

The Jesus Question

Last fall Don Williams, a retired army colonel on our pastoral staff, challenged the rest of us to read (or reread) Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *The Cost of Discipleship*.

The time was 1930. Bonhoeffer was a 24-year-old teacher of systematic theology at Berlin University. Germany was rapidly coming under the influence of Adolf Hitler. The young teacher suddenly found himself faced with deadly choices. Should he support his country, which had turned anti-God, or dared he pay the cost of being a disciple of Jesus?

Discipleship, to Bonhoeffer, had nothing to do with submitting to a shepherd. But it had everything to do with asking, "What would Jesus do?"—then following his conscience.

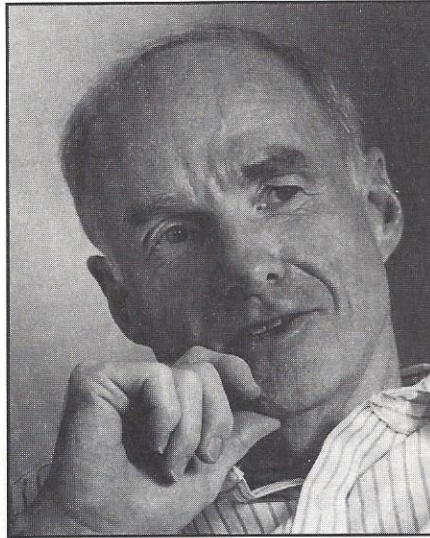
His choices put him in a Nazi prison during World War II. Five days before Germany surrendered, he was hanged for treason.

**By
Jamie
Buckingham**

Rereading Bonhoeffer's book started our entire church leadership on a new quest—how to apply the "Jesus Question" to every phase of life.

I opened 1990 in our church by telling the congregation I was going to challenge them with that question every week. I asked them to make a commitment: "Before making any major decision, taking any significant action or reacting to any adverse circumstances, I will first ask: 'What would Jesus do?'"

It quickly became evident that in order to answer that question you had to ask two others. The first was, What *did* Jesus do? That meant we had to commit ourselves to a seri-



ous study of the Gospels. The second question was, What would Jesus have *me* do? That meant we had to be filled with the Holy Spirit in order to be Spirit-led.

We've since spent a lot of time asking Jesus what He would do in certain situations. The answers we come up with are incredible. In our home group we begin each meeting by asking, "How has the Jesus Question affected your life this week?"

Most churches, most Christians I've talked to, simply don't ask the Jesus Question. What about feeding the hungry, visiting those in jail, marching in demonstrations? What about evangelizing the city? Or world missions?

Sadly, Jesus gets left out of most of what we do.

It's time to stop playing church games and start walking our talk. Jesus, you remember, was not kindly disposed to the fig tree that had abundant leaves but no fruit.

The '90s will be the most difficult time in the history of the modern church. But to those wholly following Jesus, however, it will also be the most exciting time.

Don't be afraid to ask the Jesus Question. ■

PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER: Stephen Strang
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: Jamie Buckingham
ASSOCIATE EDITOR: Michele Buckingham
COPY EDITOR: John Archer
PUBLISHER: Timothy L. Gilmour
DIRECTOR OF FINANCE: Joy F. Strang
DIRECTOR OF MARKETING: David Welday
ADVERTISING MANAGER: Bob Minotti
ADVERTISING ACCT. EXEC.: Jon Matthews
ART DIRECTOR: Eric Jessen
PRODUCTION MANAGER: Elaine Tabor
TYPOGRAPHER: Kathy Curtis
PRODUCTION ARTIST: Brenda Haun
EDITORIAL OFFICES: 3901 Hield Road NW
 Palm Bay, FL 32907
 (407) 725-4206 Ofc.
 (407) 729-8707 FAX

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

- David Bivin: *Professor of Languages, Jerusalem, Israel*
 Mark Buckley: *Senior Pastor, Phoenix, AZ*
 Jean Coleman: *Co-pastor, Laurel, MD*
 Richard Dobbins: *Clinical Psychologist, Akron, OH*
 Loren Cunningham: *Missionary statesman, Kailua-Kona, HI*
 Michael Green: *Co-pastor and Worship Leader, New Orleans, LA*
 James Guinn: *Certified Public Accountant, Irving, TX*
 Jack Hayford: *Senior Pastor, Van Nuys, CA*
 Frances Hunter: *Healing Evangelist, Kingwood, TX*
 Leonard Lovett: *Senior Pastor, Los Angeles, CA*
 Francis MacNutt: *Christian Healing Ministries, Jacksonville, FL*
 James McKeever: *Financial Advisor, Medford, OR*
 Doug Murren: *Senior Pastor, Kirkland, WA*
 Joyce Strader: *Pastor's Wife, Lakeland, FL*
 Jack Taylor: *Senior Pastor, Fort Worth, TX*
 Devi Titus: *Pastor's Wife, Camp Hill, PA*
 C. Peter Wagner: *Professor of Church Growth, Pasadena, CA*

Ministries Today (ISSN #0891-5725) is published bi-monthly by Strang Communications Co., 600 Rinehart Road, Lake Mary, FL 32746. Second class postage paid at Lake Mary, FL 32746 and at additional entry offices. Subscription rate is \$30.00 for 6 issues, \$50.00 for 12 issues and \$60.00 for 18 issues. Canadian subscriptions add \$7 per year, other countries add \$10 per year. Foreign subscriptions payable in advance in U.S. currency or equivalent. Subscription questions? Call 1-800-227-7585. *Ministries Today* is available in microfilm from University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *Ministries Today*, P.O. Box 2111, Knoxville, IA 50197-2111. Copyright © 1990 by Strang Communications Company.