

The Church's Prophetic

Voice



Presented by Minister Vincent T. Parker

Rev. Dr. Richard Lott Annual March Board Meeting
Pastor Arthur L. Lane, President
Host — Love Community Baptist Church, Dr. Michael Oyedokun II, Pastor
Wednesday, March 19, 2025

A CALL FOR A BIBLICAL RESPONSE IN THE CURRENT SEASON



BE THE CHURCH

Outposts of the Kingdom of God.



SPEAK THE TRUTH

Confront the lies.



LIVE THE CROSS

Be willing to suffer.

THE CURRENT SEASON

POLITICAL

(From *Jesus and Powers*, N.T. Wright, Chapter 6)

- **Totalitarianism** — (1) Fascist-like regimes which weaponize grievances, valorize (give value to) militarism, play on ethnic prejudices and believe that all the nation's problems can be solved by a demagogue carrying a big stick. (2) A form of far-right authoritarian ultra-nationalism characterized by dictatorial power and forcible suppression of any opposition, with a strict regimentation of society and government regulation of the economy.
- **Christian Nationalism** — Government enforcement of Christian hegemony (supremacy) combined with civil religion (a cultural and outward version of Christianity). Christians are given special privileges by the State and Christianity becomes an outward display of patriotic devotion rather than part of a true religious affection.
- **Civic totalism** — Basically the activist progressive left. Wedded to moral absolutes not based on the Bible; “binary slots” of either oppressor or oppressed. Using the civic state to impose progressive values.



“To bear the cross means that you refrain from doing what you have the power to do. You are qualified to fulfill your desire, yet you refrain from doing so. A person like this is the strongest person. The strongest person is not the one who is able to do something, but the one who is able not to do what he has the power to do.” -Watchman Nee

RELIGIOUS

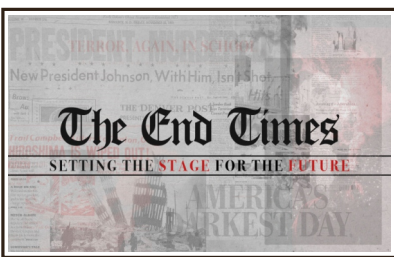
- **Christian Nationalism**
 - ◆ An attempt to use the Scripture to justify their form of a Christian nation.
 - ◆ Fear being overwhelmed by social forces and racial demographics.
- **White Evangelicalism**
 - ◆ With the decline of Christendom, this group feels marginalized from the culture.
 - ◆ Therefore, they can jettison previously held “Biblical” positions regarding candidates’ qualifications and policy prescriptions.
 - ◆ Wedded to the Republican party.
- **New Apostolic Reformation (NAR)**
 - ◆ God speaks through modern-day apostles and prophets.
 - ◆ Demonic forces can control not only individuals, but entire territories and institutions.
 - ◆ Church is not so much a place as an active “army of God,” one with a holy mission to claim the Earth for the Kingdom as humanity barrels ever deeper into the End Times.
 - ◆ Anti-democratic.
- **Catholic Monarchy**
 - ◆ Call for the emergence of a catholic king.



SOCIAL

- Chaotic
- Divisive
- Breaking of norms and traditions
- Growing divide between the “haves” and the “Have Nots”

What Underlies The Headlines? Bad Theology → False And Counterfeit Gospels



- **Gospel** – Privatized = robbed of any social, political, economic implications.
- **Kingdom** – To be ushered in by human means, not the supernatural power of God.
- **Power** – Used like the Gentiles – Luke 22: 24-25
- **Cross** – Emptied of its power – 1 Corinthians 1:17-18

PEOPLE OF COLOR

- Wounded by most recent election results
- Fear, anxiety, anger, resentment, “othering”
- Resignation
- Represents a continuing backlash against people of color - blaming
 - ◆ DEI, “wokeness”
 - ◆ Influx of immigrants
 - ◆ Poor economic conditions among certain classes.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON BIBLICAL RESPONSES TO EVIL (OLD TESTAMENT)

- **Abraham** – Co-exists and fights when necessary (Genesis 12:10-20; Genesis 14)
- **Moses** – Confronts political authority (Exodus 5:1)
- **Prophets** - Confront God's People - Isaiah, Hosea, Micah
- ◆ Limited voice to other nations – Amos, Habakkuk
- ◆ Jeremiah – considered “a traitor”
- ◆ Daniel, Nehemiah – collaborate

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE ON BIBLICAL RESPONSES TO EVIL (NEW TESTAMENT)

- **Jesus' Contemporaries' Response to Roman oppression:**
 - ◆ Purify: Scribes and Pharisees – Israel wasn't faithful to Torah, so purify.
 - ◆ Revolution: Zealots - Freedom Fighters
 - ◆ Collaborate: Sadducees – Cooperate with Romans and become power brokers
 - ◆ Separate: Essenes – Withdrew into their own strict observance of the Torah and held property in common. Waited for God to use them to start a new Israel.
 - ◆ Resignation (with underlying resentment): the general population.
- **Jesus - Resistance AND Submission**
 - ◆ Resistance to religious authority – Matthew 23: 27-26
 - ◆ Submission to political authority
 - To Rome – Pay taxes - Mark 12: 13-17
 - To Pilate – at Trial - John 19
- **Paul - Submission with qualifications** – Acts 16-17; Rom. 13
 - ◆ Submission - Imprisoned by authorities.
 - ◆ Resistance - Imprisoned for sharing the gospel and the chaos surrounding its impact.
 - ◆ Converts Roman soldiers and people of influence
- **The Church** – persecuted until it wasn't.



RESPONSE OF THE CONTEMPORARY CHURCH

- **Vacillate between:**
 - ◆ **Malcolm** (pre-conversion to Orthodox Islam) *"A black man has the right to do whatever is necessary to get his freedom. We will never get it by nonviolence."* (Liberation – Feb. 1965)
 - ◆ **Martin L. King, Jr.** *"Do to us what you will and we will still love you. ... WE will soon wear you down by our capacity to suffer."* (Stride Toward Freedom, 1958)
- Marriage to one political party
- Dependence on human resources
- Righteousness defined as...
 - ◆ Personal holiness. Or...
 - ◆ Social justice and personal freedom

A BIBLICAL RESPONSE OF THE CHURCH

- Offer an alternative community along with a counter-cultural response to evil.
- Offer a Biblical response based on:
 - ◆ Who God says I am
 - ◆ What God says I am to do
- All three responses MUST work in conjunction with the other or each alone will fall into danger zones.
- The Holy Spirit must guide any response giving wisdom as to when and how and what.

GOD SAYS WE ARE ...



- **Alive** from the dead – Eph 2: 1-10
- **Aliens** and Strangers – Hebrews 11:13 and 1 Peter 2:11
- **Abhorrent** to this world – John 15: 18-19
- **Ambassadors** – 2 Corinthians 5: 16-20

→ THEREFORE, WE SHOULD...



BE THE CHURCH

Outposts of the Kingdom of God.

- Be Holy
- Offer an alternative by:
 - ◆ Loving your enemy; forgiving; blessing those who curse you
 - ◆ Offering generous community
 - ◆ Doing good works
 - ◆ Being joyful.



**FEAR
ISOLATION
ARROGANCE
SELF-CONCERN**



SPEAK THE TRUTH

Confront the lies.

- Preach the full gospel
 - ◆ The coming Kingdom
 - ◆ Both the now and not yet
- Confront the lies about God, Jesus, the Gospel, the cross and power
- Dissent (Advocate, negotiate, engage in political, social discussion)
- Personally - Preach and teach, write, not the headlines but the spiritual forces animating the headlines.



**VIEWED AS
ANGRY
JUDGMENTAL
OPPOSED TO EVERYTHING**



LIVE THE CROSS

Be willing to suffer.

- Civil disobedience
 - ◆ Pray AND protest – Non-Violent resistance
 - ◆ Sacred subversion – undermine the powers by forgiving, returning hate with love, serving those unlike you, discovering the image of God in each person.
 - ◆ Defend self and others
- Uncivil disobedience
 - ◆ Using violence, taking up arms (Example: Dietrich Bonhoeffer – conspired to assassinate Adolph Hitler)
- Be willing to suffer.



**BECOMING A
“MARTYR FOR
JESUS” AND
ESTRANGED FROM HUMAN
RELATIONSHIPS**



"Democracy dies when people refuse to speak out. The worrying signs that democracy is being undermined include sabotaging constitutions, sidelining legislative bodies in the name of representing the people, packing courts with loyalist, delegitimizing opponents and the election processes, attacking the free press, condoning or encouraging violence, and threatening to take legal action against political rivals.

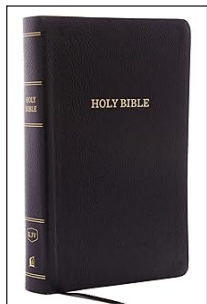
- Observations from the female Asian theologian Kwok Pui-Lan



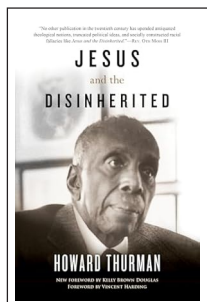
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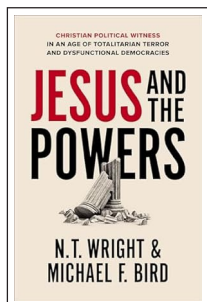
Resource List for Further Reading



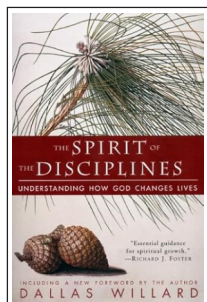
The Bible
by The Holy Spirit of God



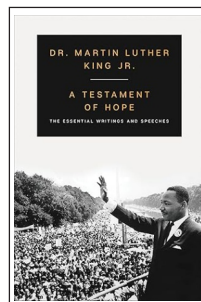
Jesus and the Disinherited
by Howard Thurman



Jesus and the Powers
by N.T. Wright and
Michael F. Bird



*The Spirit of the Disciplines
Understanding How God
Changes Lives*
by Dallas Willard
Chapter 11: "The Disciplines
of the Power Structure of this
World"



*A Testament of Hope: The
Essential Writings and Speeches
of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*
Edited by James Washington



"To those who need profound succor and strength to enable them to live in the present with dignity and creativity, Christianity often has been sterile and of little avail. The conventional Christian word is muffled, confused, and vague. Too often the price exacted by society for security and respectability is that the Christian movement in its formal expression must be on the side of the strong against the weak.

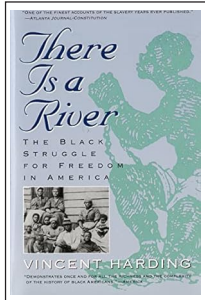
This is a matter of tremendous significance, for it reveals to what extent a religion that was born of a people acquainted with persecution and suffering has become the cornerstone of a civilization and of nations whose very position in modern life has too often been secured by a ruthless use of power applied to weak and defenseless peoples."



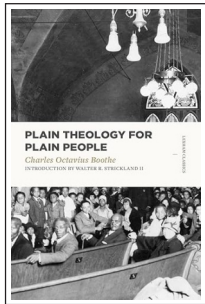
~ Howard Thurman, *Jesus and the Disinherited*



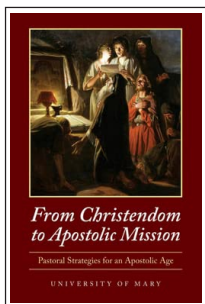
MUMD – MINISTERS UNITED FOR MINISTERIAL DEVELOPMENT



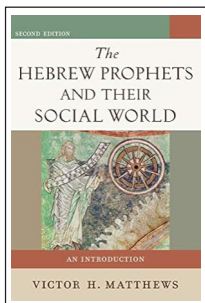
There Is a River: The Black Struggle for Freedom in America
by Vincent Harding



Plain Theology for Plain People
by Charles Octavius Boothe



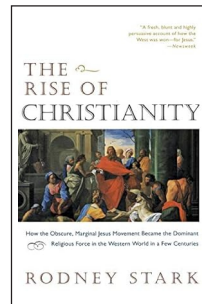
From Christendom to Apostolic Mission
by University of Mary
(Catholic Resource)



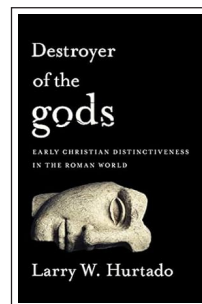
The Hebrew Prophets and Their Social World
by Victor H. Matthews



ADDITIONAL
RESOURCES



The Rise of Christianity
by Rodney Stark



Destroyer of the gods
by Larry W. Hurtado

