



Bonhoeffer's theology is still relevant today (40)

Bonhoeffer lived in Germany under Nazi regime, this period of time saw hundreds of thousands of Jewish or people who opposed the Nazi's killed. This was led by Adolf Hitler the leader of Germany at the time. Bonhoeffer heavily disagreed with the practices of the Nazi's and took an active role in preventing the actions of them. He described how Hitler was an 'anti-Christ' as he went fundamentally against his beliefs as a Christian. Bonhoeffer had a fundamental idea that every Christian must do action, and not just stand by, this is evident in Bonhoeffer as he smuggled information out of the Nazi regime and smuggled innocent Jews risking his own life. These values of Bonhoeffer are evident in today's world with the ever increase of disdainful leaders and the rules that oppose certain nations. This essay will point out how in the modern world Bonhoeffer's ideas and teaching has a lot of relevance.

Bonhoeffer's beliefs consisted of being absolute and objective, he went out his way putting his life on the line to stand up for Christian values and his beliefs. He disobeyed the laws of his land to do what was necessary for him for example he smuggled Jews out of Germany while also feeding critical information to allied forces this is called civil disobedience. This teaching of doing more action and not allowing the laws of the country to govern you, instils a moral teaching that can be used in today's society. With for example the dictator Kim Jung un, this leader rules in the same way as Hitler, if we use Bonhoeffer's theology it may be used to help stop these types of leaders coming into power. However there are some problems with this philosophy as Bonhoeffer sometimes went against some of the bibles teachings, for example when he was accused of plotting the assassination of Hitler, this can be seen as unethical to many Christian people as it goes against one of the primary precepts and 10 commandments of God which is "do not kill". However this can be seen as more ethical and relevant to today as this would've saved hundreds of thousands of Jewish people so this line of argument doesn't work. Bonhoeffer's theology would help to warn today's society of dictators and the destruction they can bring to the world.

Bonhoeffer's theology is still relevant today, this is due to his ideas on how Christians should act, he states how Christians should act in a way this isn't 'cosy Christianity' rather they should be willing to sacrifice and do anything for what they believe in. This theology causes more people to abandon self interests and the trappings of an easy life, this may cause people in western society in today's climate to have more self

worth and not be as unhappy. In western society of today there is an obsession with material benefit and self interest, which causes deep levels of unhappiness in many western countries like the UK, Bonhoeffer's challenge to abandon self interest in the long term will cause more people to have a more meaningful life as they may see what they are doing is the work of God, this would suggest how Bonhoeffer's theology still is relevant today. However this theology that Bonhoeffer is suggesting can be quite radical for our time period, Bonhoeffer was living in such extreme conditions under the nazi regime which isn't replicable in modern society so his theology doesn't work. I would have to disagree with this claim as there are many aspects that can be seen as empowering and in modern societies there are many instances of world leaders being unethical and committing crimes, this increase in these world leaders could be due to people not standing up for what they believe in rather blindly listening to the state and causing the government to control their lives. So Bonhoeffer's theology is still relevant due to it empowering many people and giving them more meaningful lives.

Bonhoeffer's theology about solidarity with the poor has many implications in today's society. Bonhoeffer felt he had to live through the experience of suffering that his people were enduring, rather than waiting in safety and security. Bonhoeffer saw Christ as a man for others, he saw that Christians had to live for other people, being there for other people is what makes a Christian, not how religious someone is but how they treat their neighbour. This sense of community and helping the less fortunate has a lot of impact in today's society, with the divide with the rich and the poor ever increasing this solidarity can help those who maybe aren't as financially stable as others. Bonhoeffer seems to have suggested something that is a counter to the capitalist views of modern society and consumerism, this I agree with as with a capitalistic society caused the divide with the rich and poor increases and many people without necessities like free healthcare. This solution of abandoning capitalism that Bonhoeffer puts forward is still relevant to this day. Bonhoeffer shows his beliefs in his Letters and papers from prison in 1971 where he states how "Our relation to God is not a 'religious' relationship to the highest, most powerful Being imaginable, but our relation to God is a new life in 'existence for others'." This idea that Bonhoeffer puts down of 'existence for others' Shows how Bonhoeffer's theology is about helping the poorer and living your life with others in mind and making sacrifices for them, he shows this in his own life when he risked being prosecuted when trying to smuggle innocent Jews to safety, this is seen as a noble act as he is putting the life of another before his own. However we live in an increasingly secular world do people need to devote themselves to Christianity, in addition Christianity is seen to be out of date with many of the messages seeming immoral like the stance on gay marriage or the Bible is contradictory. However the increase in a secular world doesn't mean we can't take the core values of Bonhoeffer's theology and apply it to our everyday lives.

Bonhoeffer's theology can run into some criticisms with his own personal beliefs and how Bonhoeffer may be contradicting himself, in addition the ideas that Bonhoeffer suggest of cosy christianity and cheap grace can be seen as too extreme. Bonhoeffer suggested how every christian should suffer in some way to be a christian, they should be willing to put their lives for their beliefs and do anything to stand up. These views can be seen as quite extreme especially when some christians state how God had not intended for his creation to suffer for the purpose of himself, this coincides with Bonhoeffer's ideas of solidarity and doing what is necessary for the poorer. These values can be too extreme and it asks too much from society, as many christians are 'cosy christians' they wouldn't want to die for what they believe and i would suggest that it asks too much. However these claims that Bonhoeffer's theology is too extreme doesn't work this is due to the similarities is the society of Germany and the world today, with the ever present increase in the divide in the poor shows how christians should be more willing to follow Jesus's teaching as he is a model christian, Bonhoeffer would suggest how these 'cosy christians' were not actually christians in the same way he is, Jesus was the model christian and in Jesus's life he made a lot of sacrifices so bonhoeffer suggests how christians should follow Jesus's actions and fight against oppressive groups even if you have to sacrifice your life. This is still relevant to today as there are many oppressed groups and using the teaching of Jesus and Bonhoeffer people can free the oppressed groups.

In conclusion, I believe that Bonhoeffer's theology is still relevant to this day. This is due the the societal issues that Bonhoeffer had to face are very similar to modern society, with the ever increase of the rich and the poor and increase in disdainful world leaders, we can use Bonhoeffer's theology of standing up for these oppressed groups and putting out lives on the line to help fight against clearly bad societal norms. Even if soceity maybe not as extreme as Germany we can still pick out certain elements in the nazi regime and our current world, in addition the claims that that his theology that it is too extreme doesnt hold up as this is how the model christian in Jesus acted which shows how christians should abandon their 'cosy christianty' and 'cheap grace' in favour for a more 'costly grace' where you have to make more sacrafices and even put your life on the line like Bonhoeffer showed in his own life.

