

AUGSBURG COLLEGE

YOUTH THEOLOGY INSTITUTE 2009

Exploring the Life and Times of Dietrich Bonhoeffer

We experimented with a new format for the journal and essay assignment this year, allowing the students to submit creative projects in place of essays if they wished. You will find some traditional essays in this journal and some artistic reflections on what was learned during ACYTI.

Sorry and Joy! *by Hans E Becklin (song)*

Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his Legacy *by Danny Burrow, Brooklyn Park, MN*

An Attempt on Comprehending Bonhoeffer's Actions and the Christian Centered Meaning Behind Them *by Erika Coe, Roseville, MN*

Reflections on Bonhoeffer *by Katelyn Dannelski, Sturgeon Lake, MN*

The Beatitudes and Dietrich Bonhoeffer *by Emily Feld, Rosemount, MN*

Who Is Christ For Us Today? *by Nicholas Holt-Woehl, Brooklyn Park, MN*

Tortured Misfortunates *by Madison Jerde, Golden Valley, MN (essay & image)*

Costly Grace versus Cheap Grace: From My Perspective *by Allie Johnson, Apple Valley, MN*

Understanding Costly Grace in the 21st Century *by Grace Lenhart, Chippewa Falls, WI*

GZUS VLOG 1: GRACE *by Zach Malecha, Cannon Falls, MN (video blog)*

Bonhoeffer? Groovy, man. *by Melanie McMahon, Eagan, MN (essay & image)*

Ministering in the Community: Bonhoeffer Style *by Laurel Midthun, Bloomington, MN*

Religionless Christianity: God's Presence in Our Faith *by River Ostrow, St. Paul, MN*

Stellvertretung *by Alyssa Weber, Aberdeen, SD (choreographed dance)*

Mislead *by Lauren Windhorst, Cannon Falls, MN (essay & image)*


Sorrow and Joy!

Text: Dietrich Bonhoeffer, arr. Hans E. Becklin


Tune: David N. Johnson

Voice

Verse 1




Sorrow — and Joy! Striking — our senses! — Seem at the start —

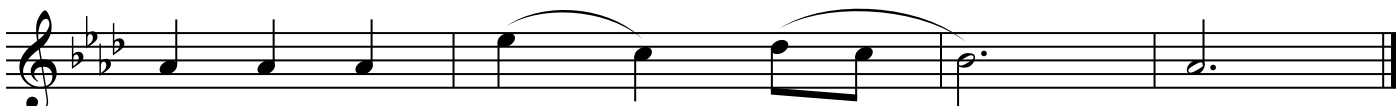


— similar! — As frost and heat at the first contact give us the

Refrain



same — sensation! — In Christ there is — central — place!



Our joy and sorrow — surround — him!

2 Sorrow and Joy!
Hurled from the Heavens!
Flash in an arc over us.
Those that they touch
Are stricken amid
All of the fragments of usual life.
(Refrain)

3 Sorrow and Joy!
Mighty and Ruinous!
Enter our lives in this way.
They transfigure
Those they encounter
Investing them with the spirit of God.
(Refrain)

4 Joy rich in Fears!
Sweetness of sorrow!
Come to us now in this place
Both so alike
Still they approach us
Potent in terror and in pow'r.
(Refrain)

8 Your Hour Comes!
You friends and brothers!
Join loyal hearts and surround!

5 From every land!
We all come hurrying!
Into the portent, swarming we peer
God's mystery
Sent from above us
Into our human sphere!
(Refrain)

6 What then is Joy?
What then is Sorrow?
Only time can decide.
When will this be?
Sorrow becomes us.
What we can see is our lives.
(Refrain)

7 Then do our kind
Sated by sadness
Turn away from the sphere.
Now comes your hour!
Mothers and loved ones!
Softly encircle the sorrow!
(Refrain)

Love's gentle glow!
This we shall follow.
Softly encircle the sorrow! (Refrain)

Dietrich Bonhoeffer and his Legacy

Danny Burrow, Brooklyn Park, MN

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was born on February 4, 1906 in Breslau, Germany. He was the sixth of eight children born to Karl and Paula Bonhoeffer. The Bonhoeffer family was fairly high in the German social order. Paula's mother was a countess, and her grandfather worked for Kaiser Wilhelm II. Karl was a respected neurologist and psychiatrist.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer decided in his early teens to be a theologian. This surprised and disappointed his parents, who were not particularly pious. They had expected him to pursue music, since he was a very good pianist, or to follow his father into a psychiatric career.

Bonhoeffer studied theology as well as several other subjects at Tübingen University starting in 1923. However, the Weimar Republic was experiencing skyrocketing inflation and a plummeting economy in the aftermath of World War I. This made studying in Berlin very difficult, and the following year Dietrich and his brother Klaus spent two months studying abroad in Italy. Dietrich was most interested by the Catholic Church in Rome, and worshiped at St. Peter's Basilica during Holy Week. When he returned, he continued his studies in Berlin under Reinhold Seeberg, who focused Bonhoeffer on the social aspect of the Church. In 1927, Bonhoeffer completed his dissertation titled *Sanctorium Communio*, which focused on theological revelation and social beliefs. *Sanctorium Communio* pleased Seeberg and brought Bonhoeffer early attention in the German Evangelical Church.

Upon finishing his theological exams, Bonhoeffer traveled to New York to study at Union College. During his studies there, he attended the First Abyssinian Baptist Church in Harlem, and was surprised by the highly spiritual worship style of the African-Americans there. He also noticed the racial discrimination there and would later on compare it to the plight of European Jews under Hitler.

Bonhoeffer returned to Berlin in July of 1931. Shortly afterwards he attended a lecture from Karl Barth, a fellow theologian whose "dialectical theology" interested him. He had a chance to meet him in person after the lecture, and they maintained correspondence with each other for years.

Adolf Hitler was appointed chancellor of Germany on January 30, 1933. Bonhoeffer was almost immediately at odds with Hitler, and despised his growing anti-Semitism and glorification of the Aryan race. Two days later, on February 1, Bonhoeffer gave a lecture through the radio with the title "The Younger Generation's Altered View of the Concept of Fuhrer". In it he outlined Hitler's potential for corruption and misguidance of Germany. Publication of the "Aryan Paragraph" later that month created a schism in the German Evangelical Church. A group called the *Deutsche Christen* supported the Nazis and advocated for the Church to create their own "Aryan Paragraph" barring non-Aryans from holding positions in the Church. Many church leaders protested such an idea on grounds that it contradicted Christian doctrine. They supported the conversion of Jews to the Christian faith.

Bonhoeffer joined other anti-Nazi Protestants in forming the Confessing Church. He concluded that there are three things the Church needs to do if the State is acting in a corrupt and

discriminatory manner: first, to determine whether the State's actions are "legitimate and in accordance with its character as state", second, to help the victims of the State's actions, and third, to rectify the State's tyranny.

Over the next few years, Bonhoeffer traveled to Sofia, Bulgaria for a World Alliance conference and to London, England to serve at a German congregation there. All the while he professed his disagreement with the *Deutsche Christen*, anti-Semitism, and Nazism in general.

In the spring of 1935, Bonhoeffer opened an underground seminary for the Confessing Church, originally located on the Baltic port city of Zingst, but moved after a few months to the town of Finkenwalde. Local congregations and benefactors financed the seminary. Bonhoeffer would lead the seminary until September of 1937, when the Gestapo closed Finkenwalde and arrested 27 of Bonhoeffer's aspiring preachers.

Bonhoeffer spent the next two years secretly meeting with his students throughout eastern Germany, while hiding from increasing Gestapo attention. There he learned of the events of Kristallnacht in November of 1938. It was about this time that Bonhoeffer that the Church and anyone resisting Hitler needed to take "responsible action" by relieving Hitler of power, killing him if necessary.

On June 2, 1939, Bonhoeffer left Germany for America in order to escape compulsory military service. However, after only a month in New York, he found himself homesick and decided that he could not return to Germany after the war if he did not live through the war in his own country with his own people. He returned home to Germany in July.

Bonhoeffer's brother-in-law, Hans von Dohnanyi, had approached Bonhoeffer a few months earlier about his willingness to take part in a resistance plot against Hitler. He had early declined, since he was planning on leaving Germany, but when he returned he contacted von Dohnanyi again, becoming involved with his conspiracy group. Their first operation was the smuggling of fourteen Jews to Switzerland. Unfortunately, the Gestapo discovered that money was missing and arrested von Dahnanyi and Bonhoeffer.

Bonhoeffer spent his years in prison writing essays, poetry and letters to family and fellow theologians; many of them smuggled out through books. During this time, the Gestapo was realizing that Bonhoeffer was involved in more than just the corruption charge for which he was arrested. They soon charged him with assisting the escape of Jews and abuse of his intelligence position in the Abwehr. By late 1944, the Gestapo finally discovered the full extent of his involvement in conspiracies against the Reich. On April 9, 1945, Bonhoeffer was hung under direct orders from Hitler.

Some of Bonhoeffer's best-known writings include his first thesis *Sanctorium Communio*, as well as *The Cost of Discipleship*, *Ethics*, and *Life Together*. Some of his enduring theological ideas are "Stellvertretung," best translated as "vicarious representative action," which supports acting on behalf of, or for, someone else, much like Christ dying on the cross for all Christians. Bonhoeffer also concluded that Christ exists as a community, rather than a figure or a god. He

also believed that the Beatitudes mentioned during the Sermon on the Mount are guidelines for people to live out, not just a hypothetical image of what Heaven will be like.

Bonhoeffer was used on many sides of issues during the Cold War, and even as recently as the War on Terror. However, since there is not a single completely trusted biography of him (the one written by his friend Eberhard Bethge is considered to be the best), it is impossible to know for sure what his opinion would be on most issues.

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An Attempt on Comprehending Bonhoeffer's Actions and the Christian Centered Meaning Behind Them

Erika Coe, Roseville, MN

In his relatively short life, Dietrich Bonhoeffer brought up many questions and made a significant effect on the theological community. It is often thought that he made such spiritual progresses and many discoveries because of the life that he led and the personal choices that he had to make. For most people, it is quite difficult and probably impossible to fully understand his views and the damning ramifications voicing them had on his family, his friends, and his own life. An analysis of Bonhoeffer's bold claims about Christ as a community, *Stellvertretung*, Grace, and Religionless Christianity will help us try to further understand his theories and why he made the statements criticizing the third Reich and the German church that condemned him to the life of a traitor of the state.

Bonhoeffer readily states that an essential piece of being Christian is the social aspect of it; the idea of Christ as a community. You can read the Bible and live by its rules, but when interacting with a community in Christ, you truly allow Christ to be alive in a fuller way. Living a solitary life doesn't cut it; it is necessary to be in the community to find Christ. Bonhoeffer stresses that we are all members of the body of Christ. This should help us to better interpret the 'love thy neighbor' phrase, as when we cast off our neighbor, we are in turn casting off Christ. Expressed in Lori Brandt Hale's *Bonhoeffer for Armchair Theologians*, Bonhoeffer states, "I and You are not interchangeable concepts, but comprise specific and distinct spheres of experience." (Hale 52). He connects our responsibility to other humans as the necessary means to become more human. The key point to be made is that the community of Christ includes the believer and the non-believer, and as this was part of Bonhoeffer's belief, one can more readily understand not his desire but his innermost voice that drove him to stand against the fastest growing political and military machine in Europe.

Bonhoeffer, through his use of the word *Stellvertretung*, revealed his rationale for openly disagreeing with the prejudice policies instated and the inhumane actions in Germany during World War II by the Nazi Regime. These actions included the unjustified closing of Jewish businesses and the imprisonment and murder of Jewish families. The direct translation of this word is 'Vicarious Representative Action'. In simpler words, Bonhoeffer wished to express the need for advocacy for those who could not advocate for themselves. This came in the long wake of the ever present question, "What is the Will of God?" Bonhoeffer believed that in this world there is no feasible way to have and follow the supposed universal set of ethics and principles, so we must therefore look to another pillar of moral conduct: Christ. This is not to say that somewhere there is a list of Christ do's and don'ts; this simply brings to light that as long as we use our judgment to be of service to others, we are acting in Christ's way. Bonhoeffer specifies, "To be conformed to the one who has become human-that is what being human really means...to be conformed to the crucified-that means to be a human being judged by God . . . to be conformed to the risen one-that means to be a new human being before God . . ." (Hale 73)

Bonhoeffer went against the law of the state and attempted to go against the Ten Commandments. In short, helping others and taking responsibility also means to take on the sin

that potentially comes with the task. Through this concept is the idea that in some cases lying is more ethical than telling the truth. Lying is less significant in comparison to saving a life. Bonhoeffer took on this sin in conspiring to assassinate Hitler and breaking the law by assisting Jews to escape. In faith, he died believing he would be forgiven for the sin he took on in his conforming to Christ and helping others.

Another crucial concept that helps clarify Bonhoeffer's stance during the War is the idea of grace. He first identifies grace as the unconditional love, mercy, and forgiveness that comes as a gift from God. He adds on to this the words either cheap or costly, as in how we interpret, see, and act in response to the grace that we're given. Costly grace is characterized by the true appreciation in receiving absolution from our sins. As in *Discipleship*:

Costly grace is the gospel which must be sought again and again, the gift which has to be asked for, the door at which one has to knock. It is costly because it calls us to discipleship...Above all, grace is costly, because it was costly to God, because it costs God the life of God's son...and because nothing can be cheap to us which is costly to God. (Hale 61)

In order to attain this sense of costly grace, one must continually follow this call to discipleship. In reverse, cheap grace is best defined in Bonhoeffer's own words as, "grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without the living, incarnate Jesus Christ." (67). Cheap grace is not appreciating what you are given, and not passing on your blessings to others. Not outright going against the Bible is still quite different from living the Bible. In relation to the Bible and more specifically the Sermon on the Mount, Bonhoeffer's close friend Jean Lassere enumerated his take on it not as an ideal yet unattainable way of life, but as a call to action in our world today. "... Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied ... Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven" (Bible). Put in this way, it was impossible for Bonhoeffer to be a follower of Christ and not try to put a stop to the killing of the Jews by Hitler and the Nazi Regime. In his search for costly grace, Bonhoeffer believed in the right and responsibility of the Church to act, aid, and stop the State when it takes too little power—or in this case, too much power. The grace that God gives us does not give us the freedom from responsibility, but gives us the freedom to be responsible.

The final theory to be explored in understanding Bonhoeffer's noncompliance with Nazi Germany's policies and actions is the idea of religionless Christianity. Bonhoeffer is in awe of the way the German Church is able to endorse and support the German State, and begins to notice the way in which religion in itself becomes a distraction to Christianity. In the view that Christianity transcends race and culture, it is then necessary, in Bonhoeffer's eyes, to be able to live a secular life. As stated in *Letters and Papers from Prison*, "To be a Christian does not mean to be religious in a particular way, to make something of oneself...on the basis of some method or other, but to be a man—not a type of man, but the man that Christ creates in us. It is not the religious act that makes the Christian, but participation in the sufferings of God in the secular life." (83). Therefore, the idea that the Church can justify or excuse the persecution of people of different religions, backgrounds, sexualities, or races, just does not match up with the word of God and the ideal of conforming to Christ. Instead, Bonhoeffer suggests a different way of living, "The God who lets us live in the world without the working hypothesis of God is the God before whom we stand continually. Before God and with God we live without God" (82). In

breaking down this statement, we find the self empowerment to live our lives under the responsibility of our own actions. To be Christian is to not act with the intention that God will come to save us. To be Christian is not to do good deeds for the sake of getting into heaven. To be Christian is to be called to this new way of life, and to act with love as the core of our existence. Deitrich spoke out against the discrimination and did all he could to stop it, because he believed that to live his life wholly on Earth was to act with love and compassion.

Through scraping the surface of Bonhoeffer's many theories and concepts we have only begun to identify with the correlation of his beliefs and decisions surrounding the war and his role in aiding the persecuted. His amazing insight and strong faith allowed him the conviction to act with purpose in his efforts to conform to Christ. He left us with his word and his legacy, and it is up to us whether to see it as merely a story of human strength or take it as a call to action and continue the fight.

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Reflections on Bonhoeffer

Katelyn Danelski, Sturgeon Lake, MN

I found Bonhoeffer's theology incredibly insightful. He is clear in his thoughts, and as the text states, his theology is very interconnected. The following are journal-type reflections on how I have seen applications and/or examples of Bonhoeffer's key points in my own life.

Reflection: Christ Existing as Community

Christ exists as community. He is not limited to working through only a specific group of people. While Christian denominations may vary far and wide on several theological points, at the center of them all we find a commitment to following Jesus Christ. We are (hopefully) able to come together and agree that it is Christ we are made to worship and give glory to, not to one another or to theological views.

I was blessed with an opportunity to see Christians from different backgrounds coming together to allow Christ to be present through them as one united community. On Good Friday of this year, an ecumenical service was held at my church. The congregation held people from the following denominations: Evangelical Lutheran, Evangelical Covenant, Pentecostal, Catholic, Methodist, and Assemblies of God. Pastors from four of those churches helped to lead the service. We all communed together. It was a beautiful, touching experience. People came together across lines of difference to share in Christ's love. After the service, people sat down to converse with one another and eat together. They shared in Christian fellowship.

Just because you are with a group of Christians does not mean there is community or fellowship. Christ must be present in the people, and for this to happen, people must engage with one another in conversation, activities, worship, or other things. At that ecumenical service, people made the direct decision to engage.

Bonhoeffer also discusses "intersubjectivity" in Christian community. "Bonhoeffer resists objectifying the Other...Bonhoeffer conceives the Other as a boundary to the self and underscores the ethical encounter rather than intimacy between self and Other" (Haynes and Hale 55). People are not objects to be converted or herded into categories. Even though differences exist, we are called to see Christ in one another and work through those differences.

I have been a part of a youth group of another denomination in addition to the one at my own church (ELCA). This other church holds views with which I do not agree. In encountering other people there, I am thankful that the majority of my experience has been welcoming. When we come to differences of opinion, we do not 'objectify' one another; that is, we do not make each other targets of conversion or make the goal of the conversation to win and impose thoughts. Instead, we engage in healthy dialogue, seeing Christ in one another. In this way, our relationships are "mediated by God" (56).

A final experience of Christ as community has been the realization that "...each encounter between I and Other comes with it the possibility of presenting Christ to the other or glimpsing Christ in the Other" (57). Christ dwells within people of all ages, races, and backgrounds. A

meaningful example of this for me was through a young girl named Amelia. I was helping at a place for underprivileged children as a part of a youth retreat weekend, and everyone was paired up with a kid. Amelia was five or six years old, dark-haired, and had big, curious brown eyes. She was the most optimistic child I've ever met, and she knew so much about Jesus. It was incredibly uplifting. I saw Christ in her eyes. It showed forth that "God can speak through even the smallest of voices," as a friend of mine pointed out.

Reflection: Costly Grace and Stellvertretung

[Costly grace] is costly because it calls us to discipleship; it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is costly because it costs people their lives; it is grace because it thereby makes them live... Above all, grace is costly, because it was costly to God, because it costs God the life of God's son... and because nothing can be cheap to us which is costly to God. (61)

So many people have taken up the 'God only on Sundays' lifestyle. We are not called to put God in a box—period, let alone in a building. Grace should evoke transformation in one's life; if it does not, then it is cheap grace, not costly. It is not our place to judge those people. It is not our place to judge the 'Easter and Christmas' crowd, either.

On a more personal note, I recently had a conversation with a friend about the Bible. This friend stated that, "You know your favorite stories and that's enough", and "The Bible is a last resort for me." This friend did not understand why I insisted that the Bible is necessary to the Christian faith or why scripture passages need to be read multiple times and with multiple people. I have come to understand these things because of trying to live in costly grace; the call to discipleship includes regular engagement with the Word of God in Scripture and in Jesus.

However, this call to discipleship also includes "Stellvertretung", meaning "vicarious representative action." "Stellvertretung, most simply, is Bonhoeffer's description of how we are to be in the world. As Christ lived and died vicariously, his disciples are called to vicarious action and responsible love on behalf of the other" (69). This statement ties Christ as community, costly grace, and stellvertretung together. While I am not called to judge this friend, I am called to try to understand where this friend is coming from and to live in "vicarious action and responsible" love on this friend's behalf; in other words, I am to be an example and hopefully this friend will see Christ rather than me and begin to understand scripture's importance to this costly grace.

I am also called to see Christ in her, and to learn about Him from her as well. All of the above relates to Bonhoeffer's "ethics as formation." "Who stands fast? Only the man... the responsible man, who tries to make his whole life answer to the question and call of God" (72). We are called to live for God so that others might see Him more clearly, too.

Reflection Three: Religionless Christianity

Bonhoeffer's religionless Christianity is about getting back to the core of Christianity. "'If religion is only a garment of Christianity... then what is religionless Christianity?'" Bonhoeffer

wants to strip Christianity of all but its barest essentials in order to discover its heart, or core" (78). Religion can simply be a garment, and it should not equal Christianity. There are components of religion, and these things can either be a part of religion or of Christianity. They are a part of Christianity if they help you to see Christ more deeply; they are a part of religion's garment if you do them out of routine or for show.

I have noticed many things that could fall to either side in our Lutheran traditions. We have liturgy and the lectionary for example; these give us a familiar pattern to our services. They can be used to engage with God, or they can be misused to simply cruise along in an 'auto-pilot' mode due to their familiarity. The reciting of the Apostles' Creed and Lord's Prayer is another example. Do we just toss out the words or do we really think about their meaning and about Christ's sacrifice? I believe they can be much like Scripture (especially since the Lord's Prayer does come from Scripture); if you take a look at them deeply again and again, you will find new insights or re-discover messages you haven't thought about for some time. You will engage with the will of God. This is a part of getting back to the core.

"For Bonhoeffer, the difference between the deus ex machina [god from the machine] and the suffering Christ marks the difference between religion and Christianity," (82) Christ suffered for us; we don't deserve that love, but we have it by God's grace. I can see that we need to start from the basis, the center of Christian faith, and then work our way outward so that we may use components like liturgy, lectionary, and reciting prayers and creeds to engage with Christ rather than with religion.

Source:

Haynes, Stephen R., and Lori Brandt Hale. Bonhoeffer for Armchair Theologians. Westminster John Knox Press, 2009.

The Beatitudes and Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Emily Feld, Rosemount, MN

In June 2009, I participated in the Augsburg College Youth Theology Institute in Minneapolis. We were a total of seventeen high school students studying the life and work of Lutheran theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer. One of the things that caught my attention while learning about Bonhoeffer was the German Lutheran Church's view on the Beatitudes during World War II. People have always been telling me that those verses in Matthew, the "Blesseds", are (or should be) a blueprint for our faith lives; that it was Jesus telling us what needs fixing in the world and in our hearts. However, I found out that it was not always so.

Back in the 1900s when Bonhoeffer was a kid, it was the accepted belief among most Lutherans in Germany that there were two "kingdoms", or "spheres". Martin Luther, founder of the Lutheran church, believed that there was the earthly, human kingdom, and the spiritual, heavenly kingdom. In her book *Bonhoeffer for Armchair Theologians*, Lori Brandt Hale says, "Luther was attempting to articulate the relationship not only between church and state but between law and gospel, and he envisioned those relationships as dialectical in nature [page 63]." Apparently, he didn't mean for this separation of kingdoms to be a reason for allowing injustice to grow, but that was how the German Lutheran church of the time understood it. They looked at their world, shrugged their shoulders, and focused on the heavenly kingdom instead. When Hitler took power in 1933, to persuade people to cooperate with his genocide against the Jews, he would in fiery speeches, essentially tell them that it was God's will to kill them. Hitler also told them that God had given him the right to do so. The Jews, kind of like Jesus Christ?

Lutherans, like many other religious institutions, were silent against this abuse of power and the Scriptures. Everybody was afraid of persecution as Hitler took hold, even though in the Beatitudes we are told "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 5:10) The German Lutheran church at the time would read the Beatitudes and essentially think, "It's hard to make peace, care for the poor in spirit, and stand up for people when you're persecuted." So they didn't even think to *try* and do these things. They basically thought it was all to show how sinful we humans are!

In 1930, Bonhoeffer, now in his 20s, traveled from Germany to New York. He would then begin his studies at Union Theological Seminary in Manhattan. While there, he met people like professor and social ethicist Reinhold Niebuhr. Professor Niebuhr was known to say that we should preach with the bible in one hand and a newspaper in the other. Another man Bonhoeffer met was fellow student Jean Lasserre. Lasserre was a deeply committed pacifist, and challenged Bonhoeffer when he told him his thoughts on the Sermon on the Mount. The Sermon on the Mount holds the Beatitudes, among other notable verses. Lasserre thought that this sermon (or collection of sermons) should be regarded as instructions, not some happy thing to be realized in heaven. What these two men were saying is that they believed Luther's two kingdoms are completely related to each other. This wasn't a totally foreign concept to Bonhoeffer, though he was raised with the two kingdoms idea. But it was different enough for him to be wary of it. He didn't really want to embrace it at first.

His friendship with student Frank Fisher, a black American, helped him to see the injustices inflicted on the African American people in those times. Through this friendship, he probably learned how to empathize more and learn from people who are oppressed, which would help him in his later work against the Third Reich back in Germany. During this year Bonhoeffer seemed to realize how the Sermon on the Mount, and more specifically the Beatitudes, could be applied to real life. Reading the Beatitudes, he didn't think it was an unattainable goal, to be a righteous person or a peacemaker or a merciful person. He thought that we should at least *try* to obey these instructions from Jesus in order to be true disciples. Indeed, he said "only believers obey" and "only the obedient believe." (Hale 63)

A few years later back in Germany, a now Pastor Bonhoeffer was an outspoken critic of the Nazi regime, and he worked with others that did the same. Up until 1938, he thought of himself as a pacifist, but as things in Germany got worse, he realized the only way to end the bloodshed would be by paradoxically killing Hitler. The Fuhrer had killed millions and intimidated everyone else. To paraphrase Pastor John Matthews, who is a pastor at Grace Lutheran in Apple Valley, MN and Bonhoeffer scholar, when the government-- part of the earthly/secular kingdom-- wasn't acting like a real government and killing innocents instead of protecting them, Bonhoeffer believed the church should have a role in confronting the un-government; one kingdom meeting the other.

Bonhoeffer believed that the Beatitudes were a call to follow Jesus, to care for these poor in spirit, to identify with the people "thirsting for righteousness," to be merciful, striving for peace—because that is what Jesus did. In his case, all of this applied to Bonhoeffer's work to overcome Hitler. He spoke out to bring peace and religious freedom, he was persecuted and jailed, he suffered alongside the Jews so as to help them, all in the name of God. You could say that the Beatitudes encompass some of the philosophies of Bonhoeffer. Everything he did to promote justice was a sign of his "Christ existing in community" idea, that what we do in our world can be a sign of Jesus' presence in our lives. And Jesus wanted us to live in community. Bonhoeffer also place-shared with people in need, those who were oppressed (the blessed people, according to the Beatitudes) and he empathized and learned from them. Bonhoeffer called that vicarious representative action, or in German *Stellvertretung*.

There are many people today who view the Beatitudes as a serious call to action, like Dietrich Bonhoeffer did over fifty years ago. For example, one such group call themselves the Red-Letter Christians. They are a group of Evangelical Christians who are trying to bring more focus to issues that Jesus directly talked about—like poverty, peace and justice—into American politics. They believe that both the Religious Right and Liberals spend too much time bickering about abortion and gay marriage, and that many Evangelicals have lost sight of what Jesus' most important teachings: loving your neighbor, making peace, striving for justice and good in the world. Red-Letter Christians frequently refer to the Sermon on the Mount and the Beatitudes to promote their cause. Bonhoeffer seemed to acknowledge the need for a separation of church and state to a certain extent, but during WWII there were many problems in Germany that could have been solved or brought to more people's attention if the faith community had made it a more critical priority to do just that. Indeed, many social justice problems today could be solved as well.

The Beatitudes were a very influential part of Bonhoeffer discovering his own theology. He understood that the Beatitudes—Jesus’ own words—should be taken seriously by all Christians as a call to action, as a blueprint for our faith.

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Pastor John Matthews, personal interview. Grace Lutheran Church in Apple Valley, MN

Who Is Christ For Us Today?

Nicholas Holt-Woehl, Brooklyn Park, MN

Who is Christ for us today? That is the question that theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer really struggled with. This question is a difficult one to answer for it may not have a set response. It could also just be something at the back of our minds that we ask at all times and in every place that we go. In Bonhoeffer's time, it was difficult to find Christ anywhere because of the evil things that Adolph Hitler was doing, especially when Hitler was using the church for his own purposes. The following essay will cover who Christ was in Bonhoeffer's time during World War Two and also my observation on who Christ is for us today.

In Bonhoeffer's time, it was very difficult to find Christ because of Hitler's taking over the church. This was accomplished by having a Reich Bishop who would decide the "correct" beliefs in Nazi Germany. So, Christ may have been viewed differently because of all those awful things that were happening: the church being taken over, the Jews being taken away and killed, and the war going on. Some people may have thought that Christ had left because of all those awful things that were happening and that he was not stopping or helping to stop them from happening. Bonhoeffer would say that Christ is somebody to listen to for advice on certain subjects, such as getting into Heaven.

I believe that Christ for us today is sort of a role model; to be like him is a good way to get into Heaven. But along with that, he is also something we can never be, only something we can aspire to be like. He also gives us the guidelines for Christian living: the Beatitudes.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled. Blessed are the merciful for they will receive mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you. (Matthew 5:3-12 NRSV)

Bonhoeffer saw these beatitudes, not as hoping that you did all those to get into heaven, but that you would do them and get into heaven. Along with the beatitudes, Jesus also gave many different parables about what heaven is like and how to get into heaven. He is also a healer for the people in the hospital who need help. He might not heal them directly, but if they have enough faith, he can heal them.

Though in these times where everybody has work to do and not enough time for church, it is, even now, difficult to find Christ. Some people who are very ill might say that Christ did not hear their prayers and help them. But he might have heard their prayers and helped them in a way that they do not know yet. For example, a person has the flu for a long time and prays every day. After being sick for two weeks they feel as if Christ has not heard their prayers so they give up when; in fact, they were slowly getting better that whole time that they were praying. So even though Christ is not physically next to us, he can still heal us from our sicknesses. Christ is also a

savior for us. He is the physical form of God on earth who forgives us of our sins. Bonhoeffer would agree with what I believe, that Christ is for us today because of how little really changed, theologically, between then and now.

Christ really hasn't changed much for us over the years. Only our view of him and his works has changed. That is especially true with each new translation of the bible that we get. Each gospel is translated a little differently not only in translation of the whole Bible, but just how each writer interpreted what he experienced. That is really all that matters in how one would interpret Christ, what gospel they look in and what translation they use. Who Christ is for us today remains a question that needs to be asked in every time and place.

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Tortured Misfortunates

Madison Jerde, Golden Valley, MN

Assembled from canvas, newspaper, flour, spray paint, and various other objects, my final ACYTI project, labeled *Tortured Misfortunates*, is my attempt to convey the unfortunate aspects of torture, and then contrast them with Bonhoeffer's opposition of a victimizing system. This theory relies on the concept that "the disposed need justice" (Bonhoeffer); but, it is primarily centered around Matthew 5:10, and is as follows: "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven".

The black background of the painting symbolizes the quiet, hopeless desperation that victims of torture suffer daily, while the three red sides represent a barrier, implying that the victims are trapped in this cycle. The remaining side, however, is colorless and open, representing possible salvation. On the bottom end of the canvas is the phrase 'matthew five ten', suggesting that redemption is possible through faith. The phrase's location on the bottom of the canvas is significant as well; it is meant as a tangible indicator that what is correct, and what is true, are not always the most obvious solution.

The newspaper hands in the center denote people who have been tortured. The number of paper hands is important as well; there are five hands, a number that represents a search for freedom ("Numbers"). The quotes written on the hands are from Sister Dianna Ortiz, the cofounder and executive director of a group of torture survivors, taken from her experiences as a torture victim. The phrases with punctuation are those that Ortiz herself has said or written, whereas the phrases without punctuation are comments made by her torturers. The lack of punctuation is used to indicate the repetition of memories that occur and reoccur frequently within the minds of torture victims.

As seven is a number generally associated with religion, the seven flower pins in the center of the piece imply a lack of spirituality in the lives of the torture victims which disallows them from moving forward, just as the pins keep the hands fastened together.

Finally, the pieces of mirror represent the people who allow torture to happen. Yahuda Bauer, an Israeli historian said, "Thou shalt not be a victim. Thou shalt not be a perpetrator. Above all, thou shalt not be a bystander". By looking into the shattered mirror, you will see yourself. Which are you?

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Costly Grace versus Cheap Grace: From My Perspective

Allie Johnson, Apple Valley, MN

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”. These words come from the gospel of John, chapter 3 verse 16. I have found that these words are instrumental in understanding the concept of costly grace. The idea of costly grace comes from the theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He wrote of costly grace versus cheap grace. This can be a confusing concept at first. However, as I came to unravel the meaning, I found that this idea of costly grace helps to define our lives as Christians. As I began to grasp the concept, I was intrigued to follow this theology myself. There are many different ways to interpret Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s concept of costly grace and cheap grace, but the most efficient way to come to understand its true meaning is to apply it to one’s own life.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer describes cheap grace versus costly grace in a variety of ways. Foremost, he plays the two concepts against each other. He states that we, as Christians, need to see the grace that God has given us as costly. The grace God has granted us originates from the crucifixion of Jesus. Jesus gave himself up so that our sins could be forgiven; thus he granted us this grace that would forgive our sins in the eyes of God. Jesus sacrificed himself for all the people of the world, so that we may have eternal life, this act was costly to him because it cost him his life. Therefore, as Bonhoeffer teaches, we must follow after Jesus, even if it is costly to us. He gives us a call to action; He calls us to give up or sacrifice ourselves, although not necessarily in the dramatic way of Jesus, for our grace. This is how Bonhoeffer describes costly grace. Living our lives as Christians, following Jesus, even if it costly to us. Thus, Bonhoeffer distinguishes the difference between cheap grace and costly grace as a call to sacrificial action. Cheap grace is described as the opposite of costly grace. According to the book, *Bonhoeffer for Armchair Theologians*, “‘Cheap grace... is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without the living, incarnate Jesus Christ.’ It is grace without the constant knowledge and hope of life and death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” While I find Bonhoeffer’s theology of cheap grace and costly grace as the most influential concept I learned at the Augsburg College Youth Theology Institute, I myself went about interpreting it in a way that had the most meaning to me.

From my perspective, cheap grace is essentially exactly how it sounds; it is grace that is cheap. When Bonhoeffer describes it as “grace without the cross,” people who live on cheap grace don’t make the connection between the sacrifice of Jesus and the grace we have been granted by God. It means that people are not truly sacrificing anything for the grace God has granted them. It is cheap in the way that it is not costing people anything! I see it as not going beyond. People are not truly taking the call of God into their own lives. One way to describe this is through the example of people who only go to church, and do little else in their lives as Christians. People who believe that going to church is all that they need to do to be Christians. They keep God and their Christian lives in church on Sunday mornings. This is cheap grace. It is accepting the grace, but not going beyond, not understanding what forgiving our sins and granting us this grace cost *God*. Cheap grace is living as a Christian without attempting to follow Jesus. When people are accepting cheap grace, they are taking the grace that God has granted them for granted. They see it as a given thing, and therefore believe they need not to go out of their way to live as Christians in their daily lives (Bonhoeffer 43). It is forgiveness from God without repentance. People who accept cheap grace are not going beyond, which is really what God has called us to do when he gave up his son.

Costly grace, on the other hand, is about sacrificing one’s self and living as a true Christian. That is really what God intended for his children when he granted us this grace. “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” This bible verse from John 3:16 displays the concept of costly grace. Costly grace is most important because it cost Jesus his life and it cost God his son. God gave up his only son in order for us to be saved, so that we

could be granted grace. It shows the cost of our grace. Costly grace means that we should not just accept this grace as a given thing; we should make it costly to ourselves as well. Grace is a gift from God that we did not deserve and by bestowing upon his children this gift, God is calling us to follow Jesus even if it costs us. However, this means more than just going to church. I see costly grace as taking what we learn from the bible and applying it to our lives. We can put what God has taught us into action. Costly grace is costly to us because it can cost us our lives and it is costly in the eyes of God because it cost him his son.

As I came to terms with the idea of costly grace versus cheap grace, I began to ponder something important. Which type of grace was I living? I think that before the Augsburg College Youth Theology Institute, I did not truly understand what it meant to be a Christian, but through Bonhoeffer's teaching of costly grace I now think that I can really live my life as a true Christian. Previously, I went to church on Sunday and I participated in other faith related activities, but I could hardly call those things following Jesus. I believe that I accepted cheap grace. I took God's grace for granted. I tried to live as a Christian but I wasn't making any costly efforts for God. I was sitting in the classroom during the Augsburg College Youth Theology Institute and something struck a chord in my mind when we were discussing costly grace and cheap grace. I began to scribble my thoughts furiously in my journal as it all came together. I began to realize that I needed to live with costly grace—something I don't believe I had been doing before. I had been called to action.

Now that I understand costly grace, I think that I have realized my vocation. First, all I want now is to follow Jesus. I will make sacrifices for God. I want to live out the bible and live out his word. I have realized that the grace God has granted us, the grace he has granted me, is a gift. If we are going to take this gift, we need to let it change us and let it cost us something. I am willing to let my grace from God cost me something. I plan to begin to fully live out my life as a Christian and take action. Ever since I came back from a mission trip last summer I have realized that I want nothing more than to help people, to help God's children. After discovering costly grace, I have realized that I can follow Jesus by helping people the way he did. During the Theology Institute, I made this connection and I believe that I was called by God. I think that God is calling me to help others in this world, because we are all God's children. He is calling me to take what I learn from His word and put it to use. It is my call to action; I want to try to right the wrongs in this world, although it might be costly to me. I am now going to live with costly grace. This summer I have begun to put what I have learned and apply it to my life. I traveled down to the Texas Gulf Coast in the middle of July to aid in helping hurricane relief with my church. This action was costly to me because it cost me time out of my summer and even some of the comforts of home. And while I am not sure if that is what Bonhoeffer meant when he said that grace should be costly to us, I felt that I was truly where God wanted me. I was helping people and while I was there I was also helping to spread the word of God. I was following after Jesus and I will continue to follow after Jesus and live in the way of costly grace. I know that following Jesus can be costly; it cost Dietrich Bonhoeffer his life. But I am willing to accept the gift of God's grace and the call to sacrificial action that accompanies it. I am willing to allow it to change and shape me and I will accept the transformation. I am ready and willing and have already begun to take what I have learned about cheap grace versus costly grace and put these ideas into action in my daily life.

I discovered many new things during the Augsburg College Youth Theology Institute, but none seemed to have as great of an impact as the theological concept of costly grace versus cheap grace. Through my understanding of this idea I also came to understand my vocation. By applying Dietrich Bonhoeffer's theology to my own life I have finally come to terms with the true meaning of costly grace, and I plan to follow this theology for the rest of my life and discover what it means to truly be a Christian.

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Understanding Costly Grace in the 21st Century

By Grace Lenhart, Chippewa Falls, WI

Deitrich Bonhoeffer, a widely known German Theologian who came to prominence at the height of Hitler's Third Reich, wrote with great clarity and passion on many theological ideas and principles. One of his most recognized principles is that of "costly grace". In 1937, Deitrich Bonhoeffer finished his book *Nachfolge* which has been translated into the book *Discipleship*, a work in which he exposed the idea of cheap grace and costly grace.

The bible depicts grace as a gift from God. In the New Testament, we learn that grace was given to us through Jesus Christ who died to save us from the consequences or cost of our sins. Said in another way, we are saved from our sins through the grace of God. In the recently published NRSV Lutheran Study Bible, grace is depicted as "God's unmerited love for humanity" (1856). An example of this definition can be found in the New Testament book of Romans chapter 3, verses 24 through 26. Writing to the Christian church in Rome, St. Paul says of all sinners:

they are now justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, whom God put forward as a sacrifice of atonement by his blood, effective through faith. He did this to show his righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over the sins previously committed; it was to prove at the present time that he himself is righteous and that he justifies the one who has faith in Jesus.

Bonhoeffer rooted his concept of costly grace in the theology of Martin Luther, and Luther's explicit acknowledgement of Christ's suffering on behalf of us all. Bonhoeffer made a distinction between cheap grace and costly grace that is important to keep in mind. Costly grace, "acknowledges the correlation of grace and discipleship". There is a relationship between receiving grace and following God. We are receiving grace so that we can continue to follow God and grow through our mistakes. Cheap grace on the other hand is "grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without the living, incarnate Jesus Christ." Bonhoeffer also says that cheap grace is the mortal enemy of the church. That idea is illustrated in this quote: "Like ravens we have gathered around the carcass of cheap grace. From it we have imbibed the poison which has killed the following of Jesus among us" (pg.67). He also illustrates this as, "that grace we bestow on ourselves".

Cheap grace and costly grace are two very different things. A challenge that Bonhoeffer laid before believers was to encourage them to ask, *Which one am I embodying?* In this new century, it is easier than ever to be distracted from our discipleship to God. The media is blaring in every direction every hour of the day. In the Western World the message it often communicates is this: we can have everything without sacrifice or cost to self. Furthermore, we are told that these things are a right and privilege, not a gift. We are bombarded with these ideas—ideas that begin in popular culture but soon begin to filter into our theology. Before long, we look at God's grace as an obligation of God instead of a gift of God, with no thought at all given to discipleship. This point is illustrated in Scripture in Romans 6:1-2

What then are we to say? Should we continue in sin in order that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin go on living in it?...

This is not to say however, that we are to work for grace, this is illustrated in this passage from Romans 11:6:

But if it is by grace, it is no longer on the basis of works, otherwise grace would no longer be grace.

In this century with the ever present media and concentration on sin, we often become numb to the sin in our lives. We fail to recognize that God's gift of forgiveness calls forth from us some kind of response. For the Christian, that response comes in the form of discipleship. The question each and every Christian is invited to ask each and every day is this: *What will my response be today, to the goodness of Jesus Christ that I have received as a free gift?*

What are we to learn from this, and how might this lesson be lifted up for future generations? First, we must always remind one another that grace is a free and unearned gift from God. As much as we might like to earn it we can't; we can only receive it. And perhaps that too—when all is said and done—is grace as well. For even the ability to accept such a profound and life changing gift such as this is yet another gift of God. Perhaps only then shall we have the ability to move forward as new creations in Christ Jesus, into the new future and new hope that the Holy Spirit is daily inviting us.

For the gift of grace is meant not only to save us but to change us. To change us into creatures who no longer love sinning but creatures who love God. Creatures who discover that grace will now cost us our old ways, our friends, our carriers, and maybe our lives. That may seem harsh, but let us realize that life is only our life on earth. Our death is merely the beginning of a great life with God. As Bonhoeffer has illustrated, grace is costly.

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GZUS VLOG 1: GRACE

Video Blog by Zach Malecha, Cannon Falls, MN

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wabQ03ogdW0>

Bonhoeffer? Groovy, man.

Artist's note by Melanie McMahon, Eagan, MN

Bonhoeffer believed that Christ died vicariously for us and that we must love and help each other to get through this world. The hippies had similar beliefs; they believed in spreading unconditional love to stop suffering.

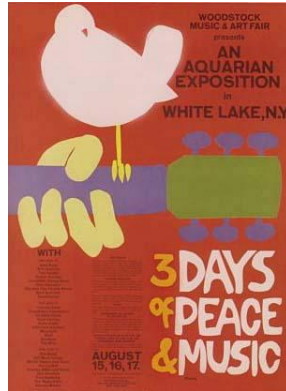
The picture is a section of, perhaps, a wall in an alley in New York. The posters collaged here mostly promote unconditional love towards everyone. I copied four of the posters and created one of them.

On the left side, under everything, there is a poster for a hospital. It has the winged staff and twisted snake symbol that represents doctors. The job of Doctors and their assistants is to help everyone and care for them.

In the center, there is an anti Vietnam War poster. It features a scarecrow clad in a gas mask and other things a soldier might wear in a field of flowers. It reads: "What if they gave a war and nobody came..." In the bottom left corner is another antiwar poster, telling about the universal suffering war brings. It reads: "War is not healthy for children and other living things".



In the right bottom corner is a Woodstock poster advertising "3 days of peace and music".



In the upper left, there is an Obama campaign poster. Many people believe he will make everything better and end the war in the Middle East.

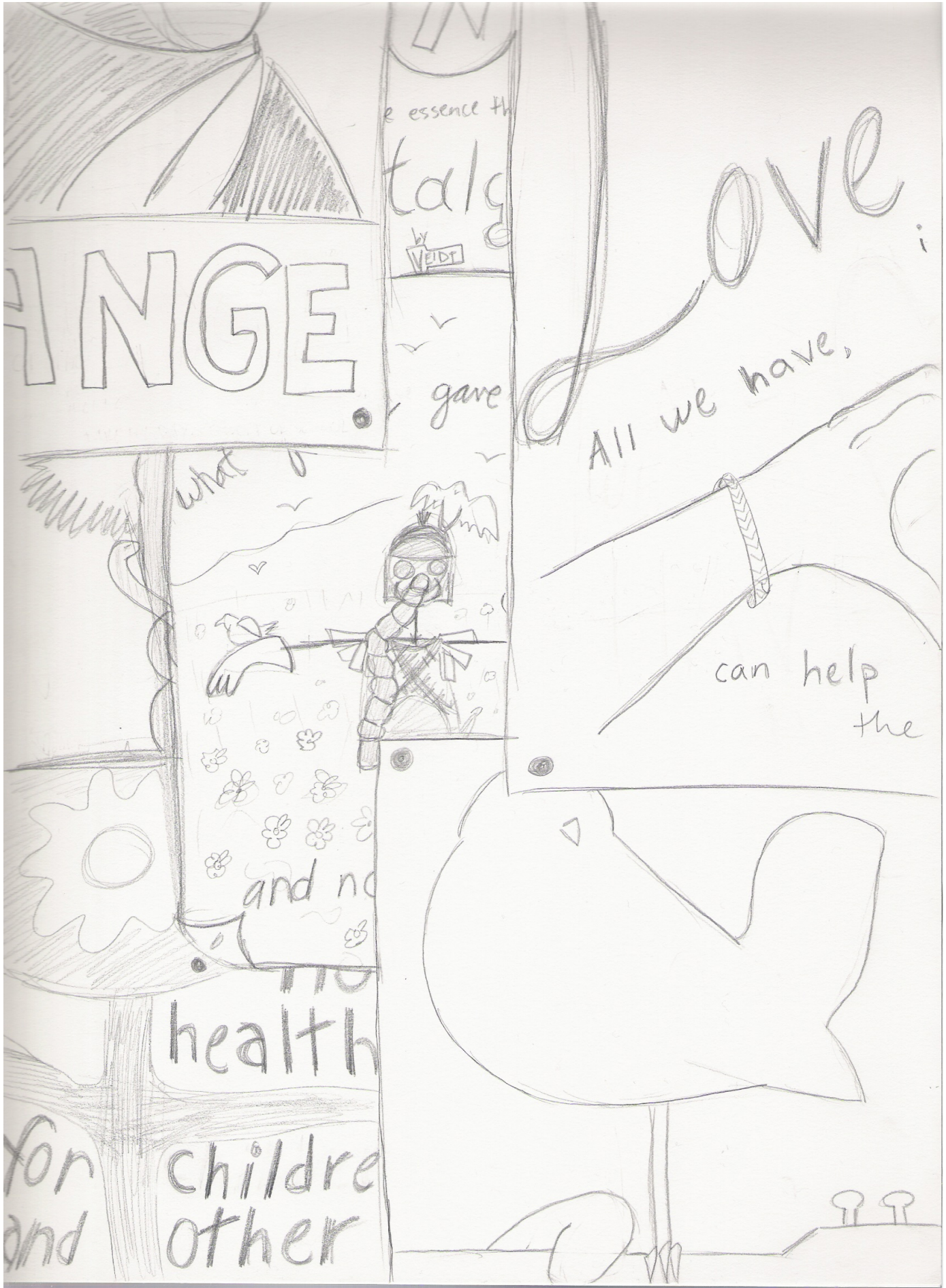


In the upper right is a poster I designed. It shows two hands making a heart and reads: “love is all we have, the only way each can help the other”. This was said by Euripides, who wrote plays about ordinary people and the troubles they overcome rather than legendary heroes.

In the upper center, is something mostly for my personal amusement. It’s an advertisement for Nostalgia cologne from Dave Gibbons’ graphic novel Watchmen. The fictional character, who sells the product, Adrian Veidt, brings the USA and the USSR to peace during the Cold War at the end of the novel.

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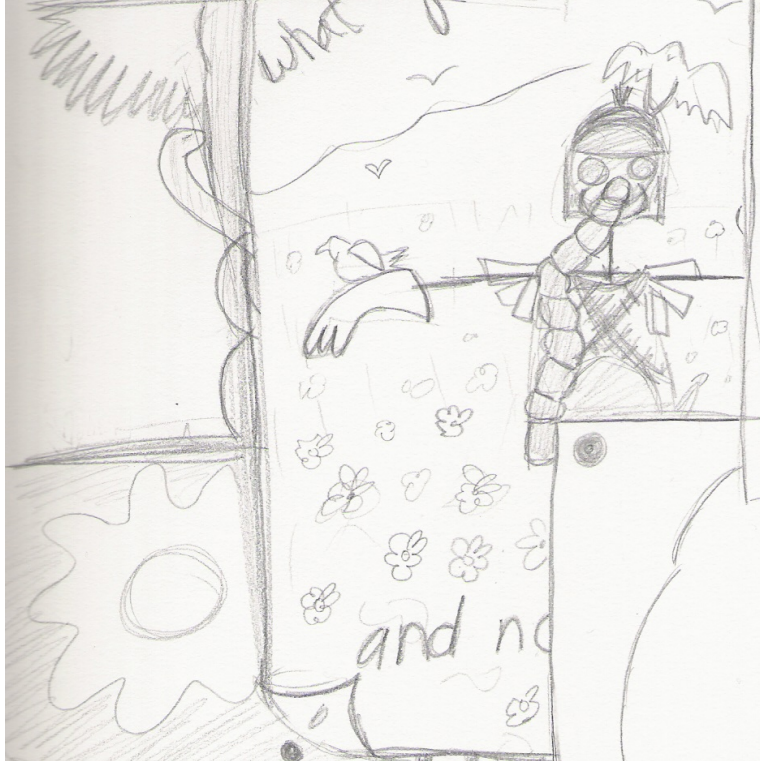
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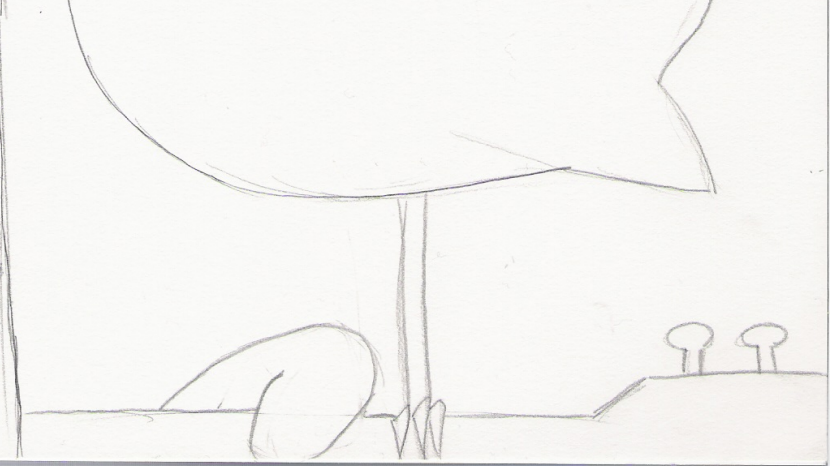
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Ministering in the Community: Bonhoeffer Style

Laurel Midthun, Bloomington, MN

The only profitable relationship to others- and especially to our weaker brethren - is one of love, and that means the will to hold fellowship with them...In bearing with men God maintained fellowship with them. It is the law of Christ that was fulfilled in the Cross. And Christians must share in this law. They must suffer their brethren, but, what is more important, now that the law of Christ has been fulfilled, they can bear with their brethren (Bonhoeffer 100-102).

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, an early 20th century theologian, wrote a variety of books, essays and letters. Within these works scholars have discerned five main ideas (Cheap Grace vs. Costly Grace, Ethics as a Formation, Stellvertretung, Christ Existing as a Community and Religionless Christianity). The idea which I shall examine closer is Christ Existing as Community.

One of the most communal experiences that Bonhoeffer had was at the Finkenwalde seminary in Germany. After the Lutheran church adopted the Aryan Paragraph in 1934 the Confessing church was formed. In 1935, the church appointed Bonhoeffer as director over an outpost resistance seminary. After his two years there Bonhoeffer wrote *Life Together*. It is a small book of five chapters discussing both the practice of community living and its necessity for Christian life. In the fourth chapter, entitled "Ministry", he discusses a number of ways that Christians minister to one another. One of those ideas was "The Ministry of Bearing". Within the realm of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's idea of Christ Existing as Community, is the need for Christians to participate in the Ministry of Bearing. To further understand the idea of The Ministry of Bearing we must first discuss how we exist in our relationships with others, where Christ exists within those relationships. The necessity of such a ministry and how Christ has enabled us to do so. In synopsis, we will examine what The Ministry of Bearing truly is.

"What does it mean to be human? For Bonhoeffer, the answer is clear. Human beings exist only in relationship to, and responsibility for, other human beings" (Hale 52). In both the Bonhoeffer and Kantian realm there is an I and an Other. The I is referring to the you as a person. The other is referring to all of those who are not you. Where the two differ is that Kant believes, "the I experiences another person only as an other I" (56). For Bonhoeffer, though, the other is one "Who places before me an ethical decision" (52). Also for Bonhoeffer "The relationship between I and You... is not a direct relationship, but one mediated by the divine you" (56). For Bonhoeffer, Christ comes into the picture; in *Life Together*, he believes first "that a Christian needs others because of Jesus Christ. It means, second, that a Christian comes to the other only through Jesus Christ. It means, third, that in Jesus Christ we have been chosen from eternity, accepted in time, and united for eternity." "We have one another only through Christ, but through Christ we do have one another, wholly and for all eternity" (Bonhoeffer 21). The Ministry of Bearing must be executed under Bonhoeffer's idea of the I, the other and Christ. Because Bonhoeffer believes that relationships are not only

critical, but essential, in fact it is very existence to serve and be served by one another. All three, the I, the other, and Christ are interconnected on every level. From passing by one another on the street or conversing before the gates of heaven.

But where is it that we should focus our minds, the streets of Earth or the road to Heaven? This question postulates the quandary of the two kingdoms. Martin Luther presented this idea of two separate realms, the Earthly Kingdom and the Heavenly Kingdom. The foremost Reformer had meant for people to live in both kingdoms. However, as time passed, people used the idea to separate the church from anything and everything, including politics and the suffering of the innocent brought on by such institutions. Bonhoeffer had serious problems with this ethical independence. In a letter written to his brother after ten years under Hitler's regime, Bonhoeffer says,

There are some people who regard it as frivolous, and some Christians think it impious for anyone to hope and prepare for a better EARTHLY future. They think that the meaning of present events is chaos, disorder, and catastrophe; and in resignation or pious escapism they surrender all responsibility for reconstruction and for future generations. It may be that the day of judgment will dawn tomorrow; in that case, we shall gladly stop working for a better future. But not before. (Kelly 509)

Bonhoeffer writes that "We are called to live in the world... Etsi Deus non daretur- as if there were no God" (Hale 78). What Bonhoeffer is trying to say is that people should not look to God as Deus Ex Machina; God as the machine, a god who will sweep down from the clouds and fix everything in the blink of an eye when chaos has crippled humanity. Nonetheless, he is not trying to glorify humanity or reduce our dependency on Christ either. He is rather trying to impress upon us that Christ is the enabler:

We are not Christ, but if we want to be Christians, we must have some share in Christ's large-heartedness by acting with responsibility and in freedom when the hour of danger comes, and by showing a real sympathy that springs, not from fear, but from the liberating and redeeming love of Christ for all who suffer. Mere waiting and looking on is not Christian behavior. (Bonhoeffer 508)

The Ministry of Bearing is one that takes place on earth. It is not, watching from the sidelines as others suffer hoping that God will swoop in and save them but recognizing that we are Christ on earth and so able to help those who suffer here.

We are able to live on earth and to try to make earth a more heavenly place because Christ has allowed us that freedom. Before Christ's death, actions were measured against other actions. Every good deed was payment for a bad one. Humans served others because they had to, because it was necessary for forgiveness and salvation in Heaven:

When we were controlled by our old nature, sinful desires were at work within us, and the law aroused these evil desires that produced sinful deeds, resulting in death. But now we have been released from the law, for we died with Christ, and we are no longer captive to its power. Now we can really serve God, not in

the old way by obeying the letter of the law but in the new way, by the spirit.
(Romans 7: 5-6)

Bonhoeffer puts it in different terms:

When God was merciful to us, we learned to be merciful with our brethren. When we received forgiveness instead of judgment we, too, were made ready to forgive our brethren... Thus God himself taught us to meet one another as God has met us in Christ. 'Wherefore receive ye one another as Christ also received us to the glory of God' [Romans 15:7] (Bonhoeffer, 24-25).

It is not a requirement to serve humanity in earthly deeds: It is not a stipulation but a privilege. Still, at the very beginning of *Life Together* Bonhoeffer states:

It is not simply to be taken for granted that the Christian has the privilege of living among other Christians. Jesus Christ lived in the midst of his enemies. At the end all his disciples deserted him. On the cross he was utterly alone, surrounded by evildoers and mockers. For this cause he had come, to bring peace to the enemies of God. So the Christian, too, belongs not in the seclusion of a cloistered life but in the thick of foes. There is his commission, his work.
(Bonhoeffer 17)

Because Jesus died for us, releasing the stipulation of sacrifices and compensation, we are freed to minister to others by bearing their burdens.

Thus, we arrive at the Ministry of Bearing: Bonhoeffer summarizes the idea concisely:

'Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ' [Gal. 6:2] Thus the law of Christ is a law of bearing. Bearing means forbearing and sustaining. The brother is a burden to the Christian, precisely because he is a Christian. For the pagan the other person never becomes a burden at all. He simply sidesteps every burden that others may impose upon him. The Christian, however, must bear the burden of a brother. He must suffer and endure the brother. It is only when he is a burden that another person is really a brother and not merely an object to be manipulated. The burden of Men was so heavy for God-Self that He had to endure the Cross. God verily bore the burden of men in the body of Jesus Christ. In bearing with men, God maintained fellowship with them. It is the law of Christ that was fulfilled in the Cross and Christians must share in this law. They must suffer their brethren, but, what is more important, now that the law of Christ has been fulfilled. They can bear with their brethren (Bonhoeffer 100).

We live in relation to one another. The difference between a Christian and a non-Christian is not their creed or their clothing; rather it is that the Christian is freed to serve. They are released from a selfish desire for repayment or glory, and thus able to serve one another selflessly and fully. Beyond the ability to do so, the Christian may evolve in these relationships, no matter how painful. We are assured the promise that we can suffer in empathy with one another because Christ has suffered it first. We are not to live in the world always day-dreaming away about a heaven where there is no pain or expecting an angel to swoop down and do our work for us. The Christian is able

to make earth a more heavenly place by bearing the burdens of others. Practically bearing another's burdens is not confined to certain areas of life or projects. Elsewhere in *Life Together* Bonhoeffer discusses The Ministries of Helping, Hearing, and Proclaiming the Word of God. He also talks about confessing to one another and communion. There are also aspects of worship, prayer, and scripture reading both with others and in solitude included in *Christ Existing As A Community*. According to Bonhoeffer, these facets are essential to the Christian life, not as strict rules and observances but to enhance the communal experience. We are freed to love as Christ first loved us, to seek out the meek and the broken, the orphan, the widow, the hungry, the hurt, the lost lambs. We find those people, those lost lambs, and we exist in community with them, a community of pain because it is something we all understand. It is something we all have felt and know.

Intricate to Bonhoeffer's idea of Christ Existing as a Community is The Ministry of Bearing. We exist in relationship to one another but more importantly we exist with Christ mediating those relationships and thus we are placed at ethical decisions. The decisions must not be decided based the idea of a god who swoops down from the sky to fix the world but rather one that has enabled us to act justly without the need for selfish motivation. A Christian therefore is able to Minister to anyone, whether he be a fellow Christian or, as Bonhoeffer puts it, a "Pagan," by; "forbearing and sustaining.... suffering and enduring the brother" (Bonhoeffer 100). Finkenwalde Seminary was shut down after only two short years of ministry. However, Bonhoeffer used what he learned through the experience to stress how much Christ exists as community; and how the Ministry of Bearing is intricate to that. It is in this way that Christians are able to live in a community and truly share life together.

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Religionless Christianity: God's Presence in Our Faith

River Ostrow, St. Paul, MN

Throughout history, countless wars and acts of violence can be attributed to disagreements around the subjects of religion and spirituality. However, many disputes around these issues have been contrastingly peaceful. These times of questioning are often when we learn the most about our faith and at the same time create new beliefs and paths of worship. Two men who showed such rebellious thought lived during a time when their faith was not the only thing being drastically changed. These men were German theologians Karl Barth and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. They contemplated an idea that at first seems paradoxical but which they made valid. 'Religionless Christianity' is a concept that is not only still relevant today, but illustrates an important element of the Christian faith.

When speaking of the tendencies of German philosopher Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, Karl Barth said "One can not speak of God simply by speaking of man in a loud voice" (Haynes and Hale 6). This statement came not simply from an opposition to Schleiermacher's way of thinking, but also from a frustration with the philosophical views at that time. Specifically, both Bonhoeffer and Barth were fighting a new and very popular movement called German idealism. An aspect of German idealism that both men strongly objected to was the idea that human beings are more important than anything else on this planet. Their justification for this claim was that we do not need anything else to make us significant. Everything else in this world would be insignificant without humans. For example, where nature is just an object with no traces of the divine and no value except for the needs of humans, humans stand alone as being ends in themselves. According to Bonhoeffer, this view not only cancels our ability to see the Holy Spirit in nature and in our lives, it also eliminates the possibility of revelation and discovery.

Another problem with the new movement was the idea that humans have the ability to find God completely. Barth counters this by saying "the human being to whom God reveals himself is the human being to whom God cannot be revealed" (Wustenberg 46). We flatter ourselves by thinking we can comprehend our eternally transcendent God. In this way, we make it harder to become the unselfish beings we want to be and again push away true revelation and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

With these criticisms of the new beliefs and teachings of German idealism came a new way of thinking for both Barth and Bonhoeffer. For Bonhoeffer, it inspired him to write of a new ideal for Christian life called 'religionless Christianity'.

To understand 'religionless Christianity', it is first important to understand the difference between religion and Christianity as well as to understand that the meaning and use of the word religion has changed over time. Essentially, it begins with the exchange of the word *religion* for the word *faith*. Before and during the Reformation, the word *religion* was used, after the Reformation religion it was replaced by the word *faith*. Because of the time of this exchange, we can see that after the reformation the words religion and faith were opposites. This polarity is even expressed and explained by Bonhoeffer: "True, God 'is' only in faith, but it is God as such who is the subject of believing. That is why faith is something essentially different from religion . . . it is faith given and willed by God, faith in which God may truly be found" (Wustenberg 44).

This idea is where the criticism of religion begins, and in effect the allure of a 'religionless Christianity'.

Many people think of the words *religion* and *Christianity* as interchangeable. Indeed, during the Wilhelman age (1888-1918) the two words were thought of as equal to each other by the majority of people. However, Bonhoeffer defines them very differently. To Bonhoeffer, Christianity is simply a word for the community in which we "share God's sufferings in the world" a community where we are meant to "share in the sufferings of all those Others who meet us, make an ethical claim on us, [and] demand a response from us" (Haynes and Hale 84). Religion, on the other hand refers more to the concept of church and aspects pertaining to human need and human selfishness. Barth expresses both his and Bonhoeffer's feelings in the following quote: "Religion offers not spiritual healing, but only illness with respect to God. [Religion] perpetually risks believing that it has God, or knows about him, albeit in complete humility and moderation" (Wustenberg 54).

While it is relatively easy to accept and even respect the concept of 'religionless Christianity', it is indeed much harder to live it. Bonhoeffer requires things that seem revolutionary even now.

One of the main barriers to true Christianity that we have as humans is our selfishness. Bonhoeffer acknowledges and notices that as a result of this we often call on God only when we need something. It may be a simple 'Please God, help me find my car keys', or a more desperate seeking for an answer to a virtually unanswerable question, but we all find ourselves pleading for God's help at many points in our lives. Bonhoeffer suggests as a part of his 'religionless Christianity' that we as Christians try to think of God during the joyous times of our lives, and call on God not for our own benefit, but simply in thanks. To be a true Christian means that God is a part of your life always, and that includes the good times.

As complicated as Bonhoeffer's 'religionless Christianity' seems, his main message is of a hope for simplicity. To Bonhoeffer, 'religionless Christianity' in general simply refers to Christianity stripped down to its simplest form. We must focus on the most basic aspects of Christianity, which are our relationship to God through Christ and in turn, our aspiration to live like Christ. In this way, we can remember what our faith really has to offer and also recognize in a more powerful way what Bonhoeffer intended. To be a Christian is a lifelong commitment. It is not a commitment you make to church every Sunday, or a commitment you make to a prayer before dinner. It is a commitment you make to every single hour of every single day.

Bonhoeffer's religionless Christianity is more relevant than ever before in a world where people don't have time to go to church or even pray. I think as modern Christians we forget what it means to simply put our faith in God. As our lives become more complicated and Christian people become more separated by differences and sects, we must remember to simply love our neighbors and to uphold our Christian ideals. Instead of a God who helps us we must think of a God who is with us always, sharing in our pain and our success. This is the only way we can truly understand Bonhoeffer's 'religionless Christianity.'

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Stellvertretung

Dance choreographed by Alyssa Weber, Aberdeen, SD

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EDhdIC5Apqs>

This dance is set to Henryk Gorecki's Symphony of Sorrowful Songs. The focus of his piece was for the suffering of the Polish Jews. In my piece I chose to focus on Bonhoeffer's theory of Stellvertretung (vicarious representative action). Through the use of dance, I demonstrated the struggle of one dancer and the desperate attempt of the second to fully understand that struggle. Try as she might, the second dancer can never fully comprehend this battle. In my case, she will not always be able to do the exact same step as the first dancer, showing her attempt to comprehend what is happening, but never truly understanding the full depth of the situation.

“Mislead” an explanation

Lauren Windhorst, Cannon Falls, MN

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a man of great insight during the Nazi regime; unfortunately, the recognition he deserved never reached his own ears. On April 9, 1945, he was executed on the terms of being an enemy of Adolf Hitler. Bonhoeffer had many ideas and thoughts on theology and about what faith was to him.

One of these thoughts from Bonhoeffer discussed that though Adolf Hitler had gained much power, he was not necessarily Germany's leader. Bonhoeffer brought up the topic while he was on the air of a radio station. He stressed that when leaders idolize themselves they sometimes become misleaders, leading the unaware followers to the wrongs instead of the rights.

Another point of Bonhoeffer's theologies is the thought of Christ being in community; How Christ is the community that holds all together. Bonhoeffer believed that even people like Hitler were part of Christ's community.

My drawing of Bonhoeffer's theology and the predicaments he found himself in depict the two separated paths that were followed. Hitler is following the sun, which contains the swastika, and he also believed himself to be following the cross. The rays from the sun, however, are being deflected by that very same cross. Bonhoeffer is on the other side, following just the cross. The rays from Christ's cross block the way for Hitler's sun, which has become a misleader for those who are part of the Nazi regime.

Another detail I would like to point out is the contrasting arm positions of the people on the paths. Bonhoeffer's side shows people with strong faith as their arms reach towards heaven. Hitler's side depicts figures whose arms are thrown out in salute of Hitler and the Nazis, again another detail of misleading.

