savior Christ, the Son of God. That is how one has always had to defend against these winds and waves, and in all this the power of the Son of God has for millennia [finally] demonstrated [proven, for five thousand years now,] that all such winds and waves have had to collapse and cease one after the other. . . . Hence despite all the powers of the evil, angry adversaries of the poor church, we should be comforted knowing that they will accomplish [nothing] with all their storming against this little ship. For he who [for over five thousand years] has [hitherto] stilled such winds and such waves for so many years is still able and still knows how to command and thwart them even today. Those adversaries have already fallen short and been unsuccessful with all their intentions [these five thousand years] until now, and they will continue to fall short and fail in the final hour that yet remains. This man who is lying and sleeping in the ship will be awakened by our prayer at his appropriate time and will show that he is still able to command both wind and sea, [and then the pope, the Turk, and the devil] and everything that has stormed with such hostility and terror against this small ship, will perish.” (Luther, Epiphany Sermon)^[11]

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To all of you who have so cheerfully sacrificed in helping us, we once more extend to you our sincerest thanks.

Greetings from
the brotherhood of the Finkenwalde Preachers' Seminary

[10.] [“The ruler of the power of the air” (Eph. 2:2 NRSV).—HGB]

[11.] Sermon on the “Euangelium auff den vierden Sontag nach Epiphanie. Matthew VIII (Gospel for the fourth Sunday after Epiphany, Matthew 8) [Matt. 8:23–27],” delivered in Eisleben on January 31, 1546. WA 51:154, 24–33 and 155:3–15, abbreviated—omissions have been added in brackets—and modernized. Ulrich Köpf located this passage in the Weimarana-Register in Tübingen. [This sermon was not included in *Luther's Works* nor has it been previously translated into English.—HGB]

34. To Wolfgang Staemmler^[1]

Finkenwalde/Stettin, November 1, 1935

Dear Brother Staemmler,

I am pleased to accept your invitation to deliver a lecture.^[2]—Might you see if it is possible for us to secure Wülffingerode for the seminary at no cost?^[3] We are looking for something like that. Neither, however, can we end up moving too often. We would have to give notice in Finkenwalde on December 1, so something would have to be found beforehand.

With collegial greetings,

Yours,

Bonhoeffer

94 **35. To Hans Herbert Kramm**^[1]

November 1, 1935

Dear Brother Kramm,

Would you be so kind as to carry out a personal request? In July I sent the enclosed invoice to the president by way of Hildebrandt–Müller Dahlem,^[2] with the request that the amount be sent to the address of my father, who advanced me the money.^[3] I have now learned that the matter has not been settled. Although the invoice did make it to the president, it did so during a meeting and hence may well have simply disappeared among other papers.

[1.] Archiv der Provinz-Sächsischen Kirche, Rep A spec B (157); carbon copy with handwritten signature. NL, A 45 (15); photocopy. Previously published in GS 6:373.

[2.] This lecture may be connected to the retreat in Halle in February 1936; see the letter to Walter Köller of February 17, 1936 (1/51). Regarding Bonhoeffer's relationship with Staemmler, see *DB-ER*, 440.

[3.] Wülffingerode was the estate of Count von Wintzingerode near Heiligenstadt. Finkenwalde did not seem financially tenable.

[1.] LKA EKvW, Bielefeld, Bestand 5,1 (431/II); typewritten carbon copy with handwritten date and signature; probably from Finkenwalde. Cf. NL, A 45 (11). Previously published in GS 6:366.

[2.] Pastor Fritz Müller from Berlin-Dahlem, called "Müller-Dahlem" to distinguish him from others with the name Müller.

[3.] Cf. 1/2, p. 000, "Expenses associated with ecumenical work," which Bonhoeffer had reported to President Koch on June 4, 1935. The July invoice possibly refers to Bonhoeffer's expenses for participation in the conference with Oldham and Schönfeld in Hannover on May 13–14, 1935, and in the meeting of the Ecumenical Advisory Committee of the Provisional Church Administration in Berlin on June 27, 1935.

Would you be so kind as to pass the invoice along to one of the president's colleagues or to the president himself with the necessary explanation? I do not want to send it there directly.

Would you like to take part in my ecumenical study group?^[4] Do you know anyone else who might be interested? What about engaging our own circle in this regard?^[5] My course does not start until the twelfth.^[6]

Many thanks and warm greetings,

Yours,

Dietrich Bonhoeffer

[4.] Bonhoeffer is apparently referring here to setting up a working group alongside the official Ecumenical Advisory Council of the Provisional Church Administration.

[5.] "Our own circle" presumably refers to the Ecumenical Youth Committee, also known as the Fanø Fellowship, led by Jürgen Winterhager with its business office in the Swedish embassy in Berlin.

[6.] The reference is to Bonhoeffer's lecture "Discipleship," which he held during the 1935–36 winter semester in the Department of Theology at the University of Berlin; see *DB-ER*, 515–16.