

April 14, 2014

“A Deafening Silence”

Seventy-one years ago this Saturday, two historic events took place in the midst of a global tragedy known as World War II. On April 19, 1943 marked the opening of the Bermuda Conference between the United States and Great Britain to discuss and decide the issue regarding the atrocities being afflicted upon German Jewry under Nazi control.

Also on that same day, seventy-one years ago, the Nazis began their final campaign to remove all Jews that had been housed in the Warsaw Ghetto in Poland, where they had been isolated. The Nazi's final campaign consisted of four weeks of brutal fighting, killing, exterminations, deportations and starvations. The remaining 60,000 Jews remaining in the Ghetto would eventually be exterminated because of the action of the Nazis.

The connection between these two events is tragic and horrific. The result of the Bermuda Conference was the conclusion that the Allied Powers were powerless to effect any change in the future of Jewish prisoners or refugees – and the powers basically washed their hands of responsibility. And they remained silent...while thousands upon thousands were systematically destroyed.

It has been said that those that do not remember the past are doomed to repeat it. And I believe in remembering these two events, there is a warning for the Christian church of America today:

If we keep silent about the horrific and systematic destruction of the spirituality of our people, we will be held to account. Today, we live with people who are being systematically destroyed:

- People caught in the trap of addiction and are powerless to break free into recovery are neglected and ignored because their problems are “unspeakable” or “untouchable” to the Christian church.
- Families being destroyed by the plague of pornography and sexual violence/abuse while the church refuses to engage the topic of healthy, biblical relationships and the protection of society's most vulnerable.
- Tiny creations of God, being fashioned in their mother's wombs systematically destroyed by our country's abortion facilities while the American church sits passively by.
- The woefully underserved and economically depressed who are “cared” for by the government (while not really being cared for) and being neglected by the very people of God who are called to compassionate ministry.

- The economic injustices of a society where the rich are increasingly comfortable in their riches and the poor becoming more destitute by living on the margins of society and being ignored by the average, middle-class, suburban congregation.
- The person of ethnic/minority background that is being discriminated against simply because of their origin or ethnicity.

In these and so many countless situations, the church often sits by in silence, concluding that they can do nothing to effect change in our culture.

A man was walking down the beach that had been dotted with hundreds of star fish that had washed ashore during the last high tide. As he walked down the beach, he would bend down, pick up a starfish, gaze at it intently, and would eventually toss it back into the sea.

A couple who had spotted this man noticed that he continued to do this during his journey down the beach. As they drew near, they stopped to ask him: “Sir, why are you doing this? There are so many and it won’t make a difference at all,”

The man replied, “Maybe so, but it makes a difference for this one starfish!”

We might not be able to affect change in the whole world and change everything – but we can make an individual difference in the life of those around us.

Make a decision not to be silent – speak into the lives of those who are hurting around you. Let your love and your actions break through the deafening silence of their lives!

Make a difference today!