

# **United States Holocaust Memorial Museum**

**Interview with Juergen Simonson**  
**March 30, 1998**  
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## **PREFACE**

The following oral history testimony is the result of a taped interview with Juergen Simonson, conducted on March 30, 1998 on behalf of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. The interview is part of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum's collection of oral testimonies. Rights to the interview are held by the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum.

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## **JUERGEN SIMONSON**

### **March 30, 1998**

#### Beginning Tape One, Side A

Question: Now today, I'm speaking with Juergen Simonson in a town called Ibthorpe in England. The date is the 28th of March, 1998. And Mr. Simonson is a minister and I'm going to let him talk about what got him to this country, where he lived, where he was born and I will start now. Mist -- in this country, you're called mister, even though you're ordained, is that right?

Answer: Yes. That's correct, yes.

Q: Would you be kind enough to give your name in there and tell me where you were born and where you lived as a young child and how you got to this country.

A: My name is J-Juergen Simonson. I come from Germany. My father was a judge in Germany. His parents had been Jewish and then converted to the Christian faith in the last century. But, under Nazi laws we're regarded as Jews and so was my father, who was married to an Aryan, and so I was considered a mishling -- a 50 percent Jew or Aryan, whichever way you take it. We were in a small town in east Germany, where my father was working as a judge and then when Hitler came in, in '33 -- he was dismissed as judge in 1935 and lived in -- in this small town called Forst, until 1938. But because life was more difficult for somebody with a Jewish background in a small place, where everybody knew you, they were beginning to look for a move to a bigger place, where they might be more anonymous.

Q: Do you have memories of that period?

A: Oh, yes, yes.

Q: What are your memories of that period?

A: My memories are that I went to this -- to this school in small town as second grade school and my main and most painful memory is that -- well, I noticed that for some time, my school friends distanced themselves from me. I used to walk with them to school and then there came a time when they said they wouldn't want to walk with me any more.

Q: And you were how old?

A: I was then -- 1938 -- 14 years old. Born in 1924. And one day, after break, I went back to my classroom and there on the notice board, written with chalk, it said, "The -- the Juda mus game." The Jew must be out. Which of course was awful sh-shock to me. So -- my class teacher was very embarrassed about it. I left immediately. My parents had gone to Dresden -- because my father's sister lived in Dresden -- to look for somewhere to live, just at that very moment. And I was being looked after by a niece. And in the afternoon, I went to the acting headmaster to see what I should do and was told that he was resting, he could not see me. I mean -- this, sort of -- so typical, this lacking the courage of their convictions, didn't want to be involved. So after the weekend, my parents came back, they'd found a flat and within, I think 24 hours, I was on the train to Dresden. Never looked back again. And --

Q: You felt you'd be safe in Dresden?

A: In Dresden, m-more. And, in fact, my father found a very good school for me, where I was admitted by the headmaster, who knew my background, but was prepared to take me on. And, until '42, I went to that school, had very good school friends and even managed to do my -- take my matric in 1942. I'll come back to that in a moment. I just want to mention that two years ago I was back in East Germany, with a Christian group, we were -- we were visiting some churches right on the Polish border. And I suddenly realized I was only about 50 miles from Forst, where I was brought up and where I had this [indecipherable].

Q: How do you spell that name?

A: F-o-r-s-t.

Q: Just as it sounds, yes.

A: Yes. And decide to go by train back to Forst. It was a harrowing experience, because the town had been just on the Polish border, had been overrun by the Russians and really looked like a very neglected eastern town. It had been quite a thriving factory place, so -- in -- before '33, in the early days of Hitler. And went round the place to identify my school and one or two other places. Went back to the station, had a few minutes to spare. Went back, waited at the station for a moment. Walked down station road and remembered that one of my school friends used to live there and he -- his father had a agricultural place, shop. And I was totally amazed that the place was still there, with the same name, Lishgut. So I walked in, the daughter-in-law was in the shop and said, "Yes, my father-in-law is here, I'll go call him." And he was out in the yard, I went out and said, "Hello, could I speak --". He didn't recognize me after 50 years. And I mentioned my name. And he looked at me, took my hand and before he said anything else, said, "I'm so very sorry for what we did to you. And it's been always on my mind." And we --

Q: Did you think he meant what he said?

A: -- and we embraced each other and I said to -- quote, "That was a long time ago, let's forget about it." And we only had 15 minutes before my train was due, to catch up on 50 years. And then of course we kept in touch by letter afterwards. And w -- he said, "I'm so glad that we've met again." But it was an extraordinary experience. And he died a week ago.

Q: Is that right? Did you keep up with him?

A: So -- yes, yes.

Q: Yeah, after that.

A: So I was so glad that --

Q: That you'd gone.

A: -- I went to Forst --

Q: Yeah.

A: -- and that we met again by pure chance, really.

Q: Luck, luck.

A: [indecipherable]. And there a sort of reconciliation took place, anyway.

Q: He probably didn't know what had happened to you, either.

A: No. No idea.

Q: So he must have been so glad to see --

A: No. Didn't know that I was in England or anywhere.

Q: Yeah. Amazing, that's amazing.

A: So then, as I say, I took my matric -- matric in '42. Because of my Jewish background, fortunately I was n-not allowed to be called up to the armed forces. All my school friends were. Most of them perished, many on the eastern front. And quite a few were in Stalingrad. And in the end, there were only four of them left and we still meet, every other year, in Germany.

Q: Really, really.

A: So I had to do some kind of forced labor -- first in armaments factory in Dresden, on the shop floor and then in the offices.

Q: And where were your parents now, this time?

A: Oh, yes now, my father knew that his life was really in danger, but was very difficult to get out. You had to be sponsored by somebody abroad. And as it happened, years before, he had met a young, English student, in Forst, who was staying with a family of friends in Forst. And my

father had written to him. He'd, in the meantime, become a British diplomat and was out in the Far East, but came on leave in '38, saw this letter and wrote back to say that yes, he was prepared to sponsor him. And so in March, '39, he left us. With 10 shillings, that was all he was allowed to take. And really no -- no job in sight. I mean, as a judge, he really had no chance to find a job in England.

Q: How many siblings did you have?

A: I was the only one. [indecipherable]

Q: You were the only child? So when you say he left us, he left your mother and you?

A: My mother and me, that's right, yes.

Q: And, do you remember your reaction?

A: Well, of course was a terribly sad moment for all three of us, to be separated and not to know what was going to happen. Now, I think I will first tell you about my father, perhaps, at this point, because in the sequence of events, that comes next. He came to England, was met by this wonderful man, Dudley Cheek, who has since died, who later became an ambassador, British ambassador. And stayed first with -- he had some distant relatives in London and then stayed with other people, but of course had no prospect of an opening for a job. He had become an active Christian towards the end of his time in Germany. He used to go -- there was an Anglican church in London, in -- in Dresden, which he used to attend. And there was, in London, an organization called the British German Christian Fellowship, with which Bishop Bell was associated. He was the --

Q: The British German Christian Fellowship?

A: Yes.

Q: All right.

A: Of which he, I think, was the chairman.

Q: Yes.

A: And father was introduced to him and there were -- in his typical way, sort of pulled out all of the stops and eventually, in September '39, father was given a case at congregational theological college in Cambridge. Cherchant College in Cambridge. As a student again. He'd been a judge and started again from scratch --

Q: Yes.

A: -- there, as a -- as a student.

Q: Yes.

A: Theological student. And in the meantime, he had also arranged for us to follow him. Again, some kind people had offered accommodation and there was even a place for me at a school near Cambridge. And we wer-were supposed to follow in September '39. September '39 of course was too late. We literally missed the boat.

Q: Goodness.

A: By about a week before that.

Q: What -- what did you do?

A: So we went on living in Dresden. My mother was eventually declared a widow, because my father was no longer regarded as being alive or -- for all intents and purposes.

Q: Did you -- she was not Jewish?

A: No, she wasn't, no.

Q: So therefore, she would have been allowed privileges.

A: That's right.

Q: But you would not have been allowed them, because you were --



A: Yes, but I was partly protected by my mother. I've just been going through it all again, because I'm now writing quite a few notes about the Holocaust in Germany, because the Holocaust was not only in Auschwitz and all the other places. Have you come across -- do you know German, or --

Q: No, I don't speak German.

A: There is a -- there are some diaries by a German professor called -- it -- I'll look it up later -- who t -- who was a -- again, a Jew married to an Aryan lady and what they endured in Dresden. Th-They -- it was from Dresden, of all places, this diary.

Q: Really? Yeah.

A: And he writes every day, secretly, his diary is about this period. And what they endured is just unbelievable. In the end, out of 5,000 Jews in Dresden, 60 were still alive at the end of the war.

Q: 5,000 Jews in Dresden, 60 alive at the end of the war.

A: All the others were deported.

Q: All the others were deported.

A: Ta-Taken away.

Q: Let me stop here. I just want to --. What was your -- what was your main fear? You hadn't made it, you didn't know whether you'd renite -- reu -- reunited with your father. What -- what were the signs around you that -- that were most frightening?

A: That one really had no idea what the future was going to bring. That one really lived from day to day. We lived a relatively normal life, because of my -- thanks to my mother being Aryan.

Q: And how did she protect you? You were -- you yourself were half-Jewish, how did she protect you? Did she not discuss what you were, or did you -- did people know or what? I mean, it sounded like it was very evident.

A: Well, fortunately, as a -- I mean Jews from '41 on, had to wear the yellow star.

Q: The yellow star, so --

A: I didn't have to wear that, so --

Q: But how did you get away with that?

A: Because, I -- as a half-Jew or half-Aryan, I didn't have to, it was only full Jews. This whole crazy legislation of 100 percent and 75 percent and 50 percent. I was 50 percent and so I could not be treated like a normal human being, but on the other hand, I was not treated as a Jew. I was sort of in-between.

Q: What -- what did that mean for you, in terms of having friends who were Aryan, who were not Jewish.

A: They -- I mean, looking back on it now, I am absolutely amazed, because I mean, obviously I was, to a certain extent, probably being watched. But they -- they stayed low and treated me as -- just like a -- very good friends and so I owe a great deal to them. Then, of course, the critical time came in '44, when things were pretty desperate, sort of, in the west and in the east. And at this point, mishlings were also being called up, but not into the armed forces, but into the Tut Organization. The Tut Organization was a -- run by one of Hitler's ministers, to be engaged in emergency work, for instance, the building of the Atlantic wall and the repair of bombed railway stations, lines and all that sort of thing, in east and west. So we were not soldiers, but we were sort of -- in fact, we were regarded as second class citizens. We didn't wear a uniform, we just wore an armband which said, Tut Organization. And we were made -- made up of people with my background, political prisoners and also minor criminals. A queer mixture of people. And when was it? April '44, I said good-bye to my mother, I did not know what was going to happen to her in Dresden. Obviously we had no real contact with my father in England. I didn't know

where I was going to land up, they didn't tell us, we were just loaded onto a train in Dresden and eventually we realized that we were on our way to France. And we're then sort of detailed to work on railway sites that had been bombed, to repair them -- very often, with time bombs going out -- going off at place-places. And that went on til September -- from April '44 to September '44. Mainly in the Paris area. Again, we were subject to quite a few air raids, but survived. And then there were four -- one, two, three, four of us -- five of us, I'm sorry -- who realized that one day this train would be dur -- and this was all during the allies invasion. The allies were sort of advancing, we were slowly being withdrawn and we knew that one day we would return to Germany and then of course, what was going to happen then? Especially towards the end of the war. We had no idea. So we had determined that if there was the slightest opportunity, we would jump off the train and try to find the French Resistance movement.

Q: Could you say that a little louder, I'm sorry.

A: Yes.

Q: Jump off the plane?

A: We jumped off the train.

Q: Train.

A: We would jump off the train and try and find the French Resistance Movement.

Q: Yes.

A: And eventually in Se -- one day in September '44, we got that opportunity as the train was being pulled back towards Germany. One evening, the five of us jumped off, disappeared in the undergrowth and found some refuge with some French farmers. And we gather that only a day or two later, the whole train was destroyed by British or American fighters. So, we were --

Q: Why do you think the French farmers would have given you refuge, given --

A: Because we were all part of the French Resistance. And we -- we had said that we -- we'd run away and --

Q: Yeah. And they believed you?

A: They believed us, but day or two later, we were being arrested by the official French forces, because they thought we were German spies.

Q: That's what I was thinking.

A: And they didn't quite know what to do with us. We weren't soldiers. We claimed we were of Jewish origin. And so, at that time there was sort of complete chaos in France. There were refugees from various countries which had been caught up by the Germans and also run away. And we were all taken down to the south of France to be repatriated to our various countries, but of course, they couldn't repatriate us. So we were eventually -- the Jews didn't want us, because we weren't proper Jews. So we -- there was an organization called Free Germany, which was really a -- a Communist organization, we landed up there. And we were indoctrinated to learn about Stalin and Marx and Lenin and all the rest of it. And that was not a very pleasant time and food was very short in France -- in the south of France at the time and there was no heating, terrible winter. But, eventually, I got a job with the American army. And also, about December, I mean post communications were [indecipherable] almost non-existent, but I wrote to the Bishop of Chichester -- Chichester, because that's all I knew, in very halting English, "Sir, I'm Juergen Simonson, I think you know my father. I would like to go to England and be reunited with him." And eventually he got the letter. I got a cable from him to say, "Letter received. I will put you in touch with my -- your father and I'm trying everything with the British Home Office, to get you a visa to England." That was still very difficult for a German.

Q: Why did you pick Bishop Bell? What did you know that made you think --

A: Because we had the occasional -- there was a Red Cross letter, that you could write every six months, with 25 or 50 words, which really said very little. In addition to that, we were extremely fortunate that we had friends in Switzerland and we could write to them and they in turn could write to my father and vice versa. So, very occasionally, we had some news through them and they had mentioned this link with the Bishop of Chichester.

Q: And -- and Bishop Bell by this time, had -- he'd been working in the 30's -- am I correct -- with the German church, trying to --

A: Yes.

Q: -- initially get them to speak out against Hitler.

A: That's right, yes.

Q: And then once the war started, of course, their tone changed. I suppose they felt it had to, and he was much more persona non grata --

A: Oh, yes, yes.

Q: -- at this juncture.

A: And of course, he had met Dietrich Vonhuffer.

Q: Yes.

A: In Stockholm and I think in '42.

Q: Did he ever talk to you about Vonhuffer? [telephone ringing]

A: Would you like to just switch it off, please?

Q: Yes, yes.

A: I just --

Q: -- say that he didn't -- he didn't talk to you about Vonhuffer.

A: He didn't talk to me about Dietrich Vonhuffer. But --

Q: So you -- he got you and [indecipherable] your father.

A: So he did manage to get this visa for me, and -- which took some time, but in June '45, I came over and really when I arrived at Newhaven, I felt like the Pope, I wanted to touch British soil. For the first time, I really felt safe again after -- what?

Q: All those years.

A: Over 10 -- 11 -- 12 -- 12 years. And met my father at Victoria and then sometime later I was introduced to George Bell. I wish I could describe --

Q: Where was your mother? Excuse me, I'm sorry.

A: She was still in England.

Q: I'm sorry.

A: Yeah, that's --

Q: No, you mean in Germany.

A: I-In Germany, that's right.

Q: What was it like seeing your father after all that time?

A: He didn't recognize me. Because he'd left me when I was a boy of 14. I was a young man of 21. We -- we'd been separated for seven years. From -- over six years, from March '39 to June '45. It was incredible. And he, in the meantime had become -- been ordained and become an Anglican priest.

Q: Did he ever discuss, or did you ever think about the fact that -- that the tradition, the religious tradition that had so let your family down -- let his family down, was the one that he joined? Was that a -- was that a -- a -- an issue, or --

A: No, because on the one hand, I seem to remember, when I was still a boy, father was forcibly retired, we lived in Forst. There was a church outside Forst where a member of the Confessional Church --

Q: Yes.

A: -- ministered, who later became a bishop in the German church.

Q: After the war.

A: After the war, yes. So our links were very much with the Confessional Church. And they were really a great encouragement to us, because they were really the only organization in Germany that was left, which offered some kind of resistance to Hitler. And of course, many of their pastors were arrested and taken to concentration camps.

Q: Yes. You never knew Paul Schneider, did you, the tr --

A: No, but I know the book and his [indecipherable] story, yes.

Q: His son was in Washington, we -- we --

A: Really?

Q: We honored him last fall.

A: Oh, really?

Q: Yes. [indecipherable] his son read something from Frau Schneider, who's still alive, who had hoped -- hoped to come, but could not make the trip.

A: Oh, how amazing.

Q: So it was --

A: I've just looked at his book the other da -- the other day.

Q: The very thick one?

A: No, just a little one -- book.

Q: Oh, I don't -- I don't know that. No, I know Claude Foster's book is the one I have --

A: Oh.

Q: -- with 900 pages.

A: No, no I don't know that one, no.

Q: So, you're with your father, and --

A: So, I -- I mean our experiences of the German church were not as unfavorable as that of others. And also, of course he -- he joined the Anglican church.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: And that --

Q: Well, where had the Anglican church been in Germany during all this? Where --

A: Well, I mean they were just colonial churches, which catered for the English people --

Q: The English -- the English speaking people in Germany.

A: That's right, that's --

Q: The English were there.

A: That's right.

Q: So, there were not -- in other words, there were no Anglican churches in Germany that were German?

A: No, no. No, no, no, no --

Q: Oh, I see -- I see.

A: -- only -- they only catered for English speaking people.

Q: Well, they were really in a peculiar position, weren't they?

A: Yes, of course, I mean they just did their job of looking after the -- their English nationals.

Q: And did they leave, most of them, did they --



A: Oh, I would think so.

Q: -- flee to England --

A: Yes, yes, yes, yes.

Q: -- when the war came. They'd have to --

A: I would have -- think so --

Q: -- I'd imagine.

A: Yes, that's right.

Q: Yeah.

A: And the Anglican church in [indecipherable] must have come to an end, probably.

Q: Yeah, yeah. So that was -- that was your tradition. Now, you met George Bell later, is that right?

A: I met him later, quite a number of times.

Q: What do you remember about him?

A: The most -- I wish I could describe him. The only thing I can describe about him -- that he had the most translucent blue eyes that I've ever seen. You really saw through him -- through the eyes, into his soul. A very fine face. A man who'd obviously stood up and been rejected himself, as you probably know. I mean he -- you probably wouldn't --

Q: Well, I don't know -- perhaps you could tell us. I know that the bishop -- Bishop Hedlum, I believe was the Bishop of Gloucester, is that right?

A: Yes, that's right.

Q: I know that Hedlum had written to the Archbishop about Bell and thinking Bell should keep quiet, because he was so vociferous against --

A: That's right.

Q: -- what Hitler was doing.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: But I don't know, other than Hedlum, I had a feeling that perhaps Bell was very supported by the British church an-and -- wh-what what was your -- you tell me what you know. I don't know.

A: It's more that he spoke up very strongly in the House of Lords, against the bombing of German cities.

Q: And so he was considered a pacifist --

A: And so --

Q: -- or was he just considered a person who should not have --

A: Who should not have -- have spoken up --

Q: -- took a -- took a position that --

A: And Churchill obviously didn't take kindly to him. I mean, there's no doubt, I think, nowadays that when Lang retired, that Bell --

Q: Archbishop Lang, we're talking about --.

A: -- would have -- would have -- yes, yes.

Q: -- the Archbishop of Canterbury. Yes. And that year was what?

A: I think it would have -- most probably '42 --

Q: Two.

A: -- that Bell would have become Archbishop of Canterbury, because he was the outstanding ecumenical figure of his time.

Q: Yes.

A: In his place, Temple was made archbishop -- who also made an outstanding archbishop. I mean both of them are -- were outstanding figures. Sorry -- no, I've got it wrong. It's the other way around. Temple was made archbishop in '42.

Q: Yes, that's right, that's right.

A: But sadly died in '44, which was a great tragedy. From -- I can't remember now what his illness was. And --

Q: So he didn't live to the end of the war?

A: No. And in his place, Bell should have been made archbishop.

Q: Oh, I see. Bell shouldn't have succeeded Lang.

A: No.

Q: He should have succeeded Temple.

A: Temple, that's right.

Q: And -- and who did succeed Temple, do you remember?

A: Well, it would have been Fisher, I think.

Q: Is that right?

A: Yes.

Q: Okay.

A: Yes.

Q: So Bell --

A: Remained Bishop of Chichester and played a very important role in the ecumenical scene.

Q: In what way? Do you know [indecipherable]

A: Well, he was -- he was one of the -- became one of the chairman of the Royal Council of Churches. And was re -- lauseal sponsor for the first assembly of the Royal Council of Churches

in Amsterdam in 1948, when, for the first time, all the churches were able to come together again. He also made visits to Germany and welcomed German church leaders to England and sort of reestablished the contact between the --

Q: With the German church.

A: With the German church.

Q: Which must have been difficult, because he had been so close to them at one time --

A: Mm, that's right, yes.

Q: -- and then -- there's a -- a letter in Andrew Chandler's book about -- I believe it's Bell writing to Carl Bart and expressing such surprise that Neimuller, from prison, had offered to command another U-boat. Do you remember that?

A: No, no.

Q: And -- and he writes to Bart and says, "How could Neimuller have even remotely suggested that he would fight in a war for people with whom he differed on every level?"

A: I know, that's right. Mm, that's right.

Q: And Bart wrote back to Bell and said, "Neimuller is too much of a German --

A: Yes.

Q: -- and too much of a Lutheran."

A: Mm-hm, mm-hm.

Q: Now, that's an interesting statement.

A: That's right, yes, yes.

Q: How would you interpret Bart's comment back to Bell?

A: That's -- Neimuller was -- I suppose, deep down his heart, a patriot, and --

Q: Mm-hm. And that -- that -- that superseded the moral sense of what was happening?

A: Must have done. That's right. And also, of course, there was a terrible -- I mean this is -- was one of the reasons and I read this again now -- terrible fear in Germany that the Russians, the Bolshevists as they were called, would overrun Germany. And they would rather be under Hitler, a -- a --a German Nazi, then under a Russian Bolshevists.

Q: Well, of course, this is the argument that the church used all the time.

A: Hm. That's right.

Q: And the church of -- of -- I mean, both Protestant and Roman Catholic. Certainly that was much of what I think generated the lack of support from Pius the -- the 12th.

A: Hm. That's right, oh yes.

Q: Was that -- that fear.

A: Oh yes, yes.

Q: And -- and because there were some people who were Jewish who were Communists, that was, of course, something that was always ascribed to the Jews, that --

A: Yeah, that's all true, yes. Oh, that's right.

Q: -- that so often as a -- and then created some antagonism there.

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Was your -- were -- when you met Bell, in later years, did he ever talk about his difficulties in the 30's?

A: No, di-didn't talk to me, because I was a -- a junior. I really met him partly because I was -- at that time -- looking for a job.

Q: That's all right. I want to know where we are. I want to -- I'm going to stop this right -- excuse me, tell me -- finish by what you were saying. You were looking for a?

A: A -- a job i-in the church.

Q: Right.

A: And so was seeking his advice.

Q: Right. Let me just.

A: So --

End of Tape One, Side A

Beginning Tape One, Side B

[blank]

Beginning Tape Two, Side A

Q: -- silence and then we're just discussing more general things, less the exact events, chronological events than some thoughts and opinions, then we'll get back to some chronological events perhaps, too. I was just asking Mr. Simonson, who's the Reverend Mr. Simonson, how he felt about the Goldhagen book and how that jibes with his own memories of Germany and -- and -- and what were you saying? It was a bit of revelation to you?

A: It was really quite a shock to me, because in the war -- I mean, he comes to the conclusion that really the whole German people are responsible for what happened and I'm just reflecting on this and putting some of these thoughts on paper. And really, other -- I find very difficult, because some of my school friends have been very loyal to me and have stood by me. But they were, of course, involved in the war. And --

Q: This is your mother's family, though, too. I mean, this is your background, also.

A: Oh yes, that's right, yes.

Q: Did you -- did you sense that growing up? Was your mother's family ever voicing anything that was that -- were they upset with your mother for marrying someone Jewish?

A: Strangely not, because I think they very much respected my father. And -- I mean they must have been in -- in a great conflict. I wonder what went on in their minds about this.

Q: Did your mother ever talk about it?

A: Not really, no, no. In fact they said very little after the war. I don't think they -- they could talk about it, was too difficult a subject.

Q: Yeah.

A: But --

Q: Well, were there -- let me phrase it differently, then. When you were in Dresden, you had people who stood by you, who were kind to you, who were good to you. Were there those who were like the people in the forest, also?

A: Not so much in Dresden, because we moved in a fairly small circle and they were all people who stood by us. So we -- which to some extent sheltered and protected. But you always -- of course you always lived in fear, that -- I mean tha -- this is the awful thing that comes through in these diaries by Klemperer, that every day they lived in fear that the Gestapo would knock on the door and call and either beat them or take them away. So one had this sort of --

Q: Did you ever see that?

A: No, the only thing I do remember was in the -- after the Kristallnacht --

Q: 1938, November.

A: 1938, when Jews were driven through the main street, the Pragerstrasser in Dresden, on their way to the station to be taken to the concentration camps.

Q: And you actually saw people hoarded?

A: I saw it, yes. And also I -- on the morning after the -- the synagogue was burned down --

Q: In Dresden?

A: I cycled past the synagogue and saw the -- just the sort of remains of it, like.

Q: Did you wonder about whether you might have been caught up in that?

A: Not so much about myself, but I knew that my father would have been caught up in it and I was -- but --

Q: But you must have had Jewish friends in Dresden, did you not? Or did you not?

A: Very -- well, very few. No, most of my friends were -- you see, we really -- my father was a Christian, was brought up as a Christian.



Q: Oh, I see.

A: So was I.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: And we had very few links with the -- the Jewish community. I mean I'm absolutely shocked now, to read these diaries of a man who lived not very far away from me and I knew nothing of what went on in those circles. And all these hundreds of people who were deported. The only thing that I do know, which sort of affects us more immediately, was that affe -- concerns my grandparents. My -- my father's father had been one of the senior judges of the central court in Leipzig in the central German court in Leipzig. And so they lived in Leipzig, fairly comfortably, because he had a fairly senior post. Then, eventually, again, I only discovered this the other day, they moved from Leipzig to Dresden -- to Berlin, because Leipzig was declared Judenfreie -- free of Jews. So they had to be -- clear out. And they had to move into rented accommodation in Berlin, which was allocated to them. And mercifully, my grandfather died there in '42. Now, with them lived my aunt, my father's sister, who was single, who'd always lived at home. And several times before '39, I think my father had also tried to bring her out to England. And she hesitated, because she couldn't bring herself to leave her parents. And so she was left behind. And in -- I've only just had all the f-file from Berlin, my aunt -- eventually they just lived in two rooms in Berlin. My aunt went to the t -- some office to collect her rations for the month, for Jews. They were treated as Jews, they had to wear the yellow star, of course. And was told that -- to get herself ready to be deported the following day. And my grandmother who was then 83 or 84, could not -- could not bear the thought of being left behind, so she decided to go with her daughter to Theresienstadt. Does that name mean anything?

Q: Of course.

A: Which of course was for the more privileged Jews.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: And -- I mean she would have been deported anyway, later on. And what I found in these papers -- this were -- this was all about the disposal of their property and their possessions, because everything went -- went back automatically to the state.

Q: And what particular branch of the state would have taken that? The Department of Treasury, Commerce, do you know?

A: Finance.

Q: Department of Finance.

A: But, through the auspices of the Gestapo. I mean th-that was really --

Q: So Himmler's --

A: Yes. And so, in March '43, they went to Theresienstadt and I think my grandmother must have died fairly soon after that. And I've written now -- it's extraordinary that all this has taken so long. I've written now to Theresien -- to -- no, to -- to an agency in Prague. They can't trace my grandmother at all. They've given me another address, which I haven't tried yet. Whether there's still any -- I mean -- whether anyone knows where she was cremated --

Q: And your father wouldn't have known any of this --

A: No, no, no, no --

Q: -- because he was in England.

A: Not til after the war. And then my aunt was later on deported. Moved on to Auschwitz and probably gassed immediately.

Q: And you don't know what happened when they -- either of them were killed?

A: No, no, no.

Q: Do you -- do you know the Red Cross? Th -- I don't know who liberated Theresienstadt, so I don't know who has those records.

A: No.

Q: Do you know which nation did?

A: I can show you. I can -- I'll look at the [indecipherable]

Q: Well, when we're through this, let me get --

A: That's right.

Q: -- some information from you.

A: Yes.

Q: So you went --

A: Su --

Q: -- when did you find this out? In '45?

A: Well, we -- no, what happened was that my other aunt in Dresden, my father's sister, wa-was also married to an Aryan and she was allowed to send monthly food parcels to my grandmother in Theresienstadt. And I -- again -- only discovered this now, that all they were allowed to write back by way of n -- acknowledgment, was a printed card which said, "Parcel received, we are well." They were not allowed to add any other information. And once that information -- that acknowledgment stopped, we knew that they had gone.

Q: Yeah.

A: So probably after a few months, the -- these -- she must have died and my aunt was then moved on to Auschwitz. The awful thing was that in one of these papers from Berlin, I found that the official document says they were -- my grandmother and my aunt were aukershoben, which simply means -- it's -- it's a word that you use for cattle transports. They were just shoved

away. I mean that's how people treated them. That's how they were looked at. Not as human beings.

Q: When did your father find out?

A: Well, immediately after the war.

Q: Right after the war he found out what happened to his mother and his sister?

A: Yes.

Q: It's unbelievable, isn't it? What -- what a -- a funny sense it must have given you, of having been able to survive, when your own family was dying. It's a hard thing to deal with too, isn't it?

A: That's right, yes, yes. And again I've only just sort of realized that had my father not found this diplomat as a sponsor, he probably wouldn't have been able to go. He would have had the yellow star and what happened to all the other Jews, he would have been deported eventually.

And we would have all moved into -- after some time, all the Jews were moved into Jewish quarters, where the Gestapo could keep a close -- watch them. And -- so we would have been --

Q: This in -- this in Dresden?

A: In Dresden, yes.

Q: In Dresden.

A: So we would have had to move into Jewish quarters.

Q: So there was a ghetto there also?

A: Yes, that's right, yes. And so my father probably would have been -- and I wouldn't have had the same protection. And also, after -- from '42 on, I -- as a mishling now, would no longer be allowed to go to a German school. I was extremely lucky, really.

Q: It's a miracle.

A: And also that I came through all the forced labor in France, and so --

Q: What did you do in the forced labor? You -- you talked a little bit about it earlier.

A: Yes.

Q: Can you tell me anything about what that was?

A: Well, we were working on railway stations, just sort of --

Q: Physically building?

A: No, exhuming. Quite a lot of trains were hit by these bombs and German soldiers were sort of covered by the debris and we had to exhume them and take them to the local cemetery to in-inter them and then reinstate the railway stations, that the trains could run through, the convoys to the front. And very often in areas infested by the French resistance movement. So, on the one hand, we had the bombs raining down from the allied forces. We were under the Nazis, who kept a close eye on -- on us and we were also threatened by the French resistance movement, because they saw us as being on the [indecipherable]

Q: Saw you as the enemy of, course.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: It's interesting how much of your life you spent being two different things.

A: Yes, that's right. Yes.

Q: Goodness. You got to England --

A: Yes.

Q: You -- you met Bell.

A: Bell.

Q: Did you ever meet cos -- well, Lang was gone by '42 --

A: Yes, no.

Q: -- so you would not have met him.

A: No.

Q: B-But you -- and Temple was gone, really, by the time you got here, too, wasn't he?

A: Yes, oh yes.

Q: So yeah, so he was -- so they would not have played a role.

A: No. Bell --

Q: Bell --

A: -- was m -- our great hero and my father owed really everything to him.

Q: Yeah.

A: Because --

Q: Tell me what your father said about him. Do you remember?

A: Well, you can read it in his book. He's --

Q: In -- in your father's book --

A: Yes, yes. He's written a book about it. [indecipherable]

Q: Your fa -- I did -- I didn't know that.

A: Yes.

Q: No. Andrew didn't tell me that.

A: Yes.

Q: Is there any way I can get a co -- another copy of that book?

A: I can lend it to you, if you want to.

Q: I'll -- I'll send it back, but I'd feel better if I could buy one. You don't think I can purchase one?

A: No, no, that's out -- out of print. Completely out of print.

Q: Well, I'd hate to take yours.

A: Well, there's a --

Q: We'll talk about that later.

A: Yes. Okay, yes.

Q: But your father's memories of Bell, he's -- he -- he saved his life, did he -- did he -- perhaps this is the question. Why was Bell what Bell was? Does anybody know? He never talked about it.

A: No, no. No idea.

Q: I mean Bell was -- was so rare in his concern for the Jews.

A: Mm, oh yes.

Q: You don't -- among Christian clergy anywhere. Here -- James Parks, yes.

A: Yes, that's right.

Q: But Bell, at a time when the best of the clergy would say, "Well, it's terrible what's happening to the Jews, but --"

A: I know.

Q: "-- we don't really like them, so it's easy to understand."

A: That's right.

Q: You had a Bell, who wasn't saying any of those things, he was saying we care for these people, we want to help them. But you don't know why?

A: No, no.

Q: I wonder if Bell ever wrote anything about his feelings at all. Do you remember your father mentioning if -- Bell writing at all?

A: No, no.

Q: [indecipherable] his letters, it -- it comes through --

A: Yes.

Q: -- so clearly. Interesting. So --

A: No, father had very close -- I mean, I've got quite a bit of correspondence from Bell upstairs.

Q: Do you really?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: I hope you --

A: Oh, I treasure it.

Q: Treasure that, yeah.

A: Yes, yes, yes, yes.

Q: And the -- oh, I'll talk about that later. When you -- when you were with Bell, did he ask you about your years in Germany? Was he interested in --

A: Oh, of course, yes.

Q: Very much.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And -- and what could he do after the war? Or let me go back to what he did during the war.

We know he went to the House of Lords.

A: Yes.

Q: Did Bell also go to Parliament to speak at all?

A: Well, as a bishop, you could only go the House of Lords.

Q: You could only go the House of -- of the Lords.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: All right.



A: But --

Q: And -- and -- was there -- what was the reception? I mean the bombing, we know the bombing --

A: That's right.

Q: -- of Dresden and -- and the -- I mean the bombing of the big cities --

A: That's right.

Q: -- people were not happy with him. When he went, did he -- did he not plea -- make a plea for refugees, though, too?

A: Yes, but again, I'm amazed -- I've just been reading another book, by a -- actually a Polish lady, who then lived in Berlin and then became refugee and came to England. And is now married to one of the labor lords. And she speaks very disparagingly of the British leadership as being anti-Semitic.

Q: Really?

A: Mm. And of course, several instances where, to her -- I mean she is very outspoken and I'm not sure whether I can trust her judgment, but she believes that there was a great deal of an-anti-Semi -- and that even England could have done much more and let in more refugees.

Q: To what degree do you think that the -- the teachings are what -- Jules Ithzak of course has coined that phrase that is used so much, teaching of contempt, the 2,000 year history of -- of saying that the Jews were responsible for the death of Jesus, that the Jews were a -- a group that had been really disowned by God, that the covenant had been passed on, the mantle had been passed on to Christianity.

A: Mm, that's right.

Q: And that degenerate religion and -- and all of those things that -- that were so much a part of our Sunday school teaching, our church teaching.

A: Oh, yes.

Q: How much do you think the anti-Judaism played into the anti-Semitism of the church here, the church in Germany -- what -- do you -- you probably don't have much sense, because you weren't involved with the church --

A: No.

Q: -- in Germany at that time, but -- but picking it up here then, let's look at it in England.

A: No, even -- I mean, looking back on it, I -- both in Germany and here, I'm sure it hurt quite a lot to --

Q: Quite a lot of impact.

A: I think so, yes. And --

Q: Do you ever meet with clergy from Germany? Did you, in -- in those early years, when you were here and -- and did your father have contact with clergy in Germany and -- after the war, much?

A: He -- some of them, yes.

Q: And -- and, you remember your father talking about there was reaction to the Jewish people [indecipherable]

A: No, I we -- unfortunately he's dead now. I wish I could ask him all these questions now.

Q: Yeah. Of course you do.

A: Too late.

Q: Too late.

A: Yes.

Q: You and your work. Tell me a little bit about what you did after the war, when you came here and before you became a clergyman yourself. What -- what -- what prompted you to go into ministry?

A: Because of the experiences a-at the end, i-i -- during the forced labor.

Q: Would you explain that a little bit?

A: I especially -- as I told you, I was down in the south of France, working for the American army. And one day a British padre who was a -- a chaplain in the forces, who was also a friend of my father's, they'd been in theological college together -- appeared and said he was also looking after a big, German prisoner of war camp, down in the south of France and didn't have the language. Could I come and help him? And, of course, I'd never done anything like it, before. And so I preached my first sermon in a German prisoner of war camp.

Q: Now, are you saying you preached, but you weren't ordained --

A: No, no.

Q: -- at this time.

A: No, no, no.

Q: So what --how did that come about?

A: He just picked me up and --

Q: And said, "I want you to preach"?

A: That's right, yes.

Q: Well, what did you preach on, do you remember?

A: I preached -- when you're confirmed in Germany, which is a lovely custom, you're given a verse subscriber to -- as a sort of motto for your life.

Q: And what was yours?

A: And my pastor, who obviously knew about my circumstances, gave me John, chapter six, verse 68, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life." And that time I did not know where I was going to go.

Q: Going, yeah. Isn't that amazing.

A: And that was really the only verse I knew. So I preached on that. And of course that was true of the German POW's as well. They were in total chaos. They had no contact with their families at home. Their cities had been bombed at home. They were defeated and --

Q: We don't think much about the young German boys --

A: No, that's right.

Q: -- who were lost or who were suffering so much.

A: Mm, that's right.

Q: Caught -- conscripted and caught up in a war they didn't understand and didn't have any responsibility for --

A: Mm, that's right.

Q: -- and had no choice and -- and well, we frankly hated them.

A: Oh yes, oh yes, yes

Q: Was a -- that was the enemy, and --

A: Mm, that's right, yes.

Q: And -- and because of what happened with the Gypsies and the handicapped and the Jews and many groups, we focus so much on them, we do forget how much suffering --

A: Yes.

Q: And of course it was the second time this had happened in a major scale, so --

A: Mm, that's right. Oh, yes, yes.

Q: -- find it hard to be so -- I'm sure a voice such as yours would have been a very welcome one for them.

A: So that was really the beginning, that I had sort of began to feel perhaps that --

Q: That you were called.

A: Mm.

Q: Then you were in England. What did you do, originally, when you got there?

A: Well, then I had to do -- immediately after the war, I was the first enemy alien to arrive in Britain.

Q: Oh, really?

A: Yes. Mm-hm. Thanks to Bell.

Q: Bishop Bell, right.

A: Mm-hm, that's right. In June '45. Only, oh, less than a month from the end of the war in Europe and I had to do some import -- I mean some essential work, so I worked for the -- really some clerical work, a filing clerk in London for a time. Partly also, because I had to retake my matric, because the German matric wasn't valid. So I had to take a sort of equivalent. And also really more -- to become more fluent in English. And then in '48, I went to theological college.

Q: Where?

A: And was again --

Q: Where -- where [indecipherable]

A: In -- near London. In Surrey. And was ordained in '52. And my college principal later became Archbishop of Canterbury, Donald Coggin. And --

Q: Yeah. And where was your first assignment?

A: First in -- in London, really in a very tough area, 40,000 people in Paddington. And then we wondered whether we should go abroad and serve the church overseas. So we were in Nigeria for seven years, in the theological college, teaching.

Q: Good heavens.

A: And then came back to England and I was in two parishes in south London.

Q: N-Now, were you there until you retired?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you have any contact with any Jewish Christian organizations, any organizations of ecumenical nature?

A: No.

Q: Did you have any interest in them?

A: Probably -- probably not at the time, because I was so involved in my own work.

Q: Right.

A: I've only really so -- I'm catching up now.

Q: Yeah.

A: I've done the Council for Christians and Jews now.

Q: I wonder if that's -- I'm meeting tomorrow with somebody from that group, with -- with Dorothy, I'm having lunch with --

A: Well, down in Southhampton?

Q: Yes, I don't know who it is. She says there's a new -- maybe it's just in Southhampton --

A: It's a new [indecipherable] that's right. That -- that I belong to.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yes.

Q: Yeah.

A: Oh, right.

Q: I'm going to have lunch then. So this is a late -- a late in life interest?

A: That's right.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yes, yes

Q: You've got your father's papers, some of them?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Did your father write any memoir -- he wrote about Bell.

A: Bell certainly must feature in his book very much, yes, yes.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I-I'll show it to you.

Q: But his own experiences, he didn't write much?

A: Oh, yes.

Q: He did?

A: There's his whole -- his whole story.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: I'll give it to you.

Q: And -- and looking at it today, what would you say about the state of Jewish Christian relations here? Is there a lot of interest and -- for example, the liturgy -- on -- on Good Friday, that whole Holy Week liturgy is so riddled with Johanine text --

A: I know. That's right.

Q: That make us so uncomfortable --

A: Yes, yes.

Q: -- and we're really working to do something about the reading of those texts, perhaps selecting others, in America. Is that true of England, or is there not much of a movement in that area?

A: Not a great deal I would have thought. And also I would have thought, there must be still quite a lot of latent anti-Semitism about.

Q: Anti-Semitism. Uh-huh. Must be strange --

A: I think if I looked into the hearts of my neighbors here, who are very much establishment and conservative, I think, deep down in their hearts -- I mean they wouldn't express it to me, because they respect me for what I am.

Q: Sure.

A: But I think deep down in their hearts, probably, it would be still there.

Q: I would think that would be very upsetting.

A: Yes, but I mean it's -- it's --

Q: You live with it.

A: -- such a long history, isn't it?

Q: It's a long history. It's a long history.

A: You can't sort of suddenly snap out of it.

Q: Hm. We've had a long time to try and snap out of it, though

A: Hm.

Q: What -- what does this -- the Christian and Jewish organization do to work on this, do you know? I mean, you just joined it, so you probably don't know a great deal about what they're doing.



A: Yes. No, and also I think that it's only a special interest for some people and it doesn't really penetrate into the heart and soul of --

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: -- the majority.

Q: Would you think that the -- I mean one of the questions that one has to ask, really, is -- is it possible to rid Christianity of this anti-Judaism?

A: I know.

Q: I mean, is it? Is it something we're just going to always have to --

A: Mm.

Q: -- say is part of us, and if so, is that -- does that -- seems to me the church never lived up to the ideals it set for itself during that period and -- and I -- I -- if we can't do something to foster a change, then -- then we've really got a -- a bit of a crippled tradition here.

A: Mm. Oh yes. But I mean, in the first place, what do you do with the gospels?

Q: Well, that's a problem.

A: Yes. What do you do about, St. John?

Q: Well, of course, what I do, is I don't preach from St. John --

A: No.

Q: -- and I don't read St. John --

A: No.

Q: -- I read the -- the others and -- and --

A: No, but -- that's right -- but I mean --

Q: Or I -- or I put it in it's te -- context though --

A: Yeah, that's right.

Q: -- I think that's what you have to ask clergy to do.

A: Yes, yes. So I think depends very much on the way it's being interpreted by the church today.

Q: And I suppose that really, then, to me, is what the crux of it all was about, that -- that we need to get into our seminaries --

A: Mm, that's right. Here, here.

Q: -- and teach students how to understand those texts.

A: That's right, yes.

Q: In the sitsinlabin and --

A: Mm, that's right, yes.

Q: -- and that's the only thing that's going to help us in our preaching, is if clergy trained in the future and I guess my question then is -- this is being done in some seminaries in the United States, the Roman Catholic Church is doing it, but do you think it's being done in this country in the seminaries today?

A: I would doubt it, on the whole. I don't think it plays a very important --

Q: I mean that's a -- tho -- there are three -- now four conciliar documents of the Roman Catholic church that have called for this. So, that has quite an imprimatur.

A: Mm, mm.

Q: And -- and sends a very strong message to the Catholic seminaries -- and I'm a product of a Catholic seminary. But I -- it distresses me as a Protestant, that I don't think this is as much a concern in our country --

A: No, no.

Q: -- in the Protestant seminaries. But if I hear you correctly, you're saying it's not really one here.

A: I don't think that's the way in Britain, I -- certainly not as far as I know.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: I think I would have picked it up.

Q: When you talk --

A: I mean what --

Q: Please --

A: -- in-interests me is that now, after 50 years, people are only beginning to address the Holocaust.

Q: That's right.

A: I mean in the churches.

Q: That's right, that's right, that's right.

A: I mean the Pope making -- making this announcement only a few weeks ago.

Q: Yeah.

A: The French church, last year I think.

Q: Beautiful statement of the French bishop's, isn't it?

A: I know. Yes, yes.

Q: Do you have a copy of that?

A: Yes. Mm. The various other things which only -- why has it taken us all this time to face up to it?

Q: I think that's the question. And I think that's the question we need to keep asking.

A: Yes.

Q: Yeah. What about your fellow clergy? What do you hear from them, anything? Do they -- do you ever discuss it with them.

A: No, [indecipherable]

Q: Who comprises the -- this council of Christians and Jews here? Is it clergy, is it hum -- just --

A: No, it's --

Q: -- regular lay people?

A: No, it's -- it's clergy and laity.

Q: Mm-hm.

A: Obviously some very good people, but only -- it's only very small number of people, a tiny minority who are anxious to foster good relationships.

Q: Yeah. Well, it's -- that must be a disappointment for you.

A: I mean, one who has played an important role is my former principal, who then became Archb -- Canterbury, Donald Coggin, who has been one of the presidents of the Council of Christian and Jews.

Q: Mm-hm. And that's a -- that's a nice feeling, isn't it -- to have it be that.

A: Hm, that's right, yes. And as -- as you probably know, Stoneberg has just received the Templeton prize.

Q: Yeah, yeah [inaudible] that. Well, as you look back on those years, knowing now what you know about the church -- I mean one of the things you would not have been probably thinking about so much when you decided to take this route, you wouldn't have been looking in depth at the role of the church at that time, you were looking at what it said -- what it meant to you and how it helped you.

A: That's right.

Q: And how you felt it could help others.

A: Yes.

Q: What -- and you have no contact with German clergy today, do you, really?

A: Not directly, no -- no.

Q: So you don't really know what they're -- what the teaching and preaching is from the seminar -- did you ever hear much about Marberg and Tubing and -- I mean, when the Aryan clause came in in -- in '33, it looks as if there was the acquiescence of all the seminaries, except Marberg seemed to be the one that held a little bit to it's belief.

A: No, I didn't know that, hm.

Q: But y -- that was not an iss -- you never discussed these kinds of things?

A: No, no, no, no.

Q: This was not part of your life, was it, at all?

A: No, no -- you see, I was only a young boy, really, when --

Q: You were so young, of course, of course. This was not --

A: -- when [indecipherable] me. So again, I'm only just catching up on things that I should have known long time ago.

Q: Let me go back to your mother. Your mother joined your father in what year?

A: '45.

Q: '45 she came here.

A: '46, '46.

Q: '46. Must have been a difficult -- almost more difficult for them.

A: Oh, very difficult

Q: How many years had they been apart then, eight?

A: Well, seven.

Q: Seven years apart.

A: Seven years apart, yes.

Q: So each had learned to live --

A: And she had -- again -- been through the terrible destruction of Ger -- of Dresden. Lost everything [inaudible]

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: Run for 12 days through the countryside, to --

Q: I'm sorry, say that again. She ran for 12 days through the --

A: Through the countryside --

Q: Countryside.

A: -- to find somewhere to -- where she could find refuge.

Q: Yeah.

A: Then she was under the -- in the Russian zone. Tried to escape twice with her parents into west Germany and failed. And then partly through Probst Grueber, of whom you may have heard, he was -- he did [indecipherable]

Q: Could you spell that name?

A: G-r-u-e-b-e-r. Probst -- Probst was a German -- he was a senior German clergyman in Berlin.

Q: Grueber.

A: Yes.

Q: I'm sorry. Yes, of course, of course. Well, tell me, go on.

A: And he was instrumental in getting my mother out of the Russian zone to Berlin, into the western zone.

Q: Pastor Grueber.

A: Yes.

Q: Yes. That was one of the great names, yes.

A: And of course he worked very closely with Bell.

Q: Yes, yes. One of the real shining lights in the church.

A: That's right, yes, yes.

Q: Now, how did he get your mother out exactly, though, do you know?

A: Well, I suppose my mother must have sort of appealed to him or written to him and asked for his help.

Q: Yeah.

A: Or no, again, I'm sure this came through Bell.

Q: Really?

A: Bell --

Q: So you think Bell got in touch with him?

A: -- got in touch with Grueber. "Could you please do something for this lady?"

Q: Yes, yes. Was he doing this with lots of people, do you know?

A: Yes. Oh, yes.

Q: Do you know what happened to him?

A: No, I -- I -- I'm not sure, no. No, I don't think I can tell you.

Q: Yeah, well I just wondered what the -- what the post-war experience --

A: I mean, there would be something about Grueber in my father's book, probably. [inaudible]

Q: In your father's book, yeah. There wo -- wo -- the -- your mother got here, what -- what was life for her then like? Did she speak much English?

A: No, no.

Q: No, I wouldn't think she would.

A: She -- she was very German and found quite difficult to -- and of course she hadn't married a clergyman.

Q: That's right. She married a judge.

A: That's right, yes. And suddenly she found herself the wife of a clergyman. So she found it quite -- quite difficult. And she was a -- there's a picture of her, under the [inaudible]

Q: I'll have to go look at that, yes.

A: Un-under this.

Q: And she probably felt some hostility, did she not? Because she was German? Maybe not.

A: I think she was so delighted to be reunited with my father and with me. And for all three of us to come together again, I mean --

Q: Yes.

A: -- it was a miracle. It was an absolute miracle.

Q: Well, it was a miracle. And the fact th-that there were English who didn't like the Germans would not have been the issue here.

A: No, no.

Q: The issue was that she was so finally --

A: That's right.

Q: -- back together. And -- and your father retired when?

A: Father retired at the age of 75. He was the vicar in Hampstead, in London.

Q: Was he?

A: And then he lived til he -- another 25 years and died at the age of hundred -- 101.

Q: Your father died at the age of 101? And how long did your mother live?

A: She died a little earlier, she was 88.



Q: So they had -- they -- they made up --

A: Yes, oh yes.

Q: -- to some degree, for those years they lost, didn't they?

A: Yes, yes, yes. But I mean, considering what they'd been through, it's amazing that they lasted so long.

Q: It's absolutely extraordinary. Just extraordinary.

A: Mm, yes.

Q: What a -- what an amazing thing. So your father and mother were together those years, did they talk much at all about what had happened --

A: No, no.

Q: -- like, did they --

A: Again that's -- again something that I've only just realized, how much more they could have talked about it.

Q: Yeah. Why do you think that is?

A: I think -- I think they found it too difficult.

Q: Just too hard to mention, yeah. Too frightening. What about nightmares, did you ever have nightmares as a -- when you got here?

A: Strange enough, no. Because really, the extraordinary thing was that from the moment I arrived here, I felt at home and I felt relaxed and released and safe and free and it was the beginning of a new life for me. I mean really life, for the first time, without all of these sort of fears and pressures that --

Q: Were gone.

A: Were [inaudible] before.

Q: Did you yourself hear anti-Semitic remarks those first years you were here?

A: No, I don -- not consciously.

Q: Not really?

A: No, no.

Q: So you were -- you -- you didn't have that memory or reminder?

A: No, no.

Q: And you never wanted to go -- excuse me.

A: Yes.

Q: What were you going to say?

A: [indecipherable]

Q: No, I was just going to say, you never wanted to go back to Germany then?

A: Not permanently, but I've been back many times and --

Q: Well, you talked about that one visit.

A: Yes.

Q: But I wondered how long it took you before you could go back?

A: And strangely I've never really had any deep resentment or hatred.

Q: Would you consider yourself unusual in that respect?

A: I would have thought so. Whether this was because the Christian message that really got into me and the message of forgiveness, I don't know. But -- and also because I had good friends in Germany who had -- as I said, stood by me and so --

Q: Did you st -- you kept up with them, you said. You've kept up with them.

A: We made contact fairl-fairly soon after the war, certainly with one or two of them and then one or two others followed and I forget now -- I -- I went back, I think first time, 1948 or '49, which was very --

Q: Oh, you went back soon, yes

A: Yes, yes. And really not -- as far as I can remember with many misgivings. But on the other hand, I knew that this was my home now.

Q: This was home for you now. Well, I -- I just -- before we stop, let me just ask you, were there any other specific memories of George Bell that you have recalled. Was there any --

End of Tape Two, Side A

Conclusion of Interview