

Author shows how to catch a vision

I am reading an exciting novel right now about the courageous life of the German pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cup of Wrath* by Mary Glazener. It is a story wonderfully written and told and deserves to be read for that reason alone. But I think the reasons behind the story are also important. The author's story is itself worth telling.

She was discouraged and at a low point in her life when someone suggested that she read Bonhoeffer's prison letters (*Letters and Papers from Prison*). That personal experience did two things for her. First she, like many 20th century readers of the books of this brave Pastor Bonhoeffer, was encouraged in her faith in Jesus Christ through the letters he wrote from prison to his friends and parents.

MORE THAN THAT, she caught a life-changing vision for herself. She determined that she had the mandate to bring forward to a larger audience the story of the life and faith of Bonhoeffer. To fulfill that goal she set out on a long journey of hard work. She returned to school to develop her skills in writing; she learned German; she researched and studied and wrote over a 15-year period about the thought and ministry of



From Your Minister

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moment in a person's journey when a life-changing vision happens. It can happen when we are riding a crest of discovery and growth. It can happen at a dark hour of loneliness and crisis. It usually happens right in the middle of ordinary

the man Dietrich Bonhoeffer and the people in his life so that she could present her novel about his life story.

Her patient mixing of a large purpose brought together with determination in the face of what seemed like very difficult roadblocks and her steady faithfulness to a dream model what vision can mean for us too.

IT FASCINATES ME to wonder about that

things we are doing, and not when we had planned to catch sight of any new light or discovery.

What does happen is that we meet up with something so good and true that we want to make sure we don't forget it. Even beyond that, we decide to make it known to our world. Like the prophets and evangelists of the Bible, we discover our mandate and it molds our future plans.

THE MOTIVATION at the heart of this mandate is that I want to make a difference in favor of the next traveler who journeys on the same road. In the Bible we call this experience the catching of a vision from God, the burden of and from the Lord. This is the grand moment when the vision caught becomes the vision shared. I decide by the grace of God to be and do in ways that become possible for me what needs to be and what needs to be done. For some of us this can be the beginning of a career, a calling, an avocation.

All of this takes time, just as there is no easy way to learn German. But it all begins, too, at some crossroads moment when we discover something so totally good and totally healthy that we can't keep it to ourselves.