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# CHRIST WITHOUT THE CHURCH:

THE CHALLENGE  
OF DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

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*Continuing a series on contemporary theologians, this essay examines the life and thought of a latter-day Christian martyr who is rapidly becoming perhaps the major influence among Protestant (and some Catholic) theologians and the younger clergy. Kenneth Godfrey, who will become Director of the L.D.S. Institute at Stanford University next year, is presently an instructor in the College of Religion at Brigham Young University, where he is finishing his doctorate in American History. He has published a number of articles in THE IMPROVEMENT ERA and has others scheduled for publication in various historical quarterlies.*

On August 24, 1932, Dietrich Bonhoeffer began an address at the International Youth Conference in Glad, Switzerland, with the words, "The Church is Dead."<sup>1</sup> Today, 1966, Bonhoeffer is dead, yet the church lives. However, a dead Bonhoeffer is exerting a greater influence over the "living church" than the living Bonhoeffer did over a "dead church."

Martin E. Marty has written that only the European triumvirate of Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, and Rudolf Bultmann and the Amer-

ican triumvirate of Reinhold Niebuhr, Paul Tillich, and H. Richard Niebuhr have been studied, invoked, and analyzed more than Bonhoeffer in the last twenty-five years.<sup>2</sup> He goes on to state that Bonhoeffer's name is frequently interjected into conversations in seminary halls, student retreats, on college campuses, on the pages of ecumenical youth journals, in fraternities of younger ministers, and in the theological world generally.

John T. Elson, writing in 1965 in *Life*, pointed out that Bonhoeffer's books were gaining an astonishing popularity in the secular world and that he was unquestionably the favorite theologian among young Protestant seminarians in the United States. John Robinson has called him "the John the Baptist of the post-Christian age."<sup>3</sup> And *Newsweek* magazine in its January 3, 1966, religion section said that "the future Bonhoeffer envisioned is taking shape . . . pre-eminently in the pious United States."<sup>4</sup>

Such statements by Bonhoeffer as "Principles are only tools in the hand of God, soon to be thrown away as unserviceable"; "We are proceeding toward a time of no religion at all"; "The church needs to develop a non-religious interpretation of Biblical concepts"; and his talk about the "world come of age," seem to have caught the fancy of such widely differing people as Thomas J. J. Altizer, John Robinson, and Martin E. Marty. Reinhold Niebuhr, John C. Bennett, the late Paul Tillich, Paul Lehmann, Karl Barth, John Baile, Stephen Neill, Ronhold Smith, and most of the leaders of the ecumenical movement have also been influenced by Bonhoeffer. Robinson's book *Honest to God*, which owes much to Bonhoeffer, has become a best seller and created an ongoing debate in the theological world.

What does all this have to do with a Latter-day Saint? Why should a Mormon concern himself with a Bonhoeffer? The answer partially lies in the questions he raised, such as How do you deal with the world come of age? What do Christ and Christianity mean for us today? What does the Church have to say to man in his prosperity and health and consciencelessness? What real meaning does Christ have for youth whose chief interests seem to be hot rods, saxophones, beauty queens, all-Americans and the pious aura of Jesus-saves-ism? What does Christ mean for a Christianity that

<sup>1</sup> John D. Godsey, *The Theology of Dietrich Bonhoeffer* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1958), p. 83.

<sup>2</sup> Martin E. Marty, "Introduction: Problems and Possibilities in Bonhoeffer's Thought," *The Place of Bonhoeffer* (New York: Association Press, 1964), p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> John T. Elson, "A Man for Others," *Life* (July 13, 1965), p. 108.

<sup>4</sup> "U.S. Protestantism: Time for a Second Reformation," *Newsweek* (January 3, 1966), p. 33.

seems to place greater emphasis on statistical victories and preserving various institutions than it does on Christ and people? It is readily apparent that all of these questions need to be answered if Christ is to live in men's hearts, minds, and lives. As Paul Busing has written:

The Greatness of Dietrich Bonhoeffer lies in the fact that he was a Christocentric theologian and pastor who was neither a narrow pietist nor a parochial Christian. Secure in his own faith and in the tradition of his church he was able and willing to look beyond frontiers: Christ is the Lord of all life, and therefore all life is the Lord's, all life belongs to him and must be related to him.<sup>5</sup>

#### THE LIFE OF DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

Dietrich Bonhoeffer lived in an age of violence and in a country of violence. Yet he found life something wonderful and worth its costs and terrible disappointments. He was optimistic about man and seemed to love living. Perhaps the key to his optimism is found in the passage from Dostoyevsky that he loved to quote, "Hell is when one can no longer love!" As one examines Bonhoeffer's life it becomes apparent that he did love.

Bonhoeffer was born February 4, 1906, in Breslau, Germany. His father was a well-known physician and authority on psychiatry and neurology. His mother was Paula von Hase; her father had been chaplain to the emperor and her grandfather was the famous church historian Karl von Hase.<sup>6</sup> Dietrich grew up in an intellectual environment close to the University of Berlin.

In the First World War his two elder brothers and three cousins were killed. Bonhoeffer wrote that even though all of this happened when he was a small boy he could never forget the gloomy days of the war. "Death," he said, "stood at the door of almost every house and called for entrance."<sup>7</sup> He later wrote:

Before the war we lived too far from God; we believed too much in our own power, in our almightiness and righteousness. We attempted to be a strong and good people but we were too proud of our endeavor, we felt too much satisfaction with our scientific, economic and social progress, and we identified this progress with the coming of the Kingdom of God.<sup>8</sup>

It seems that war made him realize that prosperity and righteousness do not necessarily go hand in hand. He tells of not having enough

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<sup>5</sup> Paul F. W. Busing, "Reminiscences of Finkenealde," *Christian Century* (September 20, 1962), p. 1108.

<sup>6</sup> Godsey, p. 19.

<sup>7</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *No Rusty Swords* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 79.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

to eat and of wearing clothes made mostly from paper, of eating bread made from sawdust and of seeing people jump from bridges as he walked to school. He also wrote that he would never forget that it was the Quakers who first sent food after the war.

Bonhoeffer was schooled at the University of Tübingen and the University of Berlin. He studied theology and presented his doctoral dissertation to the University of Berlin for approval when he was twenty-one years of age. This dissertation Karl Barth later called "A theological miracle."<sup>9</sup>

In 1930 Bonhoeffer was given the Sloane Fellowship at Union Theological Seminary in New York. In the late summer he arrived in America for the first time. At Union he studied such things as the philosophy of the Christian religion, religious aspects of contemporary philosophy, religion and ethics, parish administration, the present expansion of Christianity, and ethical issues in the social order. He wrote home, "Theological education in America is practically oriented and practical theology dominates American Christianity. There is an industrious preoccupation with organizational matters which reveals an awareness that something at the very core is missing."<sup>10</sup> He was appalled when American divinity students laughed openly about Luther's ideas on sin and forgiveness.

Upon his return to Germany Bonhoeffer became very active in the ecumenical movement. He preached that this movement needed one great common proclamation that would lead people together and this could only come by way of theology.

By 1934 he was becoming less and less satisfied with his situation at the University of Berlin. His theology was becoming suspect, largely because of his association with Karl Barth. He had no associates on the faculty whom he could turn to and none with whom he was theologically congenial. At this time his own thinking was in a state of flux. His emphasis was shifting from dogmatics to simple Biblical exegesis, and he was becoming more and more concerned with the ethical demands of the Sermon on the Mount and what it meant to be a disciple of Christ.<sup>11</sup>

After Hitler's rise to power Bonhoeffer became head of a seminary which met without official sanction, a sort of underground theo-

<sup>9</sup> Godsey, p. 23. The title of this dissertation was "*Sanctorum Communio: A Dogmatic Investigation of the Sociology of the Church.*" Ernst Wolf says this work was probably the most discerning and perhaps the most profound handling of the question of the real structure of the church. Already in this work one can see the influence of the developing "theology of the Word of God" and of Karl Barth.

<sup>10</sup> Hans J. Hillerbrand, "Dietrich Bonhoeffer and America," *Religion in Life*, XXX (1960-61), 569.

<sup>11</sup> Elson, p. 114.

logical school. The members of this school lived together in a kind of communal system; they sang Negro spirituals that Bonhoeffer had learned in America, did missionary work two by two, and studied the scriptures together. This little community lasted two years before it was discovered and abruptly closed by Gestapo orders.<sup>12</sup> During this time Bonhoeffer wrote two books, *The Cost of Discipleship* and *Life Together*; the first is a devastating attack on what he calls "cheap grace" and the other is an outlined plan for Bible study, worship, and prayer based on his experiences at Finkenwalde.

By 1939 he was concerned about his safety, as were his friends. Partly because of his own wishes and partly because of his friends' fear for him he was asked to come to America and lecture at the Union Theological Seminary. He wrote during this period, "I should have to do violence to my Christian conviction if I would take up arms here and now."<sup>13</sup> However, when he arrived in New York his conscience would not let him stay. In a letter to Reinhold Niebuhr he stated that although he was unalterably opposed to Hitler and everything he stood for he could not leave his people to suffer alone. He felt compelled to return and face their guilt with them. He seems to have concluded that one could not flee from the world and its trouble; rather one had to face reality and learn to live in the world as it was here and now. He wrote, "The full force of self-accusation due to a wrong decision arises again and almost crushes me."<sup>14</sup> His conscience compelled him to go back to Germany.

Upon his return Bonhoeffer found that he had no place to teach or preach. He discovered that he had been placed on the Gestapo's list of enemies of the Third Reich.<sup>15</sup> He became convinced that pacifism was an inadequate response to "the great masquerade of evil," and joined the anti-Nazi underground. He involved himself in one of the many plots on the life of Hitler. In March, 1944, two British-made bombs, disguised as brandy bottles, were placed aboard the plane that was to fly the Fuhrer from the Russian front near Smolensk to his military headquarters in East Prussia. The bombs failed to explode and a month later Bonhoeffer was arrested.

Bonhoeffer wrote letters and papers while in prison which, as R. A. Markus has written, reveal "a man who has, surely, come very close to the wholeness we are commended to strive after . . . a relevant pattern of holiness."<sup>16</sup> Prison life caused him to think about

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Hillerbrand, p. 571.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 573.

<sup>15</sup> Elson, p. 114.

<sup>16</sup> R. A. Markus, "A Relevant Pattern of Holiness," *The Hibbert Journal*, LV (1957-1958), 392.

Christ and the meaning of the Christian way of life. He was forced to look at death as something real that might happen to him at any moment. He wrote, "It is not the external circumstances, but the spirit in which we face it, that makes death what it can be, a death freely and voluntarily accepted."<sup>17</sup> Thus, facing death constantly, he came to feel that each new day was a miracle:

It would hardly be true to say that we welcome death — although we all know that *accidie* which should be avoided like the plague — we are too curious for that, or to put it more seriously, we still hope to see some sense in the broken fragments of our life. Nor do we try and romanticize death for life is too precious for that. Still less are we inclined to see in danger the meaning of life — we are not desperate enough for that, and we know too much about the joys life has to offer. And we know too much about life's anxieties also, and all the havoc wrought by prolonged insecurity. We still love life, but I do not think that death can take us by surprise now.<sup>18</sup>

At one time Bonhoeffer was assigned a room on the top floor of the prison during the summer months and the room was almost unbearable with the heat. He lived in this room all summer and refused to ask for a transfer because "of the other person who would have to set foot in that hot cell."<sup>19</sup> The other prisoners recognized in Bonhoeffer a more than ordinary man. When the Nazis came to hang him, he said, "My life is not ending it is just beginning."<sup>20</sup> He was executed and the witness of Dietrich Bonhoeffer was sealed.

Bonhoeffer's life and writing was full of the experience of our century and a moving response to it, and even though he died at a young age he left the world a challenge to which it has only begun to respond. Perhaps this challenge is best summarized by T. E. Utey.

Where, one must ask, will the ravages of liberal theology end? The devil and hell went long ago; the position of the blessed Virgin has been seriously undermined; God, who until last week was invulnerable, is now distinctively on the defensive. What will ultimately be left except a belief in the need for bishops if only to give evidence in trials about obscenity and to talk to pop singers on television.<sup>21</sup>

In an age when spacemen have searched the skies and have failed to find either the Christian heaven or the God who was supposed to be

<sup>17</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965), p. 34.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>20</sup> Martin E. Marty, "Bonhoeffer: Seminarists' Theologian," *The Christian Century* (April 20, 1960), p. 468.

<sup>21</sup> T. E. Utey, quoted in full in David L. Edwards, *The Honest to God Debate* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1963), p. 96.

“out there,” perhaps Bonhoeffer provides both this challenge and the answer for some.

### CHRIST: THE MAN FOR OTHERS

Jesus Christ was for Bonhoeffer a real person that could and should become the anchor of every man. He was caught up with Jesus and tried to make him the center of his life. However, he was not oppressive in his zeal. He would not force men to accept Christ. A notable example of this was the case of a fellow prisoner, an agnostic, who in an air raid cried, “O God, O God!” Bonhoeffer told him that the raid would soon be over, feeling that it was wrong to force religion down his throat under such circumstances. He felt that people should not be forced in weak moments into religion.<sup>22</sup>

He argued that “the fact that Jesus Christ died is more important than the fact that I shall die, and the fact that Jesus Christ rose from the dead is the sole ground for my hope that I, too, shall be raised on the last day.”<sup>23</sup> He is expressing here a rather common Christian view of Christ and his mission on earth. But rather than ending his belief in Christ here, he taught that just as Christ lived among sinners and died alone, deserted by his followers, so the Christian, too, belongs not in the seclusion of a cloistered life but in the thick of foes.<sup>24</sup> He did not believe in monastic withdrawal from the world. He clearly believed in fighting the battle with other men in everyday life.

There is no hint of transcendental irresponsibility in Bonhoeffer. Christianity is rooted in and concerned with the ultimate, the transcendent, the eschatological, but before the ultimate, the transcendent, the eschatological comes the penultimate, before the last things, the next to last things, and these are the everyday social and ethical concerns of mankind.<sup>25</sup> Bonhoeffer felt that it is through Christ that God grasps men, not on the boundaries, but at the center of their lives. To encounter Jesus Christ implies a complete reorientation of the human being. Bonhoeffer identifies Christ as “the man for others” and insists that one can only be a disciple of Christ by seeking that same identification.

Bonhoeffer’s theology was essentially Christology. It centered upon the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The law of Christ for

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>23</sup> Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together* (New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1954), p. 17.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>25</sup> John Macquarie, *Twentieth-Century Religious Thought* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), pp. 330-331.



man is a law of bearing burdens. 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. But when one really follows Christ everyone becomes a burden. Man cannot step aside; he must bear the yoke, and through Christ it becomes easy and the burden light.

Bonhoeffer clearly did not follow those theologians who rejected the divinity of Christ. On the contrary he seems to feel that it is only through Christ and his Atonement that men can attain real purpose in life. His was not an "easy" Jesus, for he believed that the time when men could be satisfied with words, theological or pious, was passing; religion itself, including conventional metaphysical undergirding and specific pious stances such as conscience and inwardness, was passing.<sup>26</sup> Thus he argued that Christ should not be relegated to some last secret place but that He should confront man at his strongest point, in his self-sufficiency.

#### THE CHURCH

The church for Bonhoeffer is the presence of God in the world, *really* in the world, *really* the presence of God. The church is not a consecrated sanctuary, but the world, called by God to God; therefore there is only one church in all the world. The church, he argues, is contingent upon Christ. The church hears only from Christ and not from any fixed law or from any eternal order.<sup>27</sup>

He contends that faith in the living church of Christ only breaks through where one sees most clearly the dying of the church in the world, the processes of every new collapse, where one knows that the world, if it is honest, cannot say anything but "the church is dead."<sup>28</sup> The reason the church is dead is because its "believers" do not believe in the world, not even in a world that is capable of development and improvement. They do not believe in the good in men nor that it will eventually prevail. They do not even believe in the real church or in its power. Thus, Bonhoeffer logically concluded that the church was dead. He seems, here, to be pleading for men to have faith in men, to trust one another, and to believe in God and the ultimate triumph of good.

Bonhoeffer contends that the church is more than a mere religious fellowship than can be exhaustively interpreted by a phe-

<sup>26</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, p. 220.

<sup>27</sup> Bonhoeffer, *No Rusty Swords*, p. 167.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 183.

nomenological investigation of its structure. At the same time he was convinced that Christian doctrines were completely understood only in relation to the social dimension. Man, he says, is never alone but always in community. The church, especially in America, was becoming a mere social club rather than a true *community*. The priesthood of all believers had become the rights of the club members. Teas, lectures, community charity events, athletics, dances, and bowling for all ages were substituted for the proper work of the church.<sup>29</sup>

In his address to the International Youth Conference Bonhoeffer seems to identify the church with Christ. At least Christ is the mover, the organizer, the originator of the church. He seems to feel that the teachings of Christ as given to the world, the hand of God moving the world toward the ultimate good, the Christian responsibility for one another, constitute the church. When men cease to love and trust one another, when they lose faith in the ultimate destiny of things, when men cast God out of their hearts, when churches become social clubs concerned with bingo, parties, and dances, the church is dead.

#### CHRISTIAN MAN IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Dietrich Bonhoeffer often spoke of man as being alone, free, a wanderer, afraid to confront himself, afraid to confront a fellow being; and yet he felt that through Christ and a true commitment life could bring such confrontation and meaning could be found. He strongly urged men to be themselves. A favorite thesis: "Don't let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within."<sup>30</sup> He felt that God did not stand over against man but gave himself to man and to the world. Therefore the man and the church that sought separation from the world were for him the most false.

Bonhoeffer argued that men must face reality. He said, "God will not permit us to live even for a brief period in a dream world."<sup>31</sup> God was not a God of the emotions but the God of truth. The man who fashions a visionary ideal of community and demands that it be realized by God is repugnant to Bonhoeffer because such a dreamer becomes proud and pretentious. But the man who has a vision of a better world and because of this vision enters the community, binds men to him, and creates the better world is the man of God.

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<sup>29</sup> Godsey, p. 43.

<sup>30</sup> Bonhoeffer, *No Rusty Swords*, p. 15.

<sup>31</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Life Together*, pp. 27-28.

It is just such a life that enables us to participate with God in his sufferings — with Christ in Gethsemane. If we succeed, the success will not make us arrogant, and if we fail, the failure will not lead us astray. We participate in the suffering of God by living in the world.<sup>82</sup> Going to church for an hour a week is easy enough. But to first go into the neighboring slum or the inner city from which suburbia has fled is very difficult. Yet the order of procedure is clear in the Lord's command. Were we to obey that command we would first reconcile ourselves with our neighbors in the inner city or segregated and shunned residential areas or even in the rival church down the street, and then enter our sanctuaries. If this were required there might be silence in many a meeting house next Sunday.<sup>83</sup>

Men in the twentieth century must learn that they cannot escape from themselves. Bonhoeffer felt keenly the dread of what he called "the new man of our era,"<sup>84</sup> the victim of the tragedy of time caught up in the "panic of closing doors," in growing old, in ambition's failure, and in the tyranny of social conformity. He grew tired of people who felt they were righteous and carried around with them a sanctimonious piousness. He often related the statement of St. Teresa that in her travels she met some "holy persons" who were saints in their own opinion, but that when she got to know them they frightened her more than all the sinners she had ever known.<sup>85</sup>

Bonhoeffer concluded that for man in the twentieth century, God, Christ, and religion had to be modernized in the sense that they had somehow to take on meaning for men largely religionless, devoid of sorrow and the other sufferings that had caused men to be religious in the past. He felt that if this task could not be accomplished the church was dead, God would die, and Christianity would come to nought.

### CONCLUSIONS

Bonhoeffer's theological views are not clear, nor do they support either an orthodox or a liberal persuasion. His last writings seem to lead one away from theology to the social gospel. He was more concerned in prison about the Sermon on the Mount and man's relationship to man than he was about formal theology. Yet we find in his writings such things as the suffering of Christ, the reality of God, and the value of forgiveness. Perhaps it is because he does not

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<sup>82</sup> Bonhoeffer, *Letters and Papers from Prison*, p. 21.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 334.

<sup>84</sup> Theodore O. Wedel, "Man Coming of Age," *Union Theological Review*, XVIII (1962-63), 336.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 336.

offer a neat and confident theological structure that many are drawn to him.

Many of Bonhoeffer's teachings regarding Christ are in harmony with Mormon theology. Mormons, too, would argue that Christ should be the center of their lives. They believe that men should share one another's burdens. They are concerned with the apparent Christless living of most Christians. Mormonism teaches that a man is saved by the grace of Jesus Christ after all he can do. Christ, they argue, is the mover, the organizer, the guider of the Church. But they would differ with Bonhoeffer in that Mormons believe the answer to the problems of mankind is to be found in the teachings of the scriptures and the living prophets. They hold that though Christ should be the center of a man's life — the Church itself is founded on and centered in Christ. Bonhoeffer would do away with religion whereas the Mormon believes that religion and Christ cannot be separated if the individual is to attain eternal life.

Thus, while Mormons would agree with Bonhoeffer that Christ is divine and the Son of God, they would differ with him regarding the role of the church and Christ's part in establishing His true organization upon the earth.

Mormonism, like Bonhoeffer, contends that man must involve himself in the world. There have been no ascetic tendencies in Mormon thought. Mormons have been reminded many times by their leaders that the task of the Church is to change the world; in the last annual conference of the Church Elder Harold B. Lee repeated a challenge he has made many times: "The Church is a continuing revolution against any and all the norms of society which fall below the gospel standards."

The challenge of Bonhoeffer is whether or not a man can find God in an age of comfort, material wealth, scientific discoveries, and loneliness. The Book of Mormon is replete with examples of wealthy people turning from God and trusting in their own prosperity. In fact most of the people in the Book of Mormon found God in despair, hunger, war, and sorrow. Bonhoeffer says that we are approaching the time when God will no longer have any meaning if He can only be found in the suffering part of life.

But many theologians have doubted Bonhoeffer's contention that the world has come of age. They see great advances in science and technology but little progress in human relations. Men are still alone, there are still slums, prejudice, and inhumanity. Liberal theology and the social gospel have been found inadequate to account for man's continuing failure and sin and sense of meaninglessness. Perhaps we need less "modernizing" of Christianity and more

of the religion taught by Christ 2000 years ago. New Morality has solved few problems; perhaps the old might, if it could provide better motivations.

Latter-day Saints would not agree with Bonhoeffer that man is necessarily alone in a strange, unfriendly world. They would argue that man can and does have the companionship of the Holy Ghost to comfort and guide his life. One of the great teachings of Mormonism is that this life can be one of joy with the help of Christ, the Holy Ghost, and the Church. Nevertheless one is forced to admit that Bonhoeffer has said much that strikes to the core of the human condition in our time. We need to find Christ and give meaning to our Christianity in the main currents of life. We need God in our prosperity and health. We need the church in our happiness and joy. The challenge of Bonhoeffer is the challenge of the future. Can people with long hair, dirty faces, and banjos find meaning in life through Christ? Can the man in the gray flannel suit find God within the corporation? Can we successfully meet the threat of agnosticism by preaching the brotherhood of man and the fatherhood of God? Or has God really died in our time? Is religion meaningless? Are we destined to live in a godless world, materially rich but lacking purpose? Mormonism answers that modern man can find meaning in life through Christ. That religion is not meaningless, that the Church is not dead, and that men can and often do find God amidst material wealth and prosperity, that life does have purpose and that the hand of God guides his Church toward the millennial reign of Jesus Christ.

Mormons would agree with Bonhoeffer that the Church must be concerned with things greater than dances, bingo, and teas. The real work of the Church is saving men's souls and bringing to each life its possibility for joy. The answer to religionless man in prosperity or poverty is the Church. For Mormons, true religion, the ordinances, and the Church are as essential to man's happiness here and hereafter as are loving one's neighbor — in fact, give the motivation and direction necessary to truly love one's neighbor.

Perhaps Bonhoeffer's real value lies in his effort to thrust complacent churched people out into the world come of age. Here they must use their commitment to Christ to truly love and help man, even the imposing group of men who see no place for God in their comfortable, independent lives.