

SLAVERY NO MORE 2012 GLOBAL HUMAN TRAFFICKING CONFERENCE

August 10-11 ~ LOS ANGELES, CA

Challenging Apathy and Corruption

Patrick McCalla: Challenging apathy. I get to challenge apathy here at the end. They gave me 15 minutes. I'm going to take seven, because I think there's nothing that makes people more apathetic than sitting on your butts too long. I'll get you out of here in seven minutes. The last couple of years I've had the privilege of visiting East Africa numerous times as you've probably heard from me quoting African proverbs a lot. I'll never forget my first trip to Rwanda. I had the opportunity and the privilege to go through their Genocide Museum. As we're walking through this Genocide Museum remember the 1994 genocide where in a 90 day period nearly 800,000 Hutus and Tutsis were slaughtered.

As I walked through this museum, I saw the pictures, I saw the videos, and I heard the stories it always more than I could take. When I'm standing there, and I'm reading about a mother who has been repeatedly raped in front of her children. Children are hacked to death by machetes in front of their siblings and their parents. It was almost more than I could take. I remember at the end of the museum, toward the end, there was one hallway. This hallway was to remember the other genocides that had taken place in the last 100 years. At the beginning of this hallway, they talked about the Jewish Holocaust. I remember reading about that and then seeing those two famous words that were spoken again and again at the end of the Holocaust almost 80 years ago. Do you remember what those two words were? *"Never again."*

But here's the deal as I continued walking down the hallway, I saw that every single decade there was another genocide somewhere in our world. In fact there's one right now. I think it's the same with slavery isn't it. There's a subtle myth that slavery was abolished in the 19th Century and of course, you're here, because you see the fallacy in that and you recognize that's certainly not true. The fact is that there's 27 million slaves today in our world, in our nation, in our own backyard. Whether it be the genocide or the slavery, and as I've read stories and I've been in museums, and we've looked at these things, I often wondered why were so many people silent. How is it that you can stand and watch train box cars go by with hundreds and thousands of fellow human beings, and you know what's going to happen them, and you do nothing. How can you watch your neighbors being raped again and again and their children hacked up by machetes and do nothing?

In 2005 when I was facilitating a meeting of community leaders and first learned about the realities of modern day slavery, I was like most people. I had no idea. Slavery in my mind was something that was in the past that you read about in history books. When I learned about it in 2005, I realized it's really easy to do nothing. You read about it, you hear about it, come to conferences about it, and maybe even you cry about it, but then the business of life takes over. And you do nothing. Of course, history is full of human's that heard about horrific injustices and did nothing.

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In fact when you and I read about the slavery of the past or the genocides in the past, we also read about these men and women that sacrificed everything, these heroes, and I've wondered would I have that kind of courage? If I lived in Nazi Germany back in the 1930's and 1940's would I have the courage to risk everything maybe even my family's lives to stand up against an injustice like that? Would you?

I want to be known. I want us to be known when history someday writes about us. I want us to be known as the people who refuse to be silent. The ones who gave a voice to the voiceless, who empowered the broken, who loosened the chains of injustice, that history would write about us. Maybe they won't write your name, but they'll write about this movement of modern day abolitionists. They were people that refused to be silent. That were willing to sacrifice everything if need be. If you forget everything else I say, I want you to remember this simple phrase, "*What was, what is, what could be, what should be.*" Just remember that simple phrase, "*What was, what is, what could be, what should be.*"

We need to learn from "*what was.*" We need to make sure that we never forget these heroes of the past, these men and women who sacrificed everything to fight injustices like slavery. We have to make sure that we never forget the history of our world or our nation or our own communities and the injustices that might have taken place there. "*What was, what is....*" We must realistically evaluate what is. The injustices that are taking place not just on the other side of the planet but maybe even in our own backyards, in our own communities. "*What was, what is, what could be.*" We need to explore and dream about what could be. One of the greatest speeches I think ever given was by Martin Luther King Jr. when he stood at our national's capital, and he said, "*I have a dream.*" What was he doing? He was speaking about what could be. He was dreaming and envisioning what could be in an injustice like slavery was abolished. We must never stop thinking about what could be.

"*What was, what is, what could be, what should be.*" We must relentlessly pursue. We must relentlessly fight for what should be. You're here, because you agree with this idea that it is always wrong for any human being to be enslaved by another human being. Then you and I must relentlessly fight and pursue for what should be. "*What was, what is, what could be, what should be.*" I use this quote everywhere I go. Mark Laborton wrote this, "*Part of the malady of our culture is this tragic rational that if we can't do everything, we can't do anything, so we become paralyzed and inherent.*" It's true often isn't it? T

The truth is you can't do everything. I can't do everything, but you can do something. When you do something and you do something and you do something and you something and you do something, and I do something those something's end up having an exponential impact on an injustice like modern day slavery. You can't do everything, but you can do something. Let's make sure that when history writes about us, it writes about a group of people who refused to be silent. It writes about a group of people who learned from what was. Who realistically evaluated what is. Who dreamed about what could be and relentlessly fought for what should be.

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What if even they may not know your name, what if your name was included someday in those history books when they say this was a group of people that refused to be apathetic and refused to sit by and let this take place. Make sure that's you. I believe it is by the simple fact that you're here. I think a great way to end this before I had it over to Peter is to simply say thank you. Thank you for being part of changing our world one person at a time. Thank you.

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