



0. A BUDDING INTELLECTUAL - Story Preface

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Dietrich Bonhoeffer, an educated man from an educated German family, believed that people in his country should speak-out against Hitler (including people in the German churches). "Silence," he said, "in the face of evil is in itself evil..." In this image, we see Bonhoeffer during the time he went from village to village, teaching in his "underground seminary."

Following in the footsteps of his parents, Bonhoeffer attended the best academic institutions in Germany. He received a doctorate, with honors, from the University of Berlin in 1927. During his time as a student, he devoured the writings of Karl Barth.

A man of many talents, Bonhoeffer pastored a Lutheran church for a short time in the late 1920s. Following a year of post-graduate study at Union Theological Seminary in New York City, he became a lecturer in systematic theology at the University of Berlin.

As an educated German theologian, living during the rise of Hitler, Bonhoeffer began to question the ethics of both his country and his church:

- On radio broadcasts he spoke out against the increasing influence of the Nazis and their anti-Semitism before Hitler assumed power.
- In intellectual circles he spoke against the complacency of Christians who thought Jews were cursed for killing Christ.

Banned by the government from instructing students at the University of Berlin, Bonhoeffer formed a kind of underground seminary:

- For two years he continued to teach his students as he traveled from village to village.
- Believing the German church was not taking a sufficient stand against Nazism, he co-founded the Confessing Church (a center of German Protestant resistance to the growing power of the Third Reich).

But mere intellectual pursuits and theories did not satisfy Bonhoeffer.

Although a pacifist, he decided to actively resist the perverse effects Adolf Hitler and his regime wrought on the laws and lives of the German people.

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/A-BUDDING-INTELLECTUAL-Agent-of-Grace>

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Karl Barth

Online image, courtesy Princeton Theological Seminary.

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