



THE DIETRICH BONHOEFFER INSTITUTE

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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IT'S TIME FOR CIVIL CONVERSATION AND COLLABORATION

In the Wake of the Tragic Shooting of Congressman Scalise and Others, Rev. Rob Schenck of The Dietrich Bonhoeffer Institute Says it's Time to Look Past our Bitter Politics and Instead Work with One Another to Find Common Solutions to the Issues that Plague our Nation

June 21, 2017 – (Washington, D.C.) The Rev. Dr. Rob Schenck, President of The Dietrich Bonhoeffer Institute, has been praying daily for the recovery of Rep. Steve Scalise since the Congressman was shot last week while at baseball practice with fellow Republicans for a charity game. Schenck, who started The Dietrich Bonhoeffer Institute a year ago, did so, in part, because of the increased political divide and escalating hostility seen on both sides of the political spectrum.

“This deep division has caused a continued impediment towards addressing and improving the difficult issues our communities and our nation face on a daily basis. How does one face the various moral crises of our time when the populace is so divided?” asks Schenck. “It’s long past time to look beyond our polarizing politics and look instead at the real issues that plague our nation from a perspective of humility and a sense of our dependency on God and one another. Simply put, we need to start having real engagement, when we listen to one another rather than coming to the table with our preconceived ideas and shutting out other opinions.”

The vision of the Dietrich Bonhoeffer Institute is to bring together evangelicals (on the left and right politically) and the broader Christian faith community to address the pressing issues of the culture from a biblically sound and ethical perspective, using the insights of the World War II-era moral theologian and ethicist. By working within a broad community that includes other Christian and faith traditions, as well as secular proponents, the Institute seeks to find practical solutions and concrete resolutions to the often difficult, ambiguous, and far-reaching problems that plague American society.

“At this point, less than a week after the tragic shooting of Congressman Scalise and others, we

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are already starting to hear the various political arguments as to why the violence occurred. The reality is that there is truth in both arguments – the hostile rhetoric and bitter divide in our politics AND the ongoing escalating issue of gun violence,” states Schenck. “If we step back from the politics of the issue and look at it morally and ethically, we might discover we have more in common than in conflict. It is up to each of us to make sure we respect one another and that our nation is safe for all Americans. It’s on all of us to truly make this nation one where we can all be respected and safe no matter who we are, what we believe, or where we are at any given moment.”

The mission of The Dietrich Bonhoeffer Institute is to promote the philosophy and moral theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer in practical ways for today’s culture. By applying the ideas espoused by Bonhoeffer in his writings -- especially those found in *Ethics, Letters and Papers from Prison*, and *Collected Sermons* – The Dietrich Bonhoeffer Institute seeks to find concrete solutions to current ethical crises, conundrums, ambiguities, and dilemmas. For Bonhoeffer, there was no such thing as morals without actions. The failure to act is to condone wrongdoing and makes us irresponsible people. At The Institute we believe we have a moral imperative to not only engender discourse on ethical dilemmas, but to provide direction for concrete action to turn ethical challenges into opportunities for our communities.

“Name-calling and finger-pointing will never resolve the terrible problem of hate, fear, anger, and arrogance,” states Schenck. “In the same way, gun violence solves nothing and only contributes to more pain and suffering. This isn’t a time for a ‘gun debate.’ Rather, it’s time for us to ask what is best for all people and how can we live with one another peacefully, safely, and most beneficially? We need to come together and show support for our families, neighbors and friends, our communities, and our elected and appointed officials. This isn’t a time for political name-calling, but for self-examination.”

About Dietrich Bonhoeffer

German pastor and theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer unreservedly engaged the moral dilemmas faced by German citizens in the 1930s and paid for his beliefs and activism with his life when he was murdered in a concentration camp by the Nazi regime. Dietrich Bonhoeffer offers a body of work and a compelling life story that appeal to people across religious and philosophical spectrums. His insights on the Gospel, and the challenges and demands of a moral life speak directly to persons of faith and conservative religious convictions while his ecumenism and expansive humanism speak to liberals and progressive Christians. Bonhoeffer showed a deep respect for all ethical religions – and even for atheists – attracting the attention of many non-Christian and non-religious people.

About Rev. Dr. Rob Schenck

The Rev. Dr. Rob Schenck is an ordained evangelical minister and president of The Dietrich Bonhoeffer Institute located in Washington, DC. A leader among American evangelicals, Dr. Schenck currently sits on the executive committee of the National Clergy Council and served a 2-year term as chairman of the Evangelical Church Alliance, America’s oldest association of independent evangelical clergy. Dr. Schenck holds a B.A. in Religion, M.A. in Christian Ministry, D.Min in Church and State, and is a senior fellow at the Oxford Centre for the Study of Law and Public Policy.

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