

What to Discern from the Church Where David Platt Pastors-Par...

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SPEAKERS

Sponsor: Samaritan Ministries, David Platt, Host: David Wheaton, Program Director,
Featured Resource: In His Image



Host: David Wheaton 00:07

What to discern from the church fracture where David Platt pastors. That is a topic we'll discuss today right here on The Christian Worldview Radio Program, where the mission is to sharpen the biblical worldview of Christians and to share the good news of Jesus Christ. I'm David Wheaton, the host. The Christian Worldview is a nonprofit ministry. Thank you to our listeners for your encouragement, and also your support. And also to our national sponsor, Samaritan Ministries, who provides a biblical solution to health care. You can find out more at TheChristianWorldview.org. David Platt is one of the most influential evangelical pastors in America. You've probably heard of him. He came to prominence after the release of his best selling book titled, *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith From The American Dream*. He has served as president of the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, one of the largest missionary sending agencies in the world. And since 2017, he has been the pastor at McLean Bible Church, a mega church with four locations located just outside Washington DC in Virginia. Now his tenure at the church has not been smooth, at least not of late. Prior to his sermon on July 4, Platt called out what he called a small group of people in the church for hindering the election of three new elders. A subsequent vote took place two weeks later just this past week, but allegations of voting impropriety has now led to an actual legal challenge going on within the church. It turns out that these problems are just the tip of the iceberg. A 17 page letter, which we

have linked on our website, was sent to church leadership earlier this year, detailing their concerns about the direction of the church. One of the recurring charges is that church leadership is wrongly focused on social and racial justice. A Facebook group called Save McLean Bible Church has been actively pushing back against Platts leadership. Keep in mind, this is a very influential church in the DC area. Now, church divisions are certainly nothing new. But there are things to discern and learn from them, so that churches can have unity that honors God. So we hope you join us this weekend on The Christian World View as we talk about this church fracture, and what we can learn from it, so that we can have unity in our own churches. These divisive situations in churches are hard because members of churches invest so much of their life into their church. I mean, after all, their faith in Christ is the most important aspect of their life. And that centers around the church. They invest time and money and prayer into their church. Major moments of their lives take place in their church, whether it's worship services, their marriages, funerals, baby dedications, annual holidays. Church is also their social group. So when these kinds of fractures happen, it really becomes a highly distressing situation. So it's a big issue when things go sideways at a church. So how to stay unified, and not shipwreck or fracture a church is what we're going to discuss today. Now before we get into the specifics of the issue at McLean Bible Church, and we're just looking at that as an example of what can take place when certain decisions are made that causes lack of trust and lack of unity in a church, let's talk about what it takes to cultivate unity in the church. I just wrote down four things that I think will keep a church unified, if they are adhered to very closely. Number 1: A church must be clear and committed on biblical doctrines. That must be a major focus in the church. If you're kind of fast and loose with those things, if you're not committed on those things, if you don't spend a lot of your time thinking about what we believe and have that unity throughout all your leadership everywhere in the church, there are going to be cracks in your armor, so to speak, that are going to be exploited. Number 2: The second key to cultivating unity in the church is choosing or having qualified pastors and elders according to scripture, who are discerning of false teaching and teachers. We see this all the time in the New Testament. Paul was constantly warning, whether Timothy or Titus or others, other churches he was writing to about being careful, because of false teaching, and teachers inevitably coming into churches. It's just the way Satan and his minions operate in this world. They're always trying to compromise churches. So you need qualified pastors who meet the qualifications of pastors and elders, as laid out in scripture. But they also are discerning of the fact that they're going to be attacked. And there's going to be false teaching. Maybe even by well intentioned people that are going to try to make inroads into the church. The third key to cultivate unity in the church is to focus on the fundamentals. And this was something that we talked about with Matt Fletcher last week. That in Acts 2, we see the fundamentals of what the early church focused on. They taught the Apostles Doctrine, they taught the Word, they focused on fellowship of believers. That's the purpose of the church. It's for believers, not for non

believers. And they had communion. They remembered Christ's sacrifice, and were for prayer. To pray together to God, to communicate with Him. And we'll read some of the verses. The passages of Scripture that relate to these four points. The fourth point in cultivating unity in a church or having a unified church is to exercise church discipline, and restoration. That's from Matthew 18. Because if you don't do that, if you let members of a church sin, and sort of, "Get away with it," if they're allowed to continue in sin and just go on, it infects and influences the whole congregation. After all, the church should be a group of sanctified or being sanctified believers, not ones where a sin is being overlooked, and swept under the rug. Now the verses that correspond with those four points I just listed out, the first one is from I Timothy 4:6. And this is the Apostle Paul writing to his understudy, a pastor, a younger man in the faith, Timothy, who pastored at several different or at least a couple different places where Paul went on his missionary journeys. And he writes to Timothy in I Timothy 4. He says, In pointing out these things to the brethren, (so you're the pastor, point them out to those in the church), you will be a good servant of Christ Jesus, constantly nourished on the words of the faith. (Now listen to these words he uses), and of the sound doctrine which you had been following. But have nothing to do with worldly fables or false doctrines, fit only for old women, Paul writes. On the other hand, discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness. You need to live an exemplary life, Timothy, you need to fulfill these qualifications of an elder. Moving on to verse 11 of I Timothy 4, he tells Timothy, prescribe and teach these things. Focus on your doctrine. Let no one look down on your youthfulness, but rather in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity, show yourself an example of those who believe. Verse 13. Until I come, give attention to the public reading of scripture, read God's Word. That's the perfect part of your worship. To give attention to exhortation, and teaching. Do not neglect the spiritual gift within you, which was bestowed on you through prophetic utterance with the laying on of hands by the presbytery. And verse 15. Take pains with these things. Be absorbed in them. In other words, focus on sound doctrine, the reading of Scripture, focus on the fundamentals so that your progress will be evident to all. Verse 16. Pay close attention to yourself and to your teaching. Persevere in these things. For as you do this, you will ensure salvation both for yourself, and for those who hear you. That really dealt with the first point of being clear and committed on sound biblical doctrines. It's key to having a unified church. Now let's go over to I Timothy 3, one chapter earlier, where Paul gives Timothy the qualifications for pastors and elders in the church. I mean these men, and yes, they're supposed to be men, have to have a lifestyle and a character that's beyond reproach. So he writes in I Timothy 3, starting with verse 1, a trustworthy statement. If any man aspires to the office of overseer, elder, now there has to be an aspiration, he has to want to do it, he shouldn't be just just compelled to do it. He needs to aspire to it, needs to have the desire inside of himself. It is a fine work he desires to do. An overseer, elder. Here's the list of what the qualifications must be. He must be above reproach in his life. He must be the husband of one wife. There's the specification that it should be a man, not a woman. This

elder must be temperent, prudent, respectable, hospitable. And here's a key one. Able to teach. In other words, he has to be able to teach the Word of God. You must be able to teach. He must be a good teacher of the Word. That's going to be one of his responsibilities. Verse 3. Not addicted to wine, of course not, or pugnacious, which means kind of a person of conflict, but gentle, peaceable, free from the love of money. There should be none of that in an elder a pastor. Verse 4. He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control, with all dignity. Verse 5. But if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God. In other words, it's not just kind of his spiritual life in a vacuum, it must be lived out in his home. He must be in a good marriage, and he must have his children being raised in the discipline and instruction of the Lord, his children aren't out of control. Verse 6. He must not be a new convert to the faith, so that he will not become conceited, and fall into the condemnation incurred by the devil. And he must have a good reputation with those outside the church so that he will not fall into reproach, and the snare of the devil. Now, granted, these are very strict and sobering qualifications for someone who is going to lead the church. Be it a pastor or elder. But that's exactly what God wants it to be because this is the body of Christ. This is the most important institution that God established in the entire world. It's the one that God promises to bless the church. And so those that lead it must have those things. So going back to our point, our second point of a unified church, it must have qualified pastor, elders who have a discerning spirit, being able to protect the flock from false teaching, and teachers. The next point was focusing on the fundamentals. And this is from that passage in Acts 2, where the early church was continually devoting themselves to the apostles teaching, theirs to the word of God, preaching, and to fellowship with fellow believers, to the breaking of bread into prayer. Now, there can be more to a church, of course than that. But there shouldn't be any less than that. Those are the four fundamentals upon which a church should be built. So adding anything to that, should be done with careful, careful discernment. Because whatever you add to that will actually impact the church. So if you have lots of programs or ministries, and if you have multiple services, two kinds of services, you start doing videos, and you have a certain kind of music environment, that is all going to affect the character of that church. I'm not saying all that's wrong, but you need to be really careful that none of those things you're adding are taking away from those four fundamentals of teaching God's Word fellowship, remembering Christ's death and prayer. We don't want to be distracting from those things. We talked about this last week. Finally, the last thing is exercising church discipline with the purpose of restoration that comes from Matthew 18. It says, if your brother sins, go and show him his fault in private, if he listens to you, you have won your brother. There's step one. Step two, if he does not listen to you, take one or two more with you, so that by the mouth of two or three witnesses, every fact may be confirmed. Step three, verse 17, if he refuses to listen to them, now a plurality of people, tell it to the church. Step four. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. In

other words, he needs to be disfellowshipped from the body in order to bring him to a point of repentance. Unrepentant sin, whatever it is, should not and cannot be tolerated by the Church of Christ. But the point is not to get to step four. The purpose is not just to punish the unrepentant sinner, the purpose is to restore that person. So that's why there's this process of doing it. So hopefully, that person will be restored before it comes to having to be expelled from the local body.

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Program Director 14:24

The Christian Worldview with David Wheaton returns in just a moment.

S

Sponsor: Samaritan Ministries 14:28

At Samaritan Ministries, our members are passionate about being part of a Christian community that shares one another's medical needs without the use of insurance. But for Samaritan members, Tony and Ginger Malik, that passion to share health with others is a way of life. It was my wife's dream to come back to the farm. She wanted to be able to do sustainably raised vegetables and teach people where their food comes from. We want to try to provide the healthiest possible produce for our neighbors and our friends and the people that we are able to touch in their lives. Samaritan Ministries is a perfect fit for us because we feel like we can actually partner with other Christians and other people to help them provide for their medical needs. We're Tony and Ginger Malik and we are Samaritan Ministry members. For more information, visit us at samaritanministries.org/tcw.

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Host: David Wheaton 15:27

David Wheaton here to tell you about a special offer on My Boy Ben. Ben was a Yellow Lab and inseparable companion back when I was competing in the pro tennis tour. I invite you to enter the story in its tapestry of relationships with Ben and my aging parents, with a childhood friend I would eventually marry and ultimately with God, whose gospel and grace caused all things, even the hard things to work together for good. Order a signed and personalized copy for yourself. Or for a friend who loves dogs or someone you know who needs to hear about God's grace and the gospel. My Boy Ben is owned by the Christian Worldview. It is 264 pages, hardcover, and retails for \$18.99 plus shipping. For a limited time we are offering it for a donation of any amount to The Christian Worldview. Go to TheChristianWorldview.org or call 1-888-646-2233. That's TheChristianWorldview.org.

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Program Director 16:34

Welcome back to The Christian Worldview. Be sure to visit our website, TheChristianWorldview.org where you can subscribe to our free weekly email and annual print newsletter, order resources for adults and children and support the ministry. Now back to today's program with host David Wheaton.

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Host: David Wheaton 16:50

So with some context, here's why churches fracture. You have elders and pastors who were only mildly concerned with sound doctrine. But they're majorly concerned with how the church appears. They want to attract people from the outside world. They want to appear culturally in step. They don't want to look like they're haters. The leaders of a church may not have very good discernment about what's going on, not only in the world, but actually more importantly, what's going on in the professing Christian world. They may not understand the trends and the false teaching that's always rampant in all ages in the Christian world. They never discipline members of their church. There could be, you know, an unbiblical divorce going on in that church. And that won't be addressed by church leadership. Or maybe an adulterous relationship or any of the things you see Paul addressed in his letter to the Corinthians. Or they're constantly trying to tweak things in a church as if it's like a business where you kind of tweak your marketing strategy to try to see what might increase sales and might get the momentum going. And then when they tweak things, they might do it discreetly, hoping people don't notice in the church. Or on the other hand, they might do it very brusquely and just have a very heavy handed approach to making changes in the church. And therefore when you have that dynamic, well, you have people who are probably more discerning in the church who have been there for a long time to see what's taking place and then you get these divisions and fractures like what is taking place at McLean Bible Church in Virginia, right now. Now speaking of McLean Bible Church by the acronym NBC, I looked on Wikipedia, it was founded in 1961 by five families in Northern Virginia. Its first service was held on Easter Sunday at an elementary school. Senior Pastor Lon Solomon, who became the pastor in 1980 has a very interesting biography. He was born and raised in a Jewish home in Virginia. But he became a Born Again Christian in the spring of 1971. And then as I mentioned, he became senior pastor of the church in 1980. And he served for I believe 37 years as pastor of this church going from a very small church, to a very highly influential church in the Washington DC metro, just outside that particular metro area. In 2017, according to an article, David Platt was confirmed as the pastor/teacher of the church. Later lead pastor replacing Lon Solomon. Now, it's hard to know exactly how many people go to the church. I've seen some articles online saying there was as many as 16,000 coming at one point. Not sure if that's true. But in a recent article, because this story was even featured in mainstream media in the Seattle Times, we have that linked on

our website, they said the church has about 2,500 members and meets over four locations. So who is David Platt, their new lead pastor of the church? I went to Wikipedia as well. And Wikipedia is not necessarily a trustworthy source. But just for kind of basic facts, David Platt is married and the father of four. He graduated from the University of Georgia with a degree in journalism. And he obtained his Master's in Divinity, his Master's of Theology, and his PhD from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, which is one of the six seminaries of the Southern Baptist Convention. He was a senior pastor at a church in Birmingham, Alabama, from 2006 to 2014. Apparently, according to Wikipedia, the youngest megachurch pastor in the US at that time. Years later, in 2014, he became the president of the Southern Baptist Convention's International Mission Board. I mentioned that earlier. That's a major position he held there. Then in February 2017, he began serving as the interim teaching pastor at McLean Bible Church in Virginia. Now David Platt is the author of many books, including the New York Times bestseller, *Radical: Taking Your Faith Back From The American Dream*. And I think it's important to understand what that book is about. I personally haven't read the book. So I went online to a review to one of the, I think, very highly respected reviewers, which is Tim Challies. He's got a very popular website, challies.com. He's from Canada. I believe he's either a pastor or elder in his own church, but he writes very regularly online. He has a very popular website. He wrote a review on *Radical*, David Platt's book back in 2011. So this is 10 years old now, this review. But I think it gives a good summary of what this book is about, because it really was a highly influential book. And he said this, "Whatever David Platt is selling," people are buying it." At last count 750,000 copies of *Radical* were in print. And it had been on the New York Times list of bestsellers for 52 weeks. 750,000 copies. And that may not be the final number. It may be much more than that by now. But that is an incredibly huge number. That's what Challie's says. He says, that is no small achievement. So he's written that book, I'm not sure how his other books have done, but that book did incredibly well. And he says, "By the time you finish *Radical*, you'll be charged up, you'll be ready to sell your home, to give up your car, to move across the world, to ditch the American dream in favor of moving across the world to do mission work." But here's the thing Challie's writes, you'd better do it quickly. Because a couple of weeks later, you'll probably be back to normal, back to ordinary. Platt, will get you all fired up he writes. That's a good thing. At least it can be. But in the midst of all the excitement, I worry about excitement fatigue. After all, *Radical* is far from the only book of this kind. It's the kind of book that seeks to shake up the western church, to get the church to do something more. Something, well radical. Read the book, do hard things, or *Crazy Love* by Francis Chan, and *Radical* by David Platt and all the rest, and you'll get worked up every time. But the reality is that for the vast majority of us, our lives will not look much different two weeks or two months or two years later. It's not that the books are bad, as much as they give us little to work with as we move from fantasy of being radical to reality, from the abstract moving across the world, to personal. In the middle of reading a book, it is easy enough to say, "I'm gonna

give it all away." But then you realize that your wife hasn't read the book and isn't quite as eager. And then you realize that you have children and hauling them halfway around the world would have a profound effect upon them. And then you realize that it's been six months, and you still haven't done anything. In fact, the excitement has passed away. And you realize that life isn't so bad. There may be some lingering guilt that you haven't moved across the world. But you've realized that it isn't just so easy to extract yourself from all of this. I am concerned, Challie's writes, that it is difficult to read this book, Radical, and believe its message and not feel that normal life is dishonoring to God. You get that line? In other words, if you're kind of a normal person who has a normal life, and you're kind of living in America, in a house and got a job and raising kids and just doing the normal thing, that your life is somehow dishonoring to God. Maybe we need to learn to be faithful in our own neighborhoods before believing we'll be faithful in other things. That's from Tim Challie's review of David Platt's book, Radical. Now there's more to the review than that. I just read a few paragraphs from it. And I'll just say to that very few Christians are called to "Sell it all and live in a hut on the other side of the world." I mean, after all, if you think back to the early church, the Christians that Paul traveled to and ministered to, they just lived in towns and homes, and they raised their families, they had jobs, they paid their bills, they weren't living this, "Radical life," as the Apostle Paul was. Some of them were poor, some of them had some money, some of them were wealthy. God uses all types of people for His purposes. So it's altruistic to say, just give up the American dream, "Your regular life in America." I mean, someone has to earn money, and someone has to pay the bills, especially for those who are living radical lives as missionaries on the other side of the world. And who's going to pay for the churches? I mean, churches don't produce a good or a service to sell, where they can operate as a business would. Someone has to work and live these, "Non-radical lives, this American Dream life, to pay for all this other missionary church work going on, in the midst of it all." So David Platt is a very popular, very influential, in demand, and as you're going to hear in a little bit, he's a passionate, compelling communicator. And I want to say again, I'm not on the inside of this issue of what's going on at the church he pastors at McLean Bible Church. I've heard and I've read both sides of the issue. But I'm not doing the program today to take sides, but rather to discern and learn from both sides, and how Platt's decisions have led to this once stable church, McLean Bible Church, leading to this fractured moment, and how this can be helpful for us to understand for our own churches as well. So this past week, I just happened across this sermon that David Platt had given at his church on Independence Day, July 4. It was on some website and the article surrounding the the video was about that David Platt had called out some people in his church for getting in the way of the nomination or election of three elders that have been put forward. So I decided to hear what he had to say to his church. And after listening to his message, before his sermon, about calling out these members of the church, it was just really hard to believe that he was actually saying this to people within his church in front

of the entire church congregation. So after hearing it, you're going to hear parts of it in a second here, I decided to go to try to figure out well, what is the other side? The side he's criticizing and complaining about. What are they saying? What are they upset about? What are their complaints against the direction of the church? And I dug in a little more and found out that there was a group of men in the church, who were very unhappy with the direction that David Platt has led the church and they had written this 17 page letter to the pastors and elders of McLean Bible Church. And as I read the letter, I just couldn't believe how compelling and how biblical and how discerning some of the things they were writing. Now, I don't know the behind the scenes story, but their understanding of what a church should be and what church leadership, things they should do and not do and what kinds of teaching should be embraced and what types of teaching should be pushed aside was actually really helpful to me to read this. It gave me greater insight to understand, you know, what's taking place within the church. So we'll get to that letter from these men to the elder board of McLean Bible Church. But let's first get to what David Platt said that July 4th day just a few weeks ago to his congregation about what's taking place in his church.

D

David Platt 28:58

Before we dive together, into the Word today, I need to address a dynamic that is taking place in our church family right now, in a way that I don't think I've ever had to do, or wanted to do in all my years as a pastor, and I want to be careful with my words.

H

Host: David Wheaton 29:21

Just to interject, when I heard that as a setup to what he was about to say, I thought, uh oh, what's coming? I had no idea what was going on in the church at that point.

D

David Platt 29:31

We had a meeting this last Wednesday night for the purpose of affirming God's call in the lives of potential elders, pastors in our church family. I mentioned last Sunday, this is one of the most important things we do as followers of Jesus in the church to recognize and celebrate God's grace and Biblically qualified leaders he raises up among us, And Wednesday night was a great night of worship and praise. Three elder nominees shared a bit of their stories to get a glimpse of God's grace in their lives. And if you weren't here, you missed a blessing. It was so encouraging hearing from these brothers. Together, we got to know them more, we laughed with them, we were encouraged in our faith by them, all three of them pointed us to Jesus.

H

Host: David Wheaton 30:21

So you can tell already that Pastor David Platt really wanted those particular three men to be elected to the elder board. And these were guys that he wanted,

D

David Platt 30:34

Yet, when it came time to affirm them, because no one had expressed any biblical concern about them, we were not able to because, and I want you to listen closely to the words I'm about to say, a small group of people inside and outside this church, coordinated a divisive effort to use disinformation in order to persuade others to vote these men down as part of a broader effort to take control of this church.

H

Host: David Wheaton 31:15

Now, he might as well have just dropped a bomb in the middle of the sanctuary when he said that. As a matter of fact, he repeated exactly what he said there a second time. I won't play it again. But this was an incredibly strong accusation against certain people who were likely sitting in that room that day. When a pastor ratchets it to that level, he wants those people. He doesn't care if those people leave the church. He wants them to leave the church because he sees them as being in the way. There was no sort of reconciliation, reaching out, how can we figure this out? They had reached a point where this is it. These people need to be called out and anyone else who joins them, well, you're the enemy.

D

David Platt 32:00

There was a coordinated effort started by a small group of people, and expanding to others, to deceive people into thinking that if they voted for these men, then our church would. And so here are some of the lies that people were being told as they entered the building in the lobby that night. And just hear all the buzzwords and scare tactics that were used. MBC would be gone. Down a road of leaving the gospel behind, leaving the Bible behind, embracing liberal theology and Cultural Marxism. Like the author of the Communist Manifesto. We would change our stance on abortion and sexuality, that we would allow Critical Race Theory and Black Lives Matter and defunding the police to drive our agenda as a church. I could go on and on with ideas that are questionably untrue.

H

Host: David Wheaton 32:56

So these are serious allegations that David Platt is making against members of his church,

basically calling them liars.

P

Program Director 33:06

The Christian Worldview with David Wheaton returns in just a moment.

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Host: David Wheaton 33:10

David Wheaton here. Volunteer host of The Christian Worldview Radio Program. Listeners are often surprised to learn that we as a ministry pay for airtime on the radio station, website, or app on which you hear the program. The primary way this expense is recouped is through listeners like you donating to the ministry or becoming a monthly partner. Our aim is to have each broadcast outlet fully supported by the listeners to that outlet. If you are a regular listener, we would be grateful if you made a donation or became a monthly partner of any amount. To do so, go to TheChristianWorldview.org and click on donate. You can also call 1-888-646-2233. That's 1-888-646-2033 or TheChristianWorldview.org. And be sure to specify on which station, website, or app you listen, as that helps us decide whether to continue on a given outlet. Thank you for your support.

F

Featured Resource: In His Image 34:09

I struggled with my identity all the way through my life, lived eight years as Laura Jensen until I found the Lord Jesus Christ. . .The issues are unavoidable. . . They're on the news. . . The White House in rainbow colors. . .They're in our legislation. . . The Texas Bathroom Bill. . . In our schools. . . Drag queen story hour. . . They're even reaching into our churches. . .Let us be the church together. . .We're not just talking about issues, we're talking about people. The proceeding is from In His Image. A 103 minute documentary film that Biblically and compassionately addresses the issue of transgenderism. You can order the DVD for a donation of any amount to the Christian Worldview. Call 1-888-646-2233 or write to Box 401. Excelsior, Minnesota 55331 or visit TheChristianWorldview.org. That's 1-888-646-2233 or TheChristianWorldview.org.

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Program Director 35:16

Thanks for joining us on The Christian Worldview. Just a reminder that today's program and past programs are archived at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org. Short takes are also available and be sure to share with others. Now back to today's program with host David Wheaton.

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Host: David Wheaton 35:31

But I have noticed one thing, and I'm not ascribing this to David Platt, that now that Critical Race Theory has become exposed, I think you're seeing it. There's a pushback against it by parents and school boards, and you see it in conservative news outlets. People understand what Critical Race Theory is now. You're seeing those who are trying to defend it, saying it's like a Boogeyman. It's a fear tactic. We're not Critical Race theorists. Or they'll say, this is the actual history of America, it's not critical. It's not a theory. This is actually the way America really was. And we were just systemically unjust from the beginning. White people are racist, even if they don't know it. And the country and the church needs to be completely reformed in the pursuit of social justice. David Platt continues.

D

David Platt 36:19

And just to clearly communicate, again, the seriousness behind this, behind all of this, this information and deception is a small group of people who have stated that their purpose is to take control of this church.

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Host: David Wheaton 36:33

I never was able to find that stated purpose anywhere in my research, but perhaps it's out there. And as he repeated that, I thought to myself, I wonder if David Platt has ever considered that he's only been at this church for, I think, just under four years now. And these people who are pushing back against him have likely been members for years and years and years. So you wonder if David Platt has ever had the thought that all this controversy and conflict that has come up has something to do with his leadership and his decision making as the the newer pastor of McLean Bible Church. You'll notice this other word, disinformation, he's used a couple times. This is becoming a very popular word to use as well, especially from the Biden Administration. They're out to end what they call disinformation. Facebook uses it a lot. It's as if there's a truth committee that needs to be out there to make sure that everything's truthful according to them. I'm not saying David Platt is doing that. But that word itself is becoming a buzzword. That we shouldn't allow anything that you know, certain people, the experts, whoever, the arbiters of truth, are the ones that have to keep people, to save us from things that they think are false. So next, David Platt pivots to a re-vote they're going to have two weeks later, which was just this past weekend, where the same elders are going to be voted on and David Platt is appealing for more people from the church to be involved in the vote, because the first time around, only 25% of the congregation voted. And so it allowed this, as he said, this very small group of people to influence the voting. Now he makes this appeal for everyone in the church to get involved and to vote the way he wants them to vote.

D David Platt 38:27

I cannot emphasize enough how important this is. Adjust your schedule, your vacation plans, your whatever in order to be here. That's Sunday morning, July 18. This is extremely important for our church. I want you to hear from me, that I, we genuinely love and care for you. We have an opportunity to say together as a church, what happened Wednesday night is not who we are as the Church of Jesus Christ. And it wasn't just that night, it's part of a bigger picture that's been going on for a long time. We have received constant emails we've tried to address on individual levels from members sharing things that are deeply concerning, including pages I read last night. And I'm hesitant to share examples because of how hurtful they are. Just to give you a glimpse, I saw one email from one of the main leaders in this group using race to say that MBC is no longer McLean Bible Church, that it's now Melanin Bible Church. That is not acceptable for the body of Jesus Christ. That language has no place whatsoever here. And I only shared, I hesitated to share because I know it's so ugly and painful even here, but I want to point out the approach that's being used by people giving leadership to this group in these meetings. And we need to say loud and clear that definitively does not represent who we are as a church.

H Host: David Wheaton 40:12

Now, again, I cannot verify whether or who said it's the Melanin Bible Church. But this is what he said. And he made a big point about it. He continues in this next section. I think it gives a hint at the issue that is dividing and breaking up this church.

D David Platt 40:33

We will not apologize for our increasing diversity or our commitment to humbly address racial issues from God's Word as we unite together on a glorious mission to proclaim this good word and our great God in a city where 5 million plus men, women, boys and girls are on a road that leads to an eternal hell and need the good news of God's love for them.

H Host: David Wheaton 40:57

Now, whether you agree with or believe what he's saying, you have to say that this is one compelling speaker and this is no doubt why he has become such a popular evangelical leader in this country. Because he compellingly makes his points and gets people really whipped up and on his side.

D

David Platt 41:18

We are, we are at a pivotal moment in our church, opening back up after a global pandemic, ready to enter into a new chapter of our church, standing on the shoulders of brothers and sisters who've gone before us faithfully ready to run after the city with the gospel. Caring for orphans and widows and the poor and those in need to reach the next generation with the gospel. I was in exhilarating meetings all day Friday, talking about how to reach the next generation with the gospel. I thought, God help us to give our time and energy to this. Do we not see the trends? God wake us up. I wanted so badly to pray over those three brothers with their wives here Wednesday night. All of whom are eminently qualified, but we had to pause in light of what happened.

H

Host: David Wheaton 42:02

This is clearly a man who senses that this is a pivotal moment in his church and maybe for himself as a pastor. You can see as I listened to this, why I had to think, wow, what is going on here. And I really want to look into what the other side was saying, as to how it got to this moment where again, he's speaking to the congregation of his church, I believe at all four locations.

D

David Platt 42:32

In the end, this is not ultimately about a small group of people versus church leadership. This is about the members of McLean Bible Church deciding how we're gonna move forward together as a church family, in a way that is different from this world. God is bringing us together to say in a fresh way, Spirit of God, do among us what only you can do. Bring unity out of disunity. Bring harmony out of discord. Melt hearts. Form minds. Exalt truth over lies. Bring error into light. God do what only you can do. We need you.

H

Host: David Wheaton 43:14

Okay, you can watch the entire message that he gave before his message on July 4th. We have it linked at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org. And I was just thinking as I was listening to it, what are you thinking about? And I'm sure there are some people who listen to him and think, oh, man, this guy, wow! He's on the right side of history. This is this is the guy. He's passionate and clear and biblical. What's the matter with these people who are pushing back against them? I mean this guy has, you know, God on his side. And then I'm sure there are some others of you who think this guy is really laying it on. He's covering for something he's trying to do. He is a hidden reef. You know, watch out for him, the things he's trying to institute here. He's using code language. And he seems very phony. I'm sure

there's some of you who think that as well. Whatever you think, it certainly was quite a way to start a worship service at his church and just shows you the degree to where this situation has come at McLean Bible Church. So you've heard David Platt's perspective on what's taking place. That there are a small group of people who are infecting more people, and these people are racist Melanin Bible Church, and they're trying to take over the church and keep the church from fulfilling its mission to preach the gospel to the people of Washington, DC and that area. But as in anything, there's always another side of the story, and only God knows the truth. So I started to look at the other side of the story. And as I begin to read around, I realize that there's been a lot reported on this. And by the way, this is very public information. I'm not reporting something to you that's confidential or I'm betraying someone's trust. I read these articles and got these videos just online like anyone else can. And so I began to look at the side that he was talking about. As I was saying, I came across, as I mentioned earlier, this 17 page letter that these men had written to the pastors and elders of McLean Bible Church with their concerns about what had been taking place in the church, since David Platt became the pastor. I'm just going to give a slight preview of it now, because we're not gonna have time to read the letter this week. We'll get into it next week. You can read it in the meantime, if you'd like. It's very worth reading. It's very compelling reading and it teaches us things about cultivating church unity. Roads not to go down. The letter was posted on a website called Capstone Report. I'm not that familiar with that website, but I'm sure you can find it elsewhere as well. We have it linked at our website, TheChristianWorldview.org. I'm just going to make an assumption that the men who wrote this letter to the pastors and elders of the church are part of the group that David Platt was talking about in his recent sermon. And you can be the judge whether the tone of the letter and what the content of the letter is, shows that these are people who are kind of quasi racist and intent on taking over the church. The article before the letter starts out by saying, division at McLean Bible Church over pastoral accountability began long before recent business meeting fireworks for at least a year. Church leaders and even some elders urged David Platt to stop what they considered, the website considers his reckless activities. This letter, which I will read next week, to the elders of McLean Bible Church was sent in February of 2021, and outlined in 17 pages, many of the concerns about the leftward drift of NBC and its issues involving elders, oversight, transparency, issues with staff oversight, and its moved toward promotion of Critical Race Theory, and other divisive ideologies. The letter starts out by saying, as you know, several months ago, we provided the elder board with a paper discussing our grave concerns regarding the gospel, the church, justice and racism. Acronym GCJR, that's a class that was instituted at McLean Bible Church by David Platt and leadership. Today we write again to share our deeper underlying concerns and the following key issues and elder oversight, lack of transparency, biblical preaching, and teaching, staffing and outside influences on the church. We believe that these issues are the root of MBC's current predicament, and regrettably believe that they call into question

the fidelity of McLean Bible Church to scripture. We are concerned that secular worldly ideologies have improperly influenced the teaching of Scripture at MBC, confusing and dividing the church body, ultimately undermining the preaching of the gospel at MBC. However, we believe that God can sovereignly use serious problems to very beneficial ends, as seen in Paul's rebuke of Peter and Peter's repentance. Please understand that this comparison to the Apostle Peter is intended to highlight that even the greatest church leaders are nevertheless fallible. And I take that to mean that you have a very popular evangelical leader David Platt. We can't look to him as being infallible. He can and has made mistakes. The letter lists out 20 categories of a church where they believe David Platt and the elders are taking the church in the wrong direction. They give bullet points under each one. And I'll just quickly list some. Philosophy, board composition, nomination process, functionality, church polity, budget, transparency, biblical preaching and teaching, syncretism, homiletics or preaching, law gospel distinction, doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture, legalism, hermeneutics, interpretation of Scripture, ecclesiology. We discussed that last week. Theology, proper shepherding, impact of staff hiring and training in partnership with outside organizations. So there's all these categories of things they address where they see error, grievous error going on in this church, and they lay out the letter in bullet points. So I'll just read the first one. I won't have time to get into the whole letter, as I mentioned, but the first one has to do with the philosophy and they say in the letter bullet point, according to the McLean Bible Church Constitution, the elders are responsible for guarding the reputation and doctrinal integrity of the church. We believe the elders have not properly exercised oversight of church and doctrine as MBC has undergone major theological shifts, including embracing a social justice interpretation of Scripture, and corresponding unbiblical prioritizing of unity at the expense of doctrinal truth, which must exist before love can unite. They reference I Peter 1:22. So as I got into this letter, I realized that now these men who wrote this letter aren't some wild dyed, racist, unbiblical church takeover types that David Platt seem to be referring to, but rather they have taken a very biblical, measured, comprehensive, and even reconciling approach to the troubles that have been taking place at McLean Bible Church. Now again, going back to the very beginning of the program, the point of covering this topic is to learn from this very difficult fractured situation at this church. The tendency today in evangelicalism is to turn away, to look away when situations are bad. Remember the fall of Bill Hybels at Willow Creek church, or Ravi Zacharias, and so forth. These things tend to be ignored. They're not positive, they're negative, and the church is very willing to quickly look away. I do not think that is a good idea. And in Scripture, there are all kinds of negative examples in Scripture that we need to learn from. So this situation in McLean Bible Church is one where, don't look away, this is very public, it's in the Washington Post. It's being covered very broadly. Let's learn what has gone wrong there as best we can, not being on the inside, so that we can be wiser in the leadership and in the various aspects of our own churches. That's why we're doing the program. We'll do Part Two next week. Thank you, as

always for joining us on The Christian Worldview Radio Program. You can listen to past programs, order resources for adults and children, sign up for our free weekly email and support the ministry, or perhaps become a monthly partner by going to our website, TheChristianWorldview.org. If you have healthcare needs, get in touch with our national sponsor, Samaritan Ministries. You can click on their banner on our website as well. Because we live in a fallen world there is going to be sinful situations that arise not only in the broader world, but also in the church as well. But we can look to the One who is perfect and realize that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today and forever. So until next time, think biblically, live accordingly. Pray for McLean Bible Church, that God's best in His will would be done and stand firm.

P

Program Director 52:59

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