

Virtue and bonhoeffer actions essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Bonhoeffer's ethical beliefs differ from other philosopher's beliefs because; he believed that Christian ethics are the reality of God that Jesus Christ has revealed in him. He said that " man is not, and cannot, be the final arbitrator of good and evil" (Bonhoeffer). He felt that we have no proper knowledge of good and evil because the certainty of such a thought does not exist. In the film when Maria reads what he has written on ethics, he claims that he truly believes all the things he has written.

Maria looks as though she doubts this, but it also makes her think about what they mean. He wrote " Being evil is worse than doing evil" (Bonhoeffer); knowing that when he wrote this it was inspired by the Holocaust, I believe he was saying he may be doing evil to rebel against Hitler, but for good reason. Therefore, Hitler is evil, because his actions are not concerned with the wellbeing of others, whereas Bonhoeffer's actions were. He also wrote, " Better for a lover of truth to tell a lie than for a liar to tell the truth" (Bonhoeffer).

He tells his cell guard that if a teacher asked his student if his father came home drunk the night before, the honest answer would be for the boy to lie and defend his father because the teacher abused his authority in asking that question. The final phrase that Maria read from Bonhoeffer's note on ethics was " To escape sin may be the ultimate guilt" (Bonhoeffer). He is saying that if you are sinning for a good cause then it is worth it, but if you take the cowardly way out and escape sin, the results could leave you with deep regret. He is speaking specifically about the Holocaust.

If he did not rebel against Hitler, which is a sin, his Jewish friends and family would have died and the guilt he would feel would come from the fact that he did not do anything to avert the situation. I agree with this set of ethics, more than I agree with Levinas', Aristotle's and Kant's ethics. I believe that Bonhoeffer's ethics are more practical than the other philosopher's ethics. The other sets of ethics make sense to me, but they are not the ethics I would choose to live by. I think that a lot of modern social injustices could be resolved if this ethical stance was manifested into the choices and actions of individuals.

If everyone abided by Bonhoeffer's ethics injustices such as hate crimes against homosexuals, bullying, genocide, child soldiers in Uganda, human trafficking and also, the role of dictator's in oppressed societies could potentially be resolved. If sinning by standing up for something such as the things I listed above, could potentially resolve these issues than the morality behind any sin would be nothing compared to the guilt of being a bystander. His ethics could also worsen modern social injustices if they are misinterpreted.

Especially " Better for a lover of truth to tell a lie than for a liar to tell the truth" (Bonhoeffer), because some individuals may ration that it means one lie cannot hurt, and keep saying that until it is out of control. The same instance could occur with this phrase: " Being evil is worse than doing evil" (Bonhoeffer). If misinterpreted, someone may rationalize that to do evil is acceptable. Bonhoeffer's ethics would have to first be fully understood by everyone, before they could be manifested into everyone's choices and actions, and have a positive effect on injustice.

I think Bonhoeffer's ideas about the changes that must come to religion are practical. He believed that acting with human conformity is not the heart of Christianity but it is about knowing the person of Christ. The key to Christianity is to know, and to follow Jesus, no matter what it may cost us in the end. Bonhoeffer believed that we should "share the sufferings of others in a godless world". He believed that divine suffering was to be shared because it held an importance to faith. I think that without sharing the suffering of others, our faith would be noticeably weaker.

When we feel the suffering of others through awareness, we develop a different set of feelings for others. It gives us a stronger sense of gratefulness. I believe that it could be possible for humans to gather in a meaningful way within an organized institution, but it also sets limitations. When we are not confined within an institution, our true faith is revealed because it is not forced, but natural. I would bother me if there were no churches, because churches are a comfort to many in a time of need.

Although I am not necessarily considered a practicing catholic, I would feel more comfortable if I at least had the option to attend a service. It's less comforting to someone in need to not have that option. I think I would still feel the same way in twenty years because at that time I assume I will be more mature, and maybe at that point I will be able to be bonded closer to my faith. I think this question may have been directed toward those who responded, they would not be affected if churches no longer existed. Faith will be important whether or not there are intuitions to practice that faith within.