

How Do You Kill 11 MILLION PEOPLE?

WHY THE TRUTH MATTERS
MORE THAN YOU THINK

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For you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free.”

Those are probably the most famous words ever spoken on the subject of truth. Most of us accept that particular sentence at face value. It certainly resonates with our spirit. It just feels right. But what does it mean, really? And have you ever contemplated the meaning that comes to light by inverting this principle?

If it is correct that “you shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free,” then is it possible that if you *don't* know the truth, its absence can place you in bondage?

AS A BOY, I quickly learned that if someone found out the truth, I might get in trouble or I wouldn't get chosen or I wouldn't be as well liked. Yet my parents urged me to tell the truth and went so far as to promise I would not be spanked—if I only told the truth.

At Heard Elementary School, I told my fourth-grade classmates that Elvis Presley was my cousin. I suppose it was my way of courting popularity at the time. But Elvis was not my cousin. What I had publicly declared in the cafeteria was not true, and for a time, though it didn't seem possible, I became even less popular.

It was a good lesson and helped me determine that, in the future, I would tell the truth.

Once, when I was fifteen, a man in our neighborhood told me that he would pay me fifty dollars for a particular task of yard work. When I finished, he gave me twenty dollars and said that was the amount upon which we had agreed. It was the first time someone had ever looked me directly in the eye and purposefully told me something that was not true. I took note several years later when he was publicly shamed and financially penalized for another instance—entirely unrelated to me—of not telling the truth.

Through my formative years and on into young adulthood, the truth became a touchstone, a goalpost, something to strive for. The truth was always within my sight, usually respected but sometimes compromised.

Once, I watched on television as the president of the United States resigned his office in disgrace. At that time, it didn't occur to me that the nation was in so much turmoil—and the president was in so much trouble—not because of what had been done, but because he had lied about it.

AS AN ADULT, I have become a student of history. For some reason, I am fascinated by what people said and what nations did so many years ago. I am also interested in results—the outcomes these civilizations produced as they reacted to what people said and what nations did so many years ago.

I often wonder, do those outcomes have any bearing on us today? Should we be more careful students of the events and decisions that have shaped the lives and nations of those who have gone before us?

A long time ago I decided that if history were to be of any value in my life, I could not succumb to the temptation of convenience in regard to my personal beliefs or desires. In other words, I would not be able to categorize people and nations as “good guys” or “bad guys” to suit my political or religious beliefs. The truth in what I uncovered would have to trump everything I had ever been taught or believed. Quietly, I could only hope that what I had been taught and believed was true.

Sometime during my study of the Dark Ages and Middle Ages, I uncovered an odd paradox that exists in our minds about time gone by. It is a difference most people don't discern between history and the past. Simply stated, *the past* is what is real and true, while *history* is merely what someone recorded.

If you don't think there is a difference, experience an event in person and then read about it in the newspaper the next day, after witnesses have been interviewed. It might be shocking for many of us to realize that what we know as “history” can actually be a total fabrication, created from the imagination of someone with an ax to grind. Or perhaps, and it certainly happened in the Middle Ages, history was simply recorded by the man with the sharpest ax.

ON INTO WORLD conquest I read, now aware that to be assured of accurate information it would be vitally important that I confirm records and stories with transcripts and eyewitness accounts where possible.

The records surrounding the life of Joan of Arc—her triumphs, capture, fourteen-month trial, execution, retrial of nullification twenty years after her death, and subsequent canonization—particularly fascinated me. Hundreds of eyewitnesses testified over a period of almost thirty years as to what they personally saw or did not see.

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Do we know the truth about the life and death of Joan of Arc today? One would hope so. She is the patron saint of soldiers, martyrs, prisoners, and the entire nation of France.

World history, for those who continue to study it, becomes more defined during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, particularly during the American Revolution. Records by opposing forces and differing beliefs remain in relatively good shape and can still be examined by those wishing to do so.

The people of our present world retain a general awareness of historical time lines and a few specific dramatic events that shaped our lives. We occasionally read history or watch history presented on film. But in terms of why we do what we do, how we govern each other, what our society allows and why—very few of us intentionally connect the truth of the past with the realities of where we have ended up today.

So is the truth of the past even important? What about the truth itself? Beyond the elusive moral ideal by which most of us were raised—being honest and doing good—does the truth really, really matter?

To answer that question
effectively, I would ask
you another question . . .

How do you kill
eleven million
people?

OBVIOUSLY. MOST OF us have never even considered such a thing. Yet when I began to closely research our world's recent history—the last one hundred years—that particular question made its unsettling way into my mind.

How do you kill eleven million people?

Eleven million. The number is so large when the word *people* is attached to it that it becomes almost impossible to take seriously.

“Why eleven million?” you might ask. “What is the significance of that number?”

It is true: there is no *singular* significance in that number. And the actual number is 11,283,000—the number of people recorded who were killed by Adolf Hitler between the years 1933 and 1945.² Incidentally, that particular figure only represents institutionalized killing. It does *not* include the 5,200,000 German civilians and military war dead.³ Neither does it include the 28,736,000 Europeans killed during World War II as a result of Hitler's aggressive governmental policies.⁴

Within the same parameters, we could have used the number of Cambodians put to death by their own government: slightly more than three million between the years 1975 and 1979. Three million—from a total population of eight million.⁵

We could have used the exact figure of 61,911,000. That is the number of people who were murdered by the government of the Soviet Union, shown by their own records, between the years 1917 and 1987. But only 54,767,000 of the men, women, and children put to death by the Communist Party were officially Soviet citizens. That is 14,322 human lives for every word in this book.⁶

During World War I, the highest leadership council of Turkey's Young Turk government decided to exterminate every Armenian in the country, whether a soldier already on the front lines fighting for the government or a pregnant woman. This government institutionally killed their own famous scholars, their own religious leaders, their own children, and ardent patriots of their own country. All two million of them.⁷ We could have used that number instead.

In fact, during our world's last one hundred years, there are many different figures from which to choose. Three million in North Korea.⁸ More than a million each in Mexico,⁹ Pakistan,¹⁰ and the Baltic States.¹¹ The choices available, and numbers of dead killed at the hands of their own governments, are staggering. And in other places around the world, they are just getting started.

But for our purpose, let's focus on the number that is probably the most well known to us—the eleven million human beings exterminated by the Nazi regime.

There are many lessons we have learned from that tragic period in history, but one particular part of the story remains quietly hidden from even the most brilliant of scholars. It is the answer to one simple question.

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ONLY A CLEAR understanding of the answer to this question and the awareness of an involved populace can prevent history from continuing to repeat itself as it already has, time and again.

To be absolutely clear, the *method* a government employs in order to do the actual killing is not in question. We already know the variety of tools used to accomplish mass murder.

Neither do we need to consider the mind-set of those deranged enough to conceive and carry out a slaughter of innocents. History has provided ample documentation of the damage done to societies by megalomaniacal psychopaths or sociopaths.

What we need to understand is how eleven million people allow themselves to be killed.

Obviously, that is an oversimplification, but think with me here . . . If a single terrorist begins to shoot automatic weapons in a movie theater containing three hundred people, the lone gunman couldn't possibly kill all three hundred. Why? Because when the shooting started, most of the crowd would run. Or hide. Or fight . . .

So why, for month after month and year after year, did millions of intelligent human beings—guarded by a relatively few Nazi soldiers—willingly load their families into tens of thousands of cattle cars to be transported by rail to one of the many death camps scattered across Europe? How can a condemned group of people headed for a gas chamber be compelled to act in a docile manner?

The answer is breathtakingly simple. And it is a method still being used by some elected leaders to achieve various goals today.

How do you kill eleven million people?

Lie to them.

ACCORDING TO TESTIMONY provided under oath by witnesses at the Nuremberg Trials (including specific declarations made in court on January 3, 1946, by former SS officers), the act of transporting the Jews to death camps posed a particular challenge for the man who had been named operational

manager of the Nazi genocide. Adolf Eichmann, known as "The Master," was directed by written order in December 1941 to implement the Final Solution.

Eichmann went about the task as if he were the president of a multinational corporation. He set ambitious goals, recruited enthusiastic staff, and monitored the progress. He charted what worked and what didn't and changed policy accordingly. Eichmann measured achievement in quotas filled. Success was rewarded. Failure was punished.

An intricate web of lies, to be delivered in stages, was designed to ensure the cooperation of the condemned (but unknowing) Jews. First, as barbed-wire fences were erected, encircling entire neighborhoods, Eichmann or his representatives met with Jewish leaders to assure them that the physical restrictions being placed upon their community (in what later became known as ghettos) were only temporary necessities of war. As long as they cooperated, he told them, no harm would come to those inside the fence.

Second, bribes were taken from the Jews in the promise of better living conditions. The bribes convinced the Jews that the situation was indeed temporary and that no further harm would befall them. *After all, they reasoned, why would the Nazis accept bribes if they only intend to kill us and take everything anyway?* These first two stages of deception were conducted to prevent uprisings or even escape.

Finally, Eichmann would appear before a gathering of the entire ghetto. Accompanied by an entourage of no more than thirty local men and officers of his own—many unarmed—he addressed the crowd in a strong, clear voice. According to sworn statements, these were very likely his exact words:

Jews: At last, it can be reported to you that the

Russians are advancing on our eastern front. I apologize for the hasty way we brought you into our protection. Unfortunately, there was little time to explain. You have nothing to worry about. We want only the best for you. You will leave here shortly and be sent to very fine places indeed. You will work there, your wives will stay at home, and your children will go to school. You will have wonderful lives. We will all be terribly crowded on the trains, but the journey is short. Men? Please keep your families together and board the railcars in an orderly manner. Quickly now, my friends, we must hurry!¹²

The Jewish husbands and fathers were relieved by the explanation and comforted by the fact that there weren't more armed soldiers. They helped their families into the railcars. The containers, designed to transport eight cows, were each packed with a minimum of one hundred human beings and quickly padlocked.

At that moment they were lost. The trains rarely stopped until well inside the gates of Auschwitz.

Or Belzec.

Or Sobibor.

Or Treblinka . . .

A list drawn up by the German Ministry in 1967 names more than 1,100 concentration camps and subcamps accessible by rail.¹³ The Jewish Virtual Library says, "It is estimated that the Nazis established 15,000 camps in the occupied countries."¹⁴

And that is how you kill eleven million people.

Lie to them.

But wait, you say.

This didn't happen overnight!

*How did things get so
out of hand? How did it
get to this point?*

THE NATIONAL SOCIALIST German Workers' Party, led by Adolf Hitler, rose to power during a time of economic uncertainty in a nation of people longing for better times. Germany was a modern, industrialized nation whose well-informed citizens enjoyed ready access to information by way of print and radio broadcast media.

Hitler was a man of the common people—not long before, he had been a lance corporal in the army—and his speeches were exciting and passionate. He promised more and better and new and different. He vowed rapid change and swift action.

According to record, what Hitler actually said in his speeches depended very much upon the audience. In agricultural areas, he pledged tax cuts for farmers and new laws to protect food prices. In working-class neighborhoods, he talked about redistribution of wealth and attacked the high profits generated by business owners. When he appeared before financiers or captains of industry, Hitler focused on his plans to destroy communism and reduce the power of the trade unions.

"How fortunate for leaders," Hitler said to his inner circle, "that men do not think. Make the lie big, make it simple, keep saying it, and eventually they will believe it."¹⁵

In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler's autobiography, he wrote, "The great masses of the people will more easily fall victim to a big lie than a small one."¹⁶ The book was widely read by the German people at the time.



The masses believed him anyway.

Or at the very most, they ignored him. It is a fact that fewer than 10 percent of Germany's population of 79.7 million people actively worked or campaigned to bring about Hitler's change.¹⁷ Even at the height of its power in 1945, the Nazi political party boasted only 8.5 million members.¹⁸

So the remaining 90 percent of Germans—teachers and doctors and ministers and farmers—did . . . what? Stood by? Watched?

Essentially, yes.

Mothers and fathers held their voices, covered their eyes, and closed their ears. The vast majority of an educated population accepted their salaries and avoided the uncomfortable truth that lingered over them like a serpent waiting to strike. And when the Nazis came for their children, it was too late.

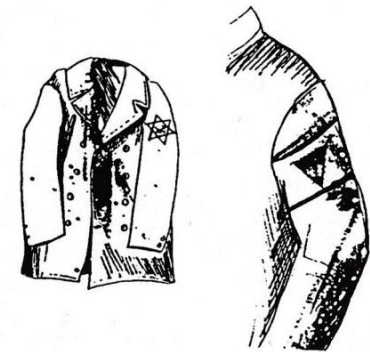
YOU SEE. IT wasn't only the Jews who were persecuted. Today, most people are unaware that of the eleven million people exterminated, five million were not even Jewish. In Dachau, one of the largest and most infamous of all concentration camps, only a third of the population was Jewish.

We've all heard of the yellow triangles the Jews were forced to wear for identification. Do you know the other colors that were used?

Brown triangles identified gypsies and those of Roman descent. Purple triangles were worn by Jehovah's Witnesses, Catholic priests, and Christian leaders who ran afoul of the government.

Black triangles marked one as a vagrant—worn by any person lacking documentation when asked for proof of a permanent address. Blue triangles were forced on those who had moved to Germany from other countries, unless they were Jewish, in which case they wore yellow.

Red triangles were worn by a large and diverse group. You wore red if you were a member of a trade union, a Democrat, a Freemason, or any number of categories labeled as a "political non-conformist." Pink badges identified homosexuals, though any suspected perpetrator of a sexual offense such as rape or pedophilia was also given a pink triangle.



Green badges were given to common thieves and murderers. And since they were not suspect politically, these prisoners—called *kapos*—were often in charge of the others.

Purple badges. Red and pink and brown. Blue and black. All worn by mothers and fathers and children who were not the first to be selected for the camps. Their badges were worn—their fates altered—well after they got a good look at the yellow ones.

IN AT LEAST one German town the railroad tracks ran behind the church. An eyewitness stated:

We heard stories of what was happening to the Jews, but we tried to distance ourselves from it, because we felt, what could anyone do to stop it?

Each Sunday morning, we would hear the train whistle blowing in the distance, then the wheels coming over the tracks. We became disturbed when we heard cries coming from the train as it passed by. We realized that it was carrying Jews like cattle in the cars!

Week after week the whistle would blow. We dreaded to hear the sounds of those wheels because we knew that we would hear the cries of the Jews en route to a death camp. Their screams tormented us.

We knew the time the train was coming and when we heard the whistle blow we began singing hymns. By the time the train came past our church, we were singing at the top of our voices. If we heard the screams, we sang more loudly and soon we heard them no more.

Years have passed and no one talks about it now, but I still hear that train whistle in my sleep.¹⁹



WITH ALL WE now know, does anyone believe that telling the truth will solve all a nation's problems? Of course not. But it *is* a beginning. In fact, speaking truth should be the *least* we require of our elected leaders! After all, what are *our* standards for being led?

You see, the danger to America is not a single politician with ill intent. Or even a group of them. The most dangerous thing any nation faces is a citizenry capable of trusting a liar to lead them.

In the long run, it is much easier to undo the policies of crooked leadership than to restore common sense and wisdom to a deceived population willing to elect such a leader in the first place. Any country can survive having chosen a fool as their leader. But history has shown time and again that a *nation of fools* is surely doomed.

INCREDIBLY. THERE ARE currently 545 human beings who are directly, legally, morally, and individually responsible for every problem America faces.

Have you ever wondered why America doesn't have a balanced budget? Have you ever in your life heard of a politician who wasn't *for* a balanced budget?

Have you ever heard a politician speak in favor of a complicated tax code that ordinary citizens would find difficult to understand? Then why do we have a complicated tax code that ordinary citizens find difficult to understand?

Meet the 545 men and women who enact every law, propose every budget, and set every policy enforced on the citizens of the United States of America: one president, nine Supreme Court justices, one hundred senators, and 435 members of the House of Representatives.

By the way, have you ever noticed that if any one of us lies to them, it is a felony? But if any one of them lies to us, it is considered politics.

According to the United States Bureau of the Census, our population has now increased beyond 311 million people.²⁰

To be clear, that's 545 of them and 311 million of us.

Can 311 million Americans ever hope to wrestle the power away from 545?

One would think so. But did you know that during the past quarter century, no presidential election has been won by more than ten million ballots cast? Yet every federal election during the same time period had at least one hundred million people of voting age who did not bother to vote!

KNOWING THAT THE quality of one's answers can only be determined by the quality of one's questions, let's ask some good ones . . .

Why do the ages of our world's greatest civilizations average around two hundred years?

Why do these civilizations all seem to follow the same identifiable sequence—from bondage to spiritual faith, from spiritual faith to courage, from courage to liberty, from liberty to abundance, from abundance to complacency, from complacency to apathy, from apathy to dependence, and finally from dependence back into bondage?²¹

Is lying to get elected acceptable? Even if the candidate's intention is to get elected in order to do good works?

Is there really any power in one's intentions anyway?

Have you ever noticed how we judge the "bad guys" by their actions and the "good guys" by their intentions?

Who are the good guys and who are the bad guys?

Would truth be a starting point for telling the difference?

What is our nation's course? Do you believe that one can determine a probable destination by examining the direction in which one is traveling? If so, where are we headed?

Can you hear the whistle and the wheels as the train comes down the track?

How
loudly are
you singing?

Notes

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3. Ibid.
4. Ibid., 14.
5. Rudolph J. Rummel, *Statistics of Democide* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction, 1992), 48.
6. Rudolph J. Rummel, *Lethal Politics: Soviet Genocide and Mass Murder Since 1917* (Piscataway, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 1990), 16.
7. Rummel, *Statistics of Democide*, 78.
8. Ibid., 178.
9. Ibid., 187.
10. Ibid., 153.
11. Ibid., 164–77.
12. Neal Bascomb, *Hunting Eichmann* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2009), 6.
13. www.enotes.com/topic/List_of_Nazi_Concentration_camps.
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17. www.mongabay.com/history/germany/germany-historical-background_population.html.
18. <http://wn.com/nsdap?orderby=published>.
19. Erwin W. Lutzer, *When a Nation Forgets God* (Chicago: Moody, 2010), 22.
20. US Census Bureau, US & World Population Clocks, <http://www.census.gov/main/www/popclock.html>.
21. Andy Andrews, *The Heart Mender* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2010), 141–42.
22. Andy Stanley, *The Principle of the Path: How to Get from Where You Are to Where You Want to Be* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2009), 14.
23. Andy Andrews, *The Final Summit* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2011).
24. George Santayana, *The Life of Reason, or: The Phases of Human Progress*, vol. 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), 284.
25. James Garfield, "A Century of Congress," *Atlantic*, July 1877, 63, 64.
26. Andrews, *The Final Summit*, 176.

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