

**Articles and Sermons :: When fourteen-year-old Dietrich Bonhoeffer...**

**When fourteen-year-old Dietrich Bonhoeffer... - posted by Joyful\_Heart, on: 2011/11/22 12:02**

When fourteen-year-old Dietrich Bonhoeffer announced his desire to be a minister, his wealthy family criticized the church. Dietrich told them that he would reform it.

At the age of twenty-one, his dissertation, *The Communion of Saints*, was praised as a "theological miracle." As an ordained minister, theology professor, and author, Bonhoeffer spent his life probing the issues of the church.

When Adolf Hitler rose to power in Germany in 1933, the church adopted one of Hitler's clauses denying the right of the church to ordain ministers of Jewish heritage. Only Bonhoeffer openly spoke out against the decision and pledged to get it repealed.

Through lectures and published articles, Bonhoeffer opposed the evil Nazis and reproved the church for not having raised its voice on behalf of the victims and . . . found ways to hasten to their aid.

In April 1943, Bonhoeffer was arrested in Berlin for "subversion of the armed forces." But while in prison, he continued to write. "The church was silent when it should have cried out."

In 1945, Bonhoeffer was moved to the Flossenburg concentration camp where he was hung with six others on April 9. The camp doctor who had watched him kneel and pray before being led to the gallows stated that he had "hardly ever seen a man die so entirely submissive to the will of God."

It has been said that if we do not stand for something, we are sure to fall for anything. Such was the case in Nazi Germany. The church in a Christian nation remained silent while wave upon wave of evil crashed against history's shore, deafening Bonhoeffer's lone cry. Can we say we are advocates for the truth if we remain silent on these kinds of issues? Does our silence on these issues signal our consent to the atrocities in restricted nations? An advocate for the truth must be straightforward in the faith. Like Bonhoeffer, we must be willing to endure the consequences of our stance. Otherwise, we risk the danger of "falling for anything" while we are busy deciding whether or not to stand up for Christ.

VOM Extreme Devotion 11.22.11

**Re: When fourteen-year-old Dietrich Bonhoeffer... - posted by Jeremy221, on: 2011/11/22 13:22**

Quote:

-----hardly ever seen a man die so entirely submissive to the will of God.  
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I had a chance to die recently, and the flesh was incredibly strong wanting to defend myself. I know that it did get through a few times, of which I am ashamed. This post reminds me of the talks by Brother Art Katz regarding martyrdom where he draws the connection between a life lived of God and in death to self that keeps one's life kept and hid in God. In such a way our life is not our own at any point thereafter because all our life flows from God.

**Re: When fourteen-year-old Dietrich Bonhoeffer... - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/11/22 13:49**

Did Bonhoeffer ever repent of his role in conspiring to kill Hitler? (They did try - it just did not work, hence his arrest.) Just wondering...he is lauded as a great theologian but this bothers me...

**Re: , on: 2011/11/22 15:24**

Hi Ginnyrose,

I have read much on the life of brother Dietrich and to my knowledge he neither repented nor regarded his role as sinful. The latest book to come out on his life is excellent and I would recommend it to all, "Bonhoeffer, Pastor, Martyr, Prophet, Spy."

Just a comment about brother Dietrich being a lone voice, he was not. He helped create the "Confessing Church," and did not consider it to be a schism, he believed it to be the true church. Those who remained in the state church called th

emselves "The German Christians." Interesting that the name German came before the name Christ. Anyway, many of the confessing church were imprisoned and killed for their faith and for their stance, God bless these martyrs. They refused to bow down to the gods of this world. To whet your appetite, here is a quote from the book..... brother Frank

“Karl Bonhoeffer’s conclusions may have been different from his son’s, but his respect for truth and for other human beings of different opinions formed the foundation of a civil society in which one might disagree graciously and might reason together civilly and productively. In the years ahead this would be seriously attacked, and the Nazis would stoke the fires of the culture wars (Kulturkampf) to play their enemies against each other. They would brilliantly co-opt the conservatives and the Christian churches, and when they had the power to do so, they would turn on them too.” (page 96)

**Re: - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2011/11/23 7:31**

QUOTE:

"and the Nazis would stoke the fires of the culture wars (Kulturkampf) to play their enemies against each other. They would brilliantly co-opt the conservatives and the Christian churches, and when they had the power to do so, they would turn on them too.” (page 96)"

Hmmm...looks like nothing has changed since then. Must be the devil at work, still.

About Bonhoeffer...I know he wrote brilliantly, inspired lots of people, blessed many. Then there are his critics for reasons not mentioned. Personally, I have decided he is in God's hands to do as he wills and will leave it there. He is dead and I will not work for him one way or another. God is the judge. I am responsible for myself and it will be in my best interest to stick by the WORD...hence my reluctance to read extensively contemporary writers' works...

Thanks for your comment, Frank.