

Dietrich Bonhoeffer makes the observation toward the beginning of *Life Together*, written while the German pastor was in prison for resisting the Nazi regime, that someone joining a Christian community would do well to let die the ideal of a “perfect” community. He means dying in the sense of really letting go of that human ideal. One possible reaction to this is to note that the facts on the ground - the imperfections of those with whom we live - take little time to reveal themselves. Yes, but that doesn’t mean, as Bonhoeffer remarks, that one may not still harbor a desire and even an expectation that the ideal is within reach. Holding on to that, he says, is a recipe for frustration and disappointment.

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