

# Rev. Phillip M. Davis Recommends "Balance Is Key For Living Together!"

## Speaking Out!

In every area of our lives there are extremes. And it seems that in today's modus operandi, we must place an easy to affix label on everything and everybody. When we affix a label on people, there is the ever present danger of going to the extreme. The question is constantly asked "What are you?" To which we expect to hear, "I'm a conservative, or I'm a liberal, or I'm a Republican, or I'm a Democrat, or a moderate, or a fundamentalist, or pro-abortion, or anti-abortion"...and the list goes on. And due to the fast paced, hurried life styles we lead, it has become convenient for us to place every thing into nice, neat, easy-to-read packages, from which we choose our alignments and judge what's good for us or bad for us. However, in making choices based on those ready made labels of a hectic society, we must beware to avoid extremes.

And the challenge for us today as Christians is to call the people of our churches, our city, our nation, and even the world, to live a balanced life. Balance is the key for us living together. If I had to select one word to describe God, that would be "balance." God, the Creator of the universe is not only a God of love, mercy, grace, and peace; but because of His Holiness, God is also a God of judgment, wrath and righteousness and discipline. He is a perfect blend of all of His glorious attributes and He is in perfect harmony with Himself and His creation. God is in balance. And we who are sons and daughters of God must take on this vital characteristic if we are to achieve the vision of the Kingdom.

Those who advocate white supremacy are out of balance, those who advocate black superiority are out of balance. Those who believe that only the Republican party is the answer for America are out of balance and the same holds true for those who believe the Democratic party is America's only hope. Those who are totally dependent on the government assistance programs for their livelihood are out of balance, while at the same time those, especially Christians, who think they can live in this world and have the world's good and not share those goods with those in need are out of balance. And those who are out of balance are standing in direct contrast to the nature and character of God.

### Freedom's Objective

During the celebration of the 200th anniversary of the birth of America in 1976, much was said about the virtue of our beloved country. And worthy it is of such praise, for the nation has emerged as the richest and most powerful in the world. But amid the accolades of 1976, one person raised a reminder that the nation still was not in balance. The pastor of Concord Baptist Church of Christ of Brooklyn, N.Y., Gardner Taylor, painfully remarked that after 200 years as a nation and more than 300 years after the landing of the Puritans in Massachusetts, America is still unable to fulfill the objective of freedom for all people which was set forth at its beginning. The reason, he insisted, is the nation's imbalance, its inability to practice what it has preached, to place into deed what it adopted as a creed. Taylor took this position in an article written in January, 1976, and published in Interpretation, entitled "Some Musings on a Nation Under God." In spite of the Puritans' vision of an ideal theocratic society and in spite of their intentions, they were unable to implement what they perceived with their heads. While making a great start, they could not complete what they began; they committed the sin of the great reversal and imbalance, reverting to bondage to guilt and immorality and enslaving a nation of people. This was the beginning of the American imbalance. The great reversal and imbalance in modern times in America is not limited to the Puritans and their Caucasian offspring; the sin has been

committed by black people as well. And I don't think it would be wrong to conclude that the freedom obtained by black people in this country came as a result of their passionate pursuit for freedom in Christ. Freedom for black people in America did not come by fiat. It came from their determination to be free in Jesus Christ. It was from their crude knowledge of the gospel of Jesus Christ that a message of freedom emerged for black people that their captors failed to disclose.

The message of Christian freedom sprang from the lips of self-taught and unlettered black preachers such as Henry Highland Garnett, Frederick Douglass, Richard Allen, Gabriel Prosser and Denmark Vesey. So there was a great move in the slave camp, a mood that raced like a tidal wave against the shores of slavery and bondage until the quest for freedom would be secured. Just as Emperor Constantine acquiesced to the force of the Christian movement to declare that the Christian faith was the religion of the Roman Empire (a subtle trick of Satan), so Abraham Lincoln acquiesced to the quest for freedom in the context of the Christian faith that had been launched by black slaves.

### What Freedom Meant

The years that followed the Emancipation Proclamation were, to say the least, tremendous indeed for the black sons and daughters of slavery. Freedom meant black men marrying the women they loved and establishing families; it meant securing land and beginning a farm; it meant earning a living for oneself and one's family by industry and ingenuity; it meant becoming a part of the federal and state political apparatus in order to participate in the process of regulating the lives of black people and assuring freedom's continuance; it meant the establishing of churches, associations, conventions, and organizations to perpetuate the religious unity of the people; it meant the establishment of schools for the religious and secular education of black people; it meant the establishment of businesses, insurance companies, banks and publishing houses to assure the economic security of black people; it meant a return to the high ethics and morals known to blacks before they were forcibly made slaves and participants in a perverted and promiscuous culture.

Yet at the beginning of the 20th century, something happened to black people in their determination to be truly free. The great sin of imbalance has emerged in the fibre of the black people's personality and has blurred our vision and prevented us more and more from keeping our eyes on the bright and morning star of freedom in Jesus Christ. And today we are as a people out of balance in at least four areas. First of all, we have abandoned the Faith as the way to our freedom. It is

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Rev. Phillip M. Davis  
....Galilean Baptist Church pastor

without question that the Christian faith provided the spirit and the power by which black people in this country claimed their freedom. The only religious expression allowed on the plantation was Christian, albeit the perverted version of the slave owner. The practice of native African religions was prohibited on the plantation. Yet, even out of the perverted version of the Christian faith came a keen feeling by black people that Jesus meant freedom for them as he did for white people.

The irony of the black people's quest for freedom in America that the Christian faith provided the spirit and the power to move us from slavery to freedom, but we failed to follow its trail to the end. We, as a people, have made tremendous steps forward; however, it is my view that we have gotten out of balance by mixing so many cults, isms, and astrology ideas into the pure Christian faith that was and is our solid foundation.

The second area in which an imbalance has occurred in connection with the Christian faith in the lives of black people is the abandonment of morals. When a people's religious faith is shattered and shaken into confusion, they lose sight of the moral imperatives in life. This

happened to black people. At the turn of the 20th century an increase in aberrant religious expressions arose. Concomitant with this was a decrease in the morals among people.

Blacks, in their native African land, were highly moral people, prior to their introduction into American slavery. They knew nothing of drunkenness, drug addiction, sexual immorality or perversity. Immorality was introduced to the black Africans by their captors who also introduced them to a perverted version of the Christian faith. Immorality among black people is a child of American slavery. Yet, black people never allowed such immorality to stop or hinder the quest for freedom, a freedom they had been assured of by the gospel of Jesus Christ. And as blacks broke their chains of human bondage, they were also able to break the yoke of immorality. Now they were free to marry and to live as a family unit. Freedom for black people meant moral decency.

### Imbalance Set In

Yet, imbalance set in again, at the turn of the 20th century. Something happened to reverse black people's strivings to return to morality. Freedom came to mean indulgence in drink and drugs

and living for the weekend party. Marriage was no longer sought by black men; instead black women became mere sex objects to be lived with and laid with. The fashionable thing now is for young people to listen to loud music that blasts loudly in their ears, luring them into a life of sex and irresponsible love. Tony Brown has so clearly stated the problem of today. He says, "There was a time when older blacks talked about values to the new generation, when older members of our community, blood-related or not, supervised the rearing and discipline of the young."

Mr. Brown goes on to state, "Today we watch vulgar behavior without comment and padlock the doors to protect ourselves from the generation we produced." He adds, "In this neo-hybrid culture, religion is pornography, evil is good, and clean is dirty and God is Satan." With this new generation of "hybrid" stars like Michael Jackson, Madonna, Prince, Boy George, and Appolonia, our young people are being seduced into a value-less lifestyle. And we are out of balance. Because fear of the truth has overwhelmed many of us who refuse to oppose immorality. And if we as a people continue to enjoy the thrall of that has come from this imbalance of morality, then not only will we fail to inherit the Kingdom of God but will also fail to obtain true freedom and will continue in bondage to immorality.

A third area in which imbalance has occurred is the lives of black people in our quest to be free. That is the development of a mentality of materialism. To be sure we need many of the creature comforts that we have. And I'm not advocating being "saved and poor, and going to heaven when you die," but I'm concerned about the great imbalance in our mental attitude toward material goods, that depreciate in value. After the Emancipation Proclamation, blacks who were former slaves were able to work and buy land and farms and businesses. Now almost en masse, black people have leaped from the lure of the fake, and have dived for the deceptive apices of materialism. While

coming out of slavery, blacks accumulated houses and land, blacks today are accumulating clothes and cars. The desire for ownership of land has eroded among blacks and there is an imbalance in our material possessions and our attitude toward possessions. There seems to be an imbalance, an obsession among black people for clothes, television sets, radios, stereos, and other material things that wear out, rot, and decay. If this imbalance is to be corrected, we must teach our children that economic wealth is not in the biggest car, or the stereo with the most gadgets, but we teach them that they must save and purchase land, buildings, houses and farms, things that will appreciate in value and thus lend themselves toward greater security and freedom.

### Contempt For Work

The final area of imbalance in black people, one that was not always so, but is seemingly more prevalent now, is the contempt for work. This imbalance occurred as a result of our failure to follow through in the development of business and industry. It is often an untold story that black Africans in American slavery were quite creative and innovative in providing for themselves. Slavery provides few, if any, comforts of life for black people; they taught themselves the way of survival and relative comfort.

The need for shoes motivated Jan Matzelter to develop the shoe machine. The need to tell time and understand the changing of the seasons encouraged one Benjamin Bannaker to create the first American clock and produce an almanac; he also was responsible for the laying of the design for the nation's capital city. With the coming of the steam locomotive came a need for a system of communication for trains traveling the same tracks. There was also a need to develop a braking system strong enough to halt that hulk of moving steel. Another black man, Granville T. Wood, was responsible for developing a communication system through which two engineers could

talk with each other, and determine their location and prevent accidents. He also was responsible for the air brake system that revolutionized train travel.

Business and industry flourished among black people, especially in the areas of education with our colleges being sponsored by our great churches and associations in the area of sick and burial societies which evolved into insurance companies and funeral homes. Blacks engaged in construction and architecture and many other businesses and industries as a people coming out of slavery. They worked and stroved their way to freedom. But in the past 30 years, something has happened to turn around the surge in business and industry among black people. And now, here, too, a great imbalance exists. There is little effort to harness and control the skills unique to black people and to develop the skills into a corporate effort that would yield jobs and financial security and independence for the people. This is truly a great imbalance for it has thrown black people once again upon white people for security, the provision of jobs, and money. It is a new kind of slavery; but it has been caused in large part by black people's failure to follow through on what has been begun by their forefathers.

### Lack Of Faith

Blacks have been left behind, not because of racism or discrimination; but because of a debilitating welfare system and our lack of faith in ourselves. The current imbalance in the black community is that economically we trust outsiders more than we trust each other. Blacks will improve their conditions, when we regain that faith in each other.

If blacks in this country are ever going to be free, successful and share in the American Dream, we must balance ourselves and not be sidetracked into living among the fringe groups of society. The key is to regain our equilibrium and balance our religious faith, our moral conduct and values, our need for material things that do not appreciate and our work and business ethic. Unless we regroup and steady ourselves on the tightrope of life, we have but one destination, DOWN.

But when and if we return to living a balanced life. One that does not lean too far to the left nor to the right. A life where God is acknowledged and where our faith in Him is lived out in our day to day affairs. A life where our morals and values are wholesome and virtuous, and where discipline is instilled into the children at an early age. A life where we as a people are not over anxious to obtain the trinkets of this world but rather invest in the things that will appreciate, such as land, businesses, houses, shopping centers and each other. And finally, we must live a life in which we stop living for the weekend and which we stop looking for ways not to work, but we must balance our leisure with hard work and aggressiveness in the business world. When we as a people balance our lives then will we be a people to be reckoned with in the world.

Sincerely,  
Rev. Phillip M. Davis,  
Galilean Baptist Church

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