

Wrestle 'rulers of darkness'

I BELIEVE that everyone should visit the Holocaust Memorial Center on W. Maple at Drake roads in West Bloomfield Township.

I believe that everyone who travels to Europe should visit the site of a former concentration camp.

I believe that everyone who travels to the Caribbean should visit Haiti or one of the other poverty-stricken countries.

I believe that everyone should spend at least a few hours in an inner-city church in Detroit.

We must not forget the contrasts of good and evil, poverty and wealth. It is only in this experience that we can continue to ask, How can this world become one?

THE HARDEST part of this question is that we must face the fact that in complex ways we all affect these problems.

Poor, Third World countries are forced to export food in order to buy technology. We buy pineapples and sugar from a country where people starve.

Recently I have been reading about the Klaus Barbie trial now taking place in France. For three years during World War II, he allegedly ordered the roundup of Jews and others who were killed in the concentration camps. Many in France and in the United States fear that collaboration between Barbie



moral perspectives

Rev. David Strong

and French and with Americans after the world will come to light.

WHY DO WE need to know about these painful things?

We need to know that the trouble of this world is more than just individual moral error. To grasp the transformation of the world which we seek, we must understand the darkness that it must overcome.

The biblical statement which comes to mind is, "For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world."

When we face the enormous pain of the world, we must either acknowledge that it is hopeless or that God alone has the power to overcome these things. God must be larger than the individual mistakes of famous people we read about in the news.

ONLY GOD can heal the terrible

scar of the Holocaust. Only God can help us solve the vast gap between the rich and the poor. Only God can give us resolve to prevent the destruction of the world.

The current investigations into the private and public morality of our leaders must be weighed against the backdrop of vastly more moral issues. Two hundred years ago only a few understood the enormous evil of slavery.

It is much easier to identify the person down the street who cheats or lies. Our current focus is upon little sins. We need to pay attention to the Klaus Barbie case as it unfolds. We need to focus upon compassion and help for those who are poor.

We need to relate to people and governments in Central America, South America and Africa in ways that assist the development of the people. It is a difficult and complex task. Yet when we grapple with enormous problems and enormous

sins we must affirm a God who is so great that he is able to transform these problems.

J.B. PHILLIPS once wrote a book with the title, "Your God Is Too Small." This phrase keeps coming to mind.

This is our temptation: to focus upon small problems and exclude awareness of the world's struggles. Our children need such a world awareness. We need to help them to understand a God who is not only able to deal with individual problems but who is transforming the world.

The function of our religion is to help us not only cope with individual problems and affirm individual faith but to expand our vision to the world. Our God is too small if we do not seek God's healing for the world.

We need not become "anxious" about such world problems if we truly believe that God is working in the entire mix of world events as much as he is working within individual persons.

With such a vision we can agree with Harry Emerson Fosdick, "This is a great time to be alive."

The Rev. David Strong is the pastor of St. Matthew United Methodist Church in Livonia.

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