



# BIBLEWAY MINISTRIES

MAKING A DIFFERENCE—THE BIBLE WAY



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What a rough week in Baltimore! By now you have heard, read, or seen footage from the riots that broke out. Who would have thought that unrest in Baltimore was such that it would make history by serving as the backdrop for the first Major League Baseball game played without fans? It is often a struggle for us to make sense of the racial tensions that have plagued our country during the last year.

As I listened to various discussions on this topic, I pondered over the reasons things have escalated to the current level. Four significant causes struck me: (1) the perception of police in our country; (2) the perception of black youths in this country; (3) the healthy desire for justice; and (4) the perception of injustice held by certain groups in our society.

Deep inside we all want justice. When there is the perception of injustice, there is a cry within all of us which indicates something is wrong. The efforts of state officials, police departments, community leaders, and citizens toward pursuing justice and achieving reconciliation often look like the equivalent of taking one step forward and two steps backwards. The media's emphasis on the negative has made many of us believe all of these efforts are futile — just think of the images of burned buildings which highlight the news.

If we focus only on Baltimore's problems, then we will blame the majority for the actions of a small minority: All Baltimore police officers have not discredited their badges; the majority of officers are providing a valuable service to their community. Likewise, all of Baltimore's black youths are not rioters, looters, arsonists, and opportunists who

want to rebel against law enforcement; the majority did not participate in the violence and crime. The same is true for groups which find themselves at odds in other cities and communities across the country.

As the Body of Christ, we must focus on the light of Christ even during our darkest days. It is during the darkest moments that light shines the brightest. And what greater motivation do we have than the words of our Lord who simply said, *Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men. 14 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.* (Matthew 5:13–14)?

The Church must move forward — not as separate-but-equal communities of blacks, whites, or folks of any other color, but as a united body of brothers and sisters in Christ. The hours between 9 a.m. and 12 p.m. on Sundays remain the most segregated period of time during the week. It is ironic that this is the time many of us gather to worship God. Our worship must reach beyond songs and praises and beyond the four walls of our church buildings to our lives and communities. Only as a united body under God can we demonstrate His light and accomplish the task no worldly organization has achieved — forgiveness, reconciliation, and racial healing. Then the world will see through us that Jesus is the Answer!

Dr. L.W. Edwards



What would it take to make you abandon your moral convictions? Death threats? Hate mail? The loss of your financial security? A lawsuit? The loss of your job? The forced closure of your business? Ostracism on social or television media? Family disownment? Imprisonment? Physical pain and suffering? A Supreme Court ruling? Fear of retaliation? Death itself?

These nightmares are increasingly becoming the reality for Christians in the United States and around the world. In the US, Christians have experienced heightened persecution for our biblical convictions against homosexuality and gay marriage. Firefighter chiefs, military chaplains, restaurant and small-business owners, wedding photographers, and blue-collar workers have paid dearly for expressing their beliefs in a culture which seems to be tolerant of everything but Christianity.

In the Middle East and North Africa, ISIS and Boko Haram are carrying out a reign of terror, leaving death and devastation in their wake. Millions of Christians have fled their homes under persecution which, according to Christian Solidarity International, is at its highest point in world history. Thousands have lost their lives.

When we feel like the foundations on which we stand are being shaken, it is helpful to remind ourselves of the psalmist's words in Psalm 94: *Who will rise up for me against the evildoers? Or who will stand up for me against the workers of iniquity? Unless the LORD had been my help, my soul had almost dwelt in silence. . . . They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous, and condemn the innocent blood. But the LORD is my defence, and my God is the rock of my refuge.* Psalm 94:16-17, 21-22

We serve a God who stands up for us when our enemies rise against us. He is our Help, a very present Help who is stronger than any foe we will encounter. He is our Defense and the Rock of our refuge. As our Defense, God stands between us and the opposition. As our Rock of refuge, God is a solid, immovable Foundation upon which our feet can be firmly planted. Is it any wonder then that the Apostle Paul could say, *We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed* (2 Corinthians 4:8-9)? With God on our side, the outcome of any situation is infused with hope.

Amidst the darkness of persecution and affliction, let us take courage in the bright light of who our God is. Let us

continue fighting His battles regardless of the cost. He is fighting with us and for us. Let us raise our voices in defense of His truth. Let us cling to God's Word and continue using it as the basis for our convictions. Above all, let us be faithful to our King. We are on the winning side! Our Lord has overcome, and so shall we.



*Conflict:* we're either going through it or coming out of it. Learn how to master this thorny issue with insights from the life of David. Growing through Conflict is Dr. Edwards' latest Bible Study topic. Don't miss this insightful series!



Dr. Edwards is available to speak at churches and special events. Contact him if you would like to have him as your special guest.

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