

## **If You Are Not Outraged You are not Paying Attention**

By Rev. Dr. Keary Kincannon

"If you're not outraged, you're not paying attention." This was Heather Heyer's last Facebook Post. Heather is the 32-year-old paralegal, with a passion for social justice, who, participating in the counter protest in Charlottesville was run down and murdered.

Nineteen others were injured in an act of terrorism for which white supremacist Alex Fields has been charged. Yet on two separate occasions President Trump makes clear that he believes and blames many sides for the violence. If you're not outraged, you're not paying attention.

Republican Senator Lindsay Graham from South Carolina spoke out saying, "Mr. President, I encourage you to try to bring us together as a nation after this horrific event in Charlottesville. Your words are dividing Americans, not healing them." Graham continued saying, "Through his statements yesterday, President Trump took a step backward by again suggesting there is moral equivalency between the white supremacist neo-Nazis and KKK members who attended the Charlottesville rally and people like [Heather] Heyer. I, along with many others, do not endorse this moral equivalency."

Another Graham, Franklin Graham, eldest son of Billy Graham, spoke out in support of the President agreeing that the blame for the violence in Charlottesville should lie on many sides. Graham says, "... they want to blame President Donald J. Trump for everything. Really, this boils down to evil in people's hearts. Satan is behind it all. He wants division, he wants unrest, he wants violence and hatred. He's the enemy of peace and unity. I denounce bigotry and racism of every form, be it black, white or any other. My prayer is that our nation will come together. We are stronger together, and our answers lie in turning to God," Graham added.

As a pastor I have no problem with theologically identifying Satan as behind the violence in Charlottesville. And every good Christian knows we are all sinners. But please, Mr. Graham, sometimes the evil in our hearts manifests itself in the world. Sometimes evil walks the streets and we must stand up to it and say NO! The President's refusal to lay blame squarely on the evil that invaded Charlottesville has only emboldened that evil. David Duke, former KKK leader and participant in this White Supremacist rally, said their rally represents the "Fulfillment of Donald Trump's promise."

Mr. Graham, by encouraging the President in such a weak condemnation of the evil that marched in Charlottesville you are deflecting the President from condemning evil, from seeking repentance and you are even hindering his own salvation. And Mr. Graham, you are also deflecting the nation, especially those evangelicals that follow you, from identifying and resisting evil when it manifests in our presence. On judgement day you will have to answer for the souls that did not enter into the Kingdom because you gave them an excuse to stay lukewarm. In the Church our baptismal vows included a promise to renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world, and repent of our sin and to accept the freedom and power God gives to resist evil, injustice, and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves.

What more are we waiting for before we will stand up and live into our baptismal vows? A battalion of Nazis, KKK, white supremacists were walking down our streets! Many were in paramilitary uniforms carrying loaded weapons, including assault rifles and chanting 'Jews will not replace us,' 'blood and soil' and 'Sieg Heil' as they passed by a synagogue.

Nazi flags, Confederate flags and other symbols of white supremacy were carried everywhere. The groups organizing this rally to protest removing Robert E Lee's statue were very public about their white supremacist agenda. Many interviewed made it clear that they want a "White Nation" cleared of minorities and people of color. This is pure evil.

The President of the United States has the gall to say the violence that may have come from the resistance to this evil is equally to blame. Then he only steps into it deeper, when he says there were many good people on both sides. No Mr. President. There may be good people who oppose the removal of the statue but any good people who may have turned out in for that cause would have left in a heartbeat as soon as they saw the grotesque gathering of Nazis, KKK and White Supremacists.

Many of my clergy colleagues were present for the counter protest. They boldly proclaimed the Gospel of Christ. They counted the cost and willingly entered the conflict with a presence of deep abiding love. Saturday morning, they marched silently through the city, wearing stoles and clergy collars. They walked past many white supremacists and paramilitary armed with assault rifles.

What unfolded was dramatic in its opposition. Insults and threats were hurled at these ministers as they knelt on the curb along the edge of Emancipation Park. The white supremacists were clearly trying to anger and engage the clergy in a response. But the response they received only pointed out how different the Gospel of love is to the hate the supremacists spewed. The clergy chanted "love has, love has, love has already won." Then their witnessing broke into a spontaneous rendition of "This Little Light of Mine, I'm Gonna Let It Shine."

There are times when our belief in Christ calls us to take a risk, step up and step out, identifying ourselves as opposing and resisting evil. If you are not outraged, you are not paying attention.