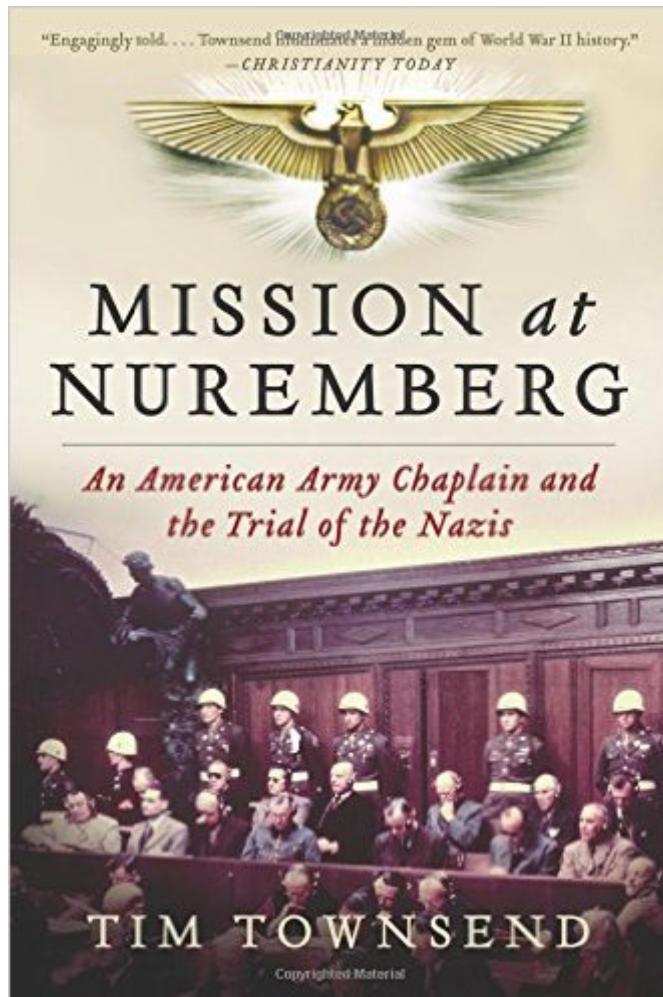


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Mission At Nuremberg: An American Army Chaplain And The Trial Of The Nazis



Synopsis

Once Adolf Hitler was defeated, U.S. Army Chaplain Henry Gerecke received his most challenging assignment: he was sent to Nuremberg to minister to the twenty-one imprisoned Nazi leaders awaiting trial for crimes against humanity. Mission at Nuremberg takes us deep inside the Nuremberg Palace of Justice, into the cells of the accused and the courtroom where they answered to the world for their crimes. These twenty-one Nazis had sat at Hitler's right hand; Hermann Goering, Albert Speer, Wilhelm Keitel, Hans Frank, and Ernst Kaltenbrunner were the orchestrators, and in some cases the direct perpetrators, of the most methodical genocide in history. As the drama leading to the court's final judgments unfolds, Tim Townsend brings Henry Gerecke's impossible moral quandary to life. Gerecke had visited Dachau and had seen the consequences of the choices these men had made, the orders they had given and carried out. How could he preach the gospel of mercy, knowing full well the devastating nature of the atrocities they had committed? As execution day drew near, what comfort could he offer? "and what promises of salvation could he make" to evil itself? Detailed, harrowing, and emotionally charged, Mission at Nuremberg is an incisive new history of the Nuremberg trials as well as a nuanced reflection on the nature of morality and sin, the price of empathy, and the limits of forgiveness.

Book Information

Paperback: 416 pages

Publisher: William Morrow Paperbacks; Reprint edition (March 3, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 006199720X

ISBN-13: 978-0061997204

Product Dimensions: 5.3 x 0.9 x 8 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars See all reviews (162 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #147,963 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #56 in Books > Law > Foreign & International Law #144 in Books > Law > Legal History #223 in Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Ministry & Evangelism > Counseling & Recovery

Customer Reviews

I must admit I was skeptical as I began to read this book. I did not expect to find what I did. This book powerfully captures the ministry of Pastor Gerecke and, for me, most importantly, repeatedly gets the good news about Jesus Christ precisely correctly. Along the way, the book does a very fine

job presenting each of the "cast of characters" in an objective light, showing the faults and failings of each of the Nazi war criminals. At no point are any of the Nazis presented sympathetically, in fact, the horrendous moral failings of each man are presented and analyzed very thoughtfully. What many readers may not understand is precisely how and why an American pastor could deal kindly with these men. It is the very scandal of the Gospel itself that will confound and perhaps even anger the reader as they read Townsend's well researched and well written account of precisely what Pastor Gerecke kept telling these men. The "good news" is precisely good news because all humanity deserves only "bad news" and there can be no more greater proof of this than the horrors of WWII. I appreciated how Gerecke presents the full life history of Gerecke and his passion for the poor and hopeless in the Saint Louis area. I also appreciated the insights into the whole process of the Nuremberg trials and all the fascinating details of what went on behind the scenes in the cells and little chapel. This is a MUST READ for anyone who wants to know the real story of the men on trial at Nuremberg and how they were dealt with justly, fairly and compassionately, and how a St. Louis, Missouri pastor took his place on a world stage and was determined "to know nothing but Christ and Him crucified" ... yes, even for these great and public sinful men, for all men in fact.

I was only 6 when my grandfather died and Tim has succeeded in bringing him back to me and the rest of my family. Tim spent 6 years researching this book and many hours with my dad to get the personal side, I learned many things about grandpa's early life but it also showed me his compassion and strength. Contrary to what Mystery Reviewer thinks he was not manipulated by the Nazis, if he had been he would have given Goring communion as Hermann Goring asked "just in case"; but lead by God. I've read many of the books written about the trials trying to catch a glimpse of grandpa and to me this book has been the most readable, Tim gives many facts about the trial but does so in a way that pulls the reader on, it is most certainly not "dry". He portrays both pastor and priest as human and compassionate, caring for their congregation in the way that Christ called them. It was not their job to judge the Nazis but to try to lead them back to God. Providing care for their families followed with that. What the Nazis did was unspeakable and only God knows what was in their hearts as they were lead to the gallows but you must remember that Christ forgave his executioners from the cross. If pastor and priest brought even one of these men back to God they did their job well, but ultimately it is up to God to forgive.

Started reading this on a flight home and couldn't wait to get home to finish. Very well researched and great writing. Highly recommended for interesting and new take on the Nuremberg trials.

Recommended by a friend who is a Chaplain. I recommend this book highly. As Christians, we know that God sent His son to die on the cross and that if we repent and believe, our sins are forgiven. Sounds nice, but just which sins? Do we forgive those who hurt our feelings and those who lie to us? Do we believe that we can be forgiven if we have lied or harmed others or hurt them? Really? But what about a parent who abuses a baby to the point of death? Did Jesus die for them? What about a serial killer? Did Jesus die for them? What about a pedophile? Did Jesus die for them? Chaplain Gerecke reached deep into his own soul to find answers about God's forgiveness and grace. To understand these men, he traveled to Dachau and touched the walls of the camp crematorium. He struggled with how to offer comfort, how to preach to men who were the epitome of evil itself. How do you offer evil the hope of salvation; of God's grace? First, you have to know what you really believe in your own heart. If you believe that 'all have sinned and come short of the glory of God', then you must believe it about these men too. This is a fascinating look at what it takes to truly know and convey the heart of God. It is not an easy look at our souls, but in the end, a comforting and human look into our own hearts and beliefs. Excellent book.

A well-researched, well-written book. Mr. Townsend's language is expressive yet clean, staying out of the way of this incredible story. This was an excellent book whether you view it as a WWII historian/Holocaust scholar, armchair theologian, or as someone who simply appreciates an incredibly riveting story that deals with the interconnections of morality and faith at their most essential levels. A tremendous read.

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