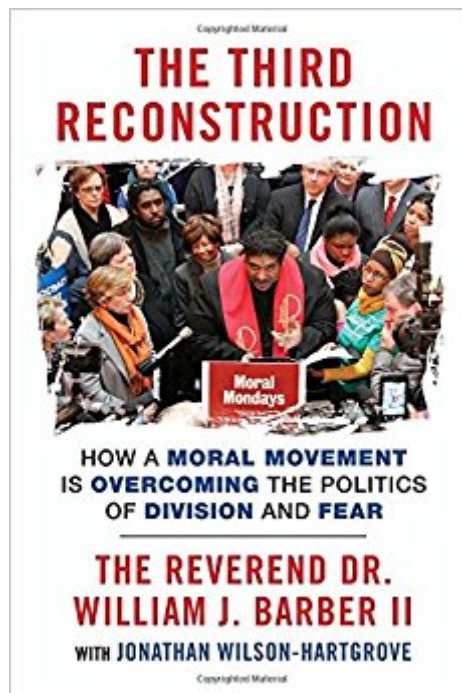




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# The Third Reconstruction: How A Moral Movement Is Overcoming The Politics Of Division And Fear



## Synopsis

A modern-day civil rights champion tells the stirring story of how he helped start a movement to bridge America's racial divide. Over the summer of 2013, the Reverend Dr. William J. Barber II led more than a hundred thousand people at rallies across North Carolina to protest restrictions to voting access and an extreme makeover of state government. These protests—the largest state government-focused civil disobedience campaign in American history—came to be known as Moral Mondays and have since blossomed in states as diverse as Florida, Tennessee, Wisconsin, Ohio, and New York. At a time when divide-and-conquer politics are exacerbating racial strife and economic inequality, Rev. Barber offers an impassioned, historically grounded argument that Moral Mondays are hard evidence of an embryonic Third Reconstruction in America. The first Reconstruction briefly flourished after Emancipation, and the second Reconstruction ushered in meaningful progress in the civil rights era. But both were met by ferocious reactionary measures that severely curtailed, and in many cases rolled back, racial and economic progress. This Third Reconstruction is a profoundly moral awakening of justice-loving people united in a fusion coalition powerful enough to reclaim the possibility of democracy—even in the face of corporate-financed extremism. In this memoir of how Rev. Barber and allies as diverse as progressive Christians, union members, and immigration-rights activists came together to build a coalition, he offers a trenchant analysis of race-based inequality and a hopeful message for a nation grappling with persistent racial and economic injustice. Rev. Barber writes movingly and pragmatically about how he laid the groundwork for a state-by-state movement that unites black, white, and brown, rich and poor, employed and unemployed, gay and straight, documented and undocumented, religious and secular. Only such a diverse fusion movement, Rev. Barber argues, can heal our nation's wounds and produce public policy that is morally defensible, constitutionally consistent, and economically sane. The Third Reconstruction is both a blueprint for movement building and an inspiring call to action from the twenty-first century's most effective grassroots organizer.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

“A battle-hardened pastor calls for a faith-based, grass-roots movement for social justice...It’s the religious component that makes his story particularly interesting. Fully aware of the suspicion Bible-speak arouses in modern progressive circles, the author still insists on viewing the justice struggle through a moral prism, one always backstopped by a Higher Power. A heartfelt dose of old-time religion mixed with modern-day activism.”  
—Kirkus Reviews  
“William Barber is the closest person we have to Martin Luther King, Jr. in our midst. His life and witness is shot through with spiritual maturity, subversive memory, and personal integrity. This book lays bare his prophetic vision, historical analysis, and courageous praxis.”  
—Cornel West, author of *Black Prophetic Fire*  
“Reverend William Barber and his allies are at the forefront of a new movement for justice our nation’s children and families desperately need. This book presents a blueprint for moving forward together.”  
—Marian Wright Edelman, Founder of the Children’s Defense Fund and author of *The Measure of Our Success*  
“The Third Reconstruction could not have come at a more critical time. It is breathtakingly insightful and unapologetically honest. Rev. William Barber offers an irresistible invitation to explore history as a gateway to not just our future, but our present.”  
—Jennifer R. Farmer, Advancement Project  
“History doesn’t just happen. History is made. Right now in North Carolina there is a movement that’s making history, and it is spreading across the land. This book is the memoir of that movement. On these pages, revival and revolution are friends, Jesus and justice kiss, evangelism and liberation are inseparable partners. Far more than a book, this is a daring call to get into the streets and be a part of the history-making, as we interrupt the patterns of injustice and build a better world.”  
—Shane Claiborne, activist and author of *The Irresistible Revolution*  
“A remarkable story about a great justice movement, led by an American prophet. Everyone interested in justice should read this book.”  
—James H. Cone, Charles

Augustus Briggs Distinguished Professor of Systematic Theology, Union Theological

Seminary

“William J. Barber II is both a pastor and a prophet. The Third Reconstruction is a powerful account of a new movement in North Carolina that is teaching us four things: that ideological extremism which targets the most vulnerable is best countered by a moral movement and not a partisan one, that single issue agendas must flow into integrated visions for social justice and the common good, that multiracial movements are needed to build both racial and economic justice, and that the willingness to sacrifice outside of politics is the best way to change the inside of politics. Rev. Barber also shows us how “faith acts” can transform political actions. Barber’s unquenchable fire for justice shines through every page of this remarkable book. I strongly recommend The Third Reconstruction, which shows how a moral, multiracial, and sacrificial movement can change the future of our democracy.”

•Jim Wallis, author of The UnCommon Good, president of Sojourners, and editor-in-chief of Sojourners magazine

“Powerful and compelling, this personal and political history of North Carolina’s 21st century freedom movement will pull readers to their feet and send them to the streets. It’s an awe-inspiring chronicle that calls us to be the country we dream of becoming.”

•Dr. William H. Chafe, former president of the Organization of American Historians, and former Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Duke University

“The Reverend William Barber knows what ails us and what is rare in this day and age—he knows what to do about it. When ordinary people see past their differences and come together, there is nothing on earth that can stop them, not even the power of organized money.”

•Thomas Frank, author of Pity the Billionaire and What’s the Matter With Kansas?

The Reverend Dr. William J. Barber II is president of the North Carolina chapter of the NAACP, pastor at Greenleaf Christian Church in Goldsboro, North Carolina, and founder of Repairers of the Breach. He is the author of Forward Together: A Moral Message for the Nation. Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove is cofounder of the Rutba House for the formerly homeless and director of the School for Conversion. His books include Common Prayer: A Liturgy for Ordinary Radicals (with Shane Claiborne) and The New Monasticism.

This book by Rev. Dr. William J. Barber describes the movement he helped to launch that aims to revive the efforts of the post-Civil War Reconstruction and the Second Reconstruction that coincided with Civil Rights movement of the mid-20th century. Each of these movements involved active

cooperation of blacks and non-elite whites on issues of justice of interest to all the cooperating groups. Each of them were largely reversed by a concerted effort that sought to reclaim the elites' former privileges under new descriptions. Rev. Barber, who grounds his approach in the prophetic books of the Bible and an astute analysis of the divisive strategy behind the New Jim Crow, advocates a fusion politics that aims to unite those working for civil rights, those working for workers rights, debtors rights, rights of sexual minorities, and environmental justice. This book describes months of work in the Moral Mondays movement in North Carolina, which involved nonviolent mass demonstrations at the state capital, and the extension of the movement to other states in the South and, more recently, to states outside the South. This vision and the practice that goes with it cuts across familiar divisions of left and right, liberal and conservative, male and female, Christian and non-Christian, theist and atheist, native citizen and recent immigrant. As one who has felt alienated from what often passes for Christianity in the United States, I welcome this book and the inclusive yet ultimately Biblical way of thinking and working for justice that it grows out of and aims to extend.

Outstanding. Reverend Barber has a gift for seeing the commonalities that bind us all together. He beautifully articulates the reasons that the moral many need to come together to overcome the ruthless few. He cuts across all the divisive issues of race, class, sexual orientation, gender and politics to raise up the call for a true fusion movement in America focused on not left versus right, or right versus left; but on right versus wrong. Before reading this book I had a very negative view of organized religion. Reverend Barber has opened my eyes to the good things about religion. I still do not consider myself aligned with any particular organized religion, but when Reverend Barber preaches, I listen. His words are inspiring, but at the same time practical. This book offers a brilliant blueprint for how to overcome the ruthless few that oppress the moral many.

Barber describes not just the story of faith-based organizing in NC, uniting all the issues in a 'fusion' coalition, but shares the largely untold story of past fusion movements in our history. I had not known of the extent and depth of Black and White working together in the south after the Civil War. Nor of the devastating effect of backlash from the southern power structure. He shares a powerful, hopeful perspective that is also a road map for us in other states, working together, across issues, to recognize how much we need each other if we are to protect the gains in civil rights from the last 80 years. He emphasizes a story of relationship, where people are challenged and provided the structure to see each other's humanity, which motivates us to care for each other and take action. I wish every American could know this story - our past and our future.

Very useful book for our troubled times. Barber's practical tips for building "fusion coalitions" and fighting the politics of division are just what we need!

Wonderful collection of stories on the background of today's most important civil rights leader that add information on the history and theology of the Moral Movement. You can't read this book and not feel inspired to make William Barber's vision of fusion spiritual/political action a part of your life. May God bless you through this book and may you be a blessing in the world as a result of it!

This is recent history that was made by the man some are calling the Martin Luther King Jr of this generation. Moral Mondays started as a small movement in North Carolina and this is the story of how that movement grew into a national movement. Here is where it began making preparation for the resistance that being proclaimed all over the country now. Rev Dr. William J. Barber II is a powerful speaker and a powerful writer and his story is worth reading. For the more activists among us there is also a section on how to start the movement where you live.

Powerful, enlightening, challenging - it has gotten and focused my attention on realities and possibilities as no book ever has.

Rev. Barber's views and actions are inspiring. I agree with his view that our nation is in the third reconstruction of our government. We are a nation, supposedly, devoted to the concept of inalienable rights, such as life and liberty and the pursuit of happiness, of equality and justice for all. However, we have compromised these ideals for the sake of prosperity (or greed) on numerous occasions, starting with the Three-Fifths Compromise that allowed plantation owners to continue to profit and politically use slavery. Then again, we compromised with the same forces to finally end the bloody conflict of our Civil War in the late 1800s, and again with the same forces after the Voting Rights Act of 1865. Now the sharp divides among our citizens reflects the tension between two views of freedom, which Abraham Lincoln described as Freedom meaning one thing to the sheep and another to the wolf. Rev. Barber is firmly siding with the flock but has some suggestions for how the sheep can stand up to the wolf. The book is very engaging and presents of a hopeful future, if we are willing to work for it.

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