Remembering the Holocaust: Students grieve over the victims

By Janaé Daniels
Wire Reporter

The crisp air blowing in their faces, red cheeks and runny noses, dried chapped lips, frozen hands and feet are felt by the bitter winter cold. Everybody is thinking to themselves, “when will we be able to go inside?”

Once inside, the guards make sure what it is. Some notice the strange motion. Some notice the strange sudden moves in a downward movement. Some notice the strange yells over them— they are not sure what it is.

As the door opens, they enter another cold, dark room uncertain of what each moment may reveal. Their reactions may affect the rest of their lives and the many people they come in contact with through their years.

Dr. David Gushee, Graves professor of moral philosophy and his 30 students were faced with these emotions as they waited to begin their experience at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

Gushee feels taking students to the museum gives them a chance to see, touch and feel what they are learning about in class and make it more of a reality.

“I feel it is important for Christians to know about the Holocaust because we have been charged to help people who have been oppressed and who can’t help themselves and because it was a tragedy against God’s creation,” said junior Sarah Jane Head, Christian ethics major.

“I think the Holocaust poses unique questions to Christian theology and ethics,” said Gushee.

The architecture of the museum is designed to simulate many aspects of the tragedy. The windows are barred with little view of the outside world, the elevators are structured like gas chambers and each exhibit is specifically designed to capture every human emotion that can be felt.

Visitors are given identification cards of a real Holocaust victim as they walk through the four-story building. The identification card helps students identify with the victim while following their life.

Junior Erika Godfrey, Biblical studies and psychology majors, was issued the card of twelve-year-old Simone Arnold from Husseren-Wesserling, France. She was 11 years old when she encountered her first act of hatred in 1941. She was expelled from school for refusing to say “Heil Hitler” and then was interrogated by the Gestapo.

When she was twelve, Nazis took her from her parents because they felt she was being corrupted by their Jehovah’s Witness teachings.

In June 1943 she was sent to a reeducation center in Constance, Germany, where she stayed two years. In April 1945 the French Army liberated Simone’s center and she was reunited with her family where she returned to school in France.

“My experience at the museum made the Holocaust real and it made an impact on me to remember the Holocaust so it won’t happen again,” said sophomore Brody Mcurty, Christian ethics and political science major.

Gushee teaches the course to make the Holocaust more personal for students and help them realize what happens when Christians fail to uphold their duties, especially during times of oppression.

This course has been offered for three years and is taught every other year.

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Friday, April 20 – Friday, April 27
Copies will be distributed to graduating seniors and those who pre-purchased in the fall.

Monday, April 30 – Friday, May 3
In addition to distributing to the seniors and pre-purchasers, we will be selling copies for $50 while supplies last.

Shoes of Sorrow: These shoes line the halls of the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C., representing the lost lives of the six million people who were killed during the Holocaust.