

Evil and the God of Love
Dietrich Bonhoeffer:
The Enduring Aspects of His Influence
In Confronting Evil

St. Bart's Church
New York

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I. Bonhoeffer Biography (see reverse)

II. Bonhoeffer's Views of Christ and the Church

A) Bonhoeffer's views of Christ
i. The center of all reality
ii. The man for others

B) The nature of the Church
i. Centered in God
ii. Genuine fellowship
iii. The Church is mission-oriented
iv. Remain focused on the primary — “solid at the core, loose around the edges”

III. What Does Costly Discipleship (and resisting evil) Look Like?

A. Focus on Christ the Center — Costly Grace
B. The Sermon on the Mount
C. Obligation, Obedience, Sacrifice and Suffering
D. Incremental and Deepening Concrete Action
E. Hope in the Midst of Hardship and Tragedy
F. Exercise the Principles of Nonviolent Resistance

IV. Life Applications/Learning from Bonhoeffer in Confronting Evil

A. Loyal Opposition
B. Devoted to communal theology of the Church — Christ existing in community
C. Connection between the Jesus of history and the Christ of Faith
D. Authority of the Bible for costly discipleship
E. Incremental ethics — step-by-step involvement
F. Who is Jesus Christ for us today?
G. Participation in the sufferings of God and God's people
H. Political resistance in a “World come of age”
I. Christian faith lived for others

Dietrich Bonhoeffer — Biography

(February 4, 1906 — April 9, 1945)



1906 — Born in Breslau, Germany.

A twin, he grew up in a highly educated middle/upper family.

At 15 years of age, he begins to sign his papers “Theol.”

1923 — at 17, he begins his theological studies.

He completes his basic training in two years at Berlin.

1927 — completes his doctorate at 21 years of age

1928 — too young to be ordained, Bonhoeffer becomes a lay assistant at Church in Spain.

1930 — he becomes Professor at University of Berlin.

Does post-doctoral work in New York — 1930-31

1931-32 — teaches Youth Confirmation classes at Lutheran Church in East Berlin

1933 — Germany — National Socialist Party

Adolph Hitler appointed Reich Chancellor,

Bonhoeffer moves to London to pastor a Lutheran, German speaking Church.

He becomes compelled by Gandhi’s teaching and practice of non-violence and resistance.

1934 — Confessing Church established out of Barmen Synod and Declaration.

1935 — Bonhoeffer called back from London to direct one of five legal (anti-Nazi) seminaries at Finkenwalde.

1937 — Seminary is closed by the Gestapo.

1939 — Leaves Germany for New York; three months later returns to Berlin.

1940 — Recruited by brother-in-law to be agent in the Abwehr.

1940-1943 Works as double-agent

1943 — Arrested on April 5 — Tegel Prison.

1944 — Prince Albrecht Strasse Gestapo Prison: Evidence discovered about plot to kill Hitler.

1945 — Buchenwald, Schoenberg and then Flossenburg Prisons

— killed on April 9

— April 30 — Hitler commits suicide

May 7, 1945 — Germany surrenders