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Week 47: Fall Mission Feeding

James and Betty Robison

Michael Brown #1

In the studio

JAMES: Welcome to *LIFE Today*. I don't have anyone on here as a guest that I don't highly respect and appreciate or admire. But I don't have any guests that I admire any more or appreciate more than Dr. Michael Brown. Betty, you know Michael and I have become good friends. He lets me call him Michael, Dr. Brown. He's got to be one of the smartest people God ever made. I have a gift to communicate, to talk. This guy can write faster than I can talk. It is unbelievable, and he writes brilliantly. God in heaven, how do you do that? It is the most amazing thing. And what he writes is important. And there is a definite vein in the divine touch to help warn us, caution us, when necessary, correct us, to keep us on course to bless us so that we more effectively bless others and not actually by our life damage others and experience damage. He's trying to help us.

And this new book is called *The Political Seduction of the Church*. I asked Michael, and we're actually going to do this program about this book, and we're going to do another one about just one chapter in the book. I asked him to let us give away that chapter and make it available to everybody with the hope that everybody read the book too. But the chapter is talking about how the church is supposed to function related to the culture in the world. And exactly what is the title of that particular chapter, doctor?

MICHAEL: "Is the church called to take over society?"

JAMES: Wow! Because that's what you'll be accused of doing if you get effective at doing anything positive today. Because it's going to be so easy to hate the church if you make positive change and correction. Because positive change and correction, the deceiver, the divider, the desecrator, the destroyer, the death angel, he hates everything

positive, and he hated the one person who was perfect and did it perfectly more intensely than he's hated anything.

But no, we're not supposed to take over the cultural world. We simply present the life that changes culture and can reshape every broken life in the most positive fashion. Isn't it amazing that when you can give the best possible to people from the one who wants the best and knows the best that they would resent you and even hate you, Dr. Brown?

MICHAEL: Jesus said if the world hated him it's going to hate us. What did he do? He shined the light in dark places and people don't like that. We like to hide in the darkness. We like to have our excuses. When he would work a miracle, people would get mad at him and say, you're doing it by the power of Satan, rather than rejoice because they didn't want God coming to them.

And that's where we're a threat. As we live for Jesus, we will be agents of change. Looking I'm on the road a lot. I check into a hotel at night. What's the first thing I do? I flip on the light switch. If nothing happens, I don't get mad at the darkness. I ask what's the matter with the light? So I've said for years, I'm not so much concerned about the presence of darkness in America. It doesn't surprise me when sinners sin. It doesn't surprise me when Hollywood puts out an anti-God movie. There are a lot of people that don't like the Lord there. What surprises me is when the church is living in darkness. If we would shine our light more effectively, America would be shaken.

So I burn to see the church healthy. I burn to see God's people thriving, doing what we're called to do. And there are things that only the church can do. We work with politics. Absolutely, we should. And we should be a good influence. And we work in every area of media and business and everything. But the church is the only real agent because only the church through the gospel can change hearts and change lives, and through that change laws and change cultures. But we've got to shine -- we've got to shine.

JAMES: You know if you have perfect laws with imperfect hearts they will break those

laws, desecrate those laws, defy those laws. We want better laws. We've got some lousy laws. We've got laws that shouldn't have been on the books. The Supreme Court has passed some judgments and decisions that never should have been made. They just threw one out and just basically changed a couple of others. There have been three major changes that are miraculous, to God be the glory. But if you put a positive in, lawless hearts will still defy that law, break it, and desecrate everything that needs to be honored. And the only thing that will change those hearts is the gospel of Jesus Christ presented by the church, by people who have revealed to the world the positive aspects of the good news of the gospel. Because God knows best, he desires best. With all that he is, he wants the best and can deliver it.

You know, people have received me amazingly. Would you agree with that? People that you would have never thought would listen. And do you know what all of them tell me? They say you don't have an agenda. You're not after something. And then they'll go on and they'll say to me, Michael, they say, "James, we figured out you actually come to us and talk to us because, with everything that's in you, you want the best for us. And you think you know the one who knows best and that he will help us find the best and lead us to the best, and that's what carries you. And we don't have to figure out what he's trying to get from us, he's trying to give something to us.

Do you see me that way when you watch me relate to people? Because that's what fills me.

MICHAEL: Yeah, 100 percent. And that's what pours out. If you call me on the phone, "Hey Michael, can you take a call?" It's like absolutely. You pour into me for an hour. Okay, why are you doing that? Because you have no one else to talk to? You just got off the phone with a C.E.O. or the president of the United States. Why are you calling me? Because you care about me and because you want to invest in me.

And when people see that, I was sitting with a local gay activist in Charlotte, North Carolina. He was an editor of a gay newspaper there. And we finally had a meal together,

and as we were talking, at a certain point he said, "Wait! You're not doing this for political power." He said, "I've totally misjudged you." Now he concluded that I was crazy, that was his conclusion. He said, "I've totally misjudged you." And tears started streaming down my cheeks. I said, "I just want you to know the love of the Father." And he couldn't figure -- he had to -- I know there is some political motivation, some personal -- no, I care about you. And that's God's heart and people don't know how to deal with that.

JAMES: Well, you know you wrote this book. By the way, this is the greatest political activist I know. I have never in my life -- how would you answer to somebody, why do you care about who runs in every election? Why do you believe that we should participate in every election? That we should pray about every election? That we should pray about every candidate? And that we should try to pick the best? Why do you do that?

BETTY: Well, for one thing, we have three children, 11 grandchildren, and 14 great-grandchildren. I care about their future. So I need to care about and be responsible for some of that future to help set the foundation. I'm the older -- we're the older generation. We have, hopefully, some wisdom from God that we can pass on so that some of the same mistakes aren't made again.

So that's what's in my heart. I want it to be good for them. I want everything that God has and offers to them to be able to take and bless others with it and to live in freedom. We don't understand how close we are to losing our freedom.

JAMES: Okay, so she is an activist. Now here's the deal. You titled the book *The Political Seduction of the Church* and you talk about how the church can be pulled into political action, to be used by politics rather than impact politics. But I've said to you, and I'm going to say it to the whole world, I think the greatest seduction of the church has been to opt out of what she just talked about. To opt out of what she just talked about. To opt out of a personal responsibility to oversee the decision makers and the principles in

place that create the policies and practices that can either keep us brighter, lighter, freer or burden us into bondage and a prison that is like the same one that Israel lived in under Pharaoh. When you live under any power other than God controlling you, it's misery.

So I think the greatest seduction of the church is that we opted out. But don't think for one moment that political powers won't try to take advantage of the influence of the church, the numerical potential of the church, to manipulate it. And you see that. You see very clearly the enemy's activity. I see this book as a warning not to be manipulated by the deceiver or the manipulator to your own demise. I don't see you telling people to stay out of something, I see you telling them to get in it the right way. Am I right about that?

MICHAEL: Exactly! The second chapter of the book is "The transcendent calling of the church." The church of Jesus is transcendent. When you see who we are in God, the role that only we can play, and the spiritual weapons that you can give us, we prostitute ourselves when we can be bought by a political party or we become an appendage of a political party or we look to the government to do what only the gospel can do. We cheapen that when we do what God's called us to do, politics needs us. We must be the salt and the light of the political world as well.

And something as simple as voting! Look, you have Christians saying, "It is time to take up arms against the government." I said, "How about we vote?" If we just voted, we wouldn't be talking about this. If we prayed and we voted righteously, we wouldn't be talking about half the problems we're talking about. If Christians just voted, we wouldn't be complaining about who is in office today because the elections would go differently. So it is righteous involvement. It is gospel first and political, and cultural involvement in that order. When we turn it around, we mess it up and we dishonor the Lord. When we look to a person as a savior.

Look, I voted for Donald Trump twice. You're as close to him as any man on the planet and God used you to speak into his life constantly in amazing ways. You'd call me and say, "Hey pray. I just spoke to him. I'm praying he gets it." And you'd tell me he's making

good decisions because we're pouring into him to do it.

JAMES: He didn't always make good decisions. He made me very unhappy, and I made it very clear I was very unhappy and that he was shooting himself in the foot like an elementary school child. You say you talked to him that way? And I talked to him that way because it is the truth. I only speak the truth, but I speak it in unconditional, redemptive love. I want the best for him. If I can get the best to a leader and they respond to the best, it benefits you. It benefits every -- I love you. God loves you. God loves us all. So this is the way I talk to all leaders. You see that it works.

What I try to put across to the people that are listening, and this is what I see you doing, it is what I see you doing in the articles you write for The Stream. Do you agree The Stream is good with this diverse group of people coming together?

MICHAEL: It is amazing! It is amazing! I don't know another group like it.

JAMES: No, it is a miracle. What we're trying to get people to do is understand the principles that matter. These principles work. You know there are principles for good effective farming, principles for building, principles for relationships having let's say a joyful, meaningful, lengthy, effective relationship, not torn apart, not miserable. These are principles that you practice. So what we want to do is we want to put good principles in place. And we don't worship somebody's policy or ideas, we put principles before those people.

And then, you also have to understand we don't worship personalities. We don't do that. We try to get every personality and every party -- we don't worship a party. We hold up the principles to the parties, to the personalities, and every voter on the planet; is that correct? Isn't that what you're trying to get across in this book?

MICHAEL: One hundred percent what I'm trying to get across. When I'm out preaching, my wife and I've been married 46 years so we're kids compared to you guys.

JAMES: Sixty years.

MICHAEL: So when I'm out preaching, I'm about to tell something and I hear my wife's voice in my head, no, you don't want to do that. But we've been married long enough. As I write my articles, I hear your voice in my ear, be redemptive Michael, be redemptive, Michael. So I'm always thinking, okay, I've got to say this is an area. But this is the right thing!

So I voted for Trump twice and was thrilled with the good that he did; grieved over the things that grieved everyone; but I voted for him twice. But when I hear people say, "Only Trump can save America," no, no! There is only one name that belongs in that sentence. Only Jesus can save America. But politics is important too. It's just when we switch it that's the problem. So the principles that we operate on are that we have a holy stewardship here as Americans in a Democratic Republic. And if the church doesn't function as the church, the nation will collapse, and that's in every area. So when I look to politics, I can understand it can be a dirty system. I understand that there can be corruption and power plays and all that. So I'm not looking for it to be perfect. I'm looking for the church to be the church and then how can we influence politics? And if it is a simple matter of numbers, if you want our vote, you're going to have to be sensitive to our issues.

Initially, I thought Trump was playing evangelicals. During the primaries, I didn't trust him at all. As you got to know him you said, "Michael, I think something is going on here." That's what got me to vote for him with hope that he would keep his promise. But it wasn't just he was playing, normally, he actually bought into some of the principles, didn't he?

JAMES: He did. Well, here's the thing. You've got to understand that God only uses imperfect people because there is only one perfect. Donald Trump did some great things. Now here's what we pray for. He had tremendous courage. He was willing to take on the

biggest obstacles fearlessly. He was willing to try to do what was best for the American people, not necessarily best for him. As a matter of fact, they had lost an awful lot. Here's what people see in him. They see a billionaire that they actually believe cares about them, and they believe his kids care about them. And the fact is, I know for a fact, the family and the President and his wife actually want the best for America. We need that in whatever politician runs. We need the strongest people to come together in the supernatural unity Jesus prayed for. Wouldn't it be something if the great leaders that we can see right now who are in office fighting for freedom in congress and in the senate, wouldn't it be wonderful if people who might be a candidate for the highest offices would become one for the benefit of the people? That's what I'm praying for. Wouldn't that be an incredible miracle?

MICHAEL: Now look, I'm not Catholic but I work side by side with Catholic authors at the stream that --

JAMES: They're amazing!

MICHAEL: Yeah! Very! That have a similar vision for what's right for America. I work with orthodox Jews. We fight over who Jesus is. I'm like the archenemy. But we stand together against anti-Semitism. We work together for common causes. I have an orthodox rabbi say, "Mike, you've got to speak out more about these transgender issues because there is so much confusion." So we come together understanding we have our differences.

JAMES: We understand the value of the family, the nuclear family.

MICHAEL: For the common good. Who is going to do it if we don't do it? Dietrich Bonhoeffer, going back to what you said, Dietrich Bonhoeffer said, "The ultimate test of a moral society is the kind of world that it leaves to its children." And I had someone reading my book that doesn't like Donald Trump at all and said, you explained why we got behind him and why we voted because he fought for things that were important to all

of us, and to our kids and grandkids.

JAMES: To freedom!

MICHAEL: We went too far and then we had all the prophecies coming in and the -- okay, so that's what we have to learn. Okay, so what's your one message to me day and night, in my ear? Love one another -- love one another -- love one another. Church, we need to learn to love one another. Love one another. We don't amputate --

JAMES: Unconditional love, redemptive!

MICHAEL: And I hear that from you day and night. I still remember where I was when you called me and out of the blue and broke down weeping and said, "If you went into a pit, I'd go down into that pit." You're there weeping on the phone.

JAMES: And lift you up.

MICHAEL: Right. Right. You would do it. I believe that. So remember that old song "They will know we are Christians by our love, by our love." And Jesus says, "The world will know that I've sent you because you love one another." I wrote an article in the midst of the 2020 elections saying, "They'll know we're Christians by our hate, by our hate." I said here's the part of the Trump test, can we vote for him without tarnishing our witness? And can we unify around Jesus even if we differ over Trump? Instead, we tore at each other. So one of the calls in the book is we have to step higher. Let's talk about our political differences, let's challenge issues where we feel the challenge, but we must love one another beyond that and find our common unity in Jesus. And then say, okay, are there causes? We might not like certain candidates. Can we unite behind these causes for good because lives are at stake? If we get it right, America will turn. If we get it wrong, America collapses.

JAMES: We're going to talk in the next program about the one chapter that I'm actually

going to make available to all of you. The book is available.

We are feeding hungry children, starving children. Michael, we got a report in the last year from the representative governments where we have saved children and the total number that they said we've saved of African children that were starving -- 18 million. Now, that is an incredible -- that's what you do -- 18 million lives saved.

Here's the magnificent thing. We have led more people to Christ in those same areas than lives saved. We're in the 20 million, public written reports requesting follow-up, more people trusting Christ than their lives saved. That's what love does. So I'm going to offer your book to every single person who will help us feed children for the next few months.

I want you to see a grandmother. I want you to hear her broken heart. We are not only grandparents, we're great-grandparents with 14 great-grandchildren, and I'm certain more are on the way. Here's the deal. We want the best for them. We certainly want life for them. I want you to listen to what this grandmother says. And then I want you to be the miracle, not only for her but for hundreds and even thousands of precious children and families. Watch prayerfully.

On the mission field

JOHN: James, Betty, as our trip here in Angola is coming to an end, and we have been with so many mothers and grandmothers this week who have lost their children and their grandchildren, and whose crops have failed, and there is no food in their villages to feed, and they and their husbands and sons and daughters are all working diligently trying to find a way to make just enough to survive.

But today I'm sitting here in a field, a very dry and barren field with a grandmother. This grandmother has dreams and hopes for her grandchildren. She had seven of them. But just six months ago, she lost one. She lost little Amelia and there are no words to express. And I'll be honest with you, after being here for two weeks and listening to more

brokenhearted stories than I can imagine, I hardly have tears left in my body to cry.

If we don't help these villages, these families, the hopes and the dreams of being able to see a time that's better for their grandchildren than it was for them is almost impossible. And so I'm asking you right now, for every one of you that are watching *Life Today*, whatever way you give, I'm asking you do not delay one more minute. Please go now and make your very best gift.

End of video

In the studio

JAMES: Betty, how do you feel when you hear that? And you know we've not talked about it. And it was hard for our grandchildren to talk about it, but we had some little great-grandchildren stillborn. I can't even say stillborn without knowing what it did to --

BETTY: You know, James, the loss of a child no matter what age, it is so, so hard. These mothers, they love their children, that's all they have is their children. And this grandmother loved her little granddaughter and to see her die slowly. It is not an easy death. It is a slow painful death to starve to death. And so it is just hard to put into words what that feels like in your heart. It feels like your heart is being split right down the middle and no one to put it back together.

Guess what though? You can be a part of healing the hearts of those mothers and those grandmothers. Let's fill them with joy and happiness and hope. Let's get to them in time to feed their babies, to feed their grandbabies, and let them know that God loves them, and he cares.

JAMES: Father, I just pray that every person watching would put your arms around these grandparents and moms and dads that love their little children, and grandchildren, and let us save their lives by joining together.

You're watching this program because as I say many times, you can be someone's miracle today. We have saved 18 million children's lives. That's huge! One child, one life, it's huge! It's huge!

We lost one child, our precious daughter, our miracle baby. Listen to me. You would have given us whatever it would have taken to save that daughter, I've told you that many times and I know it. Well, you can give what will positively save the grandchildren of grandparents like the one you just heard. Would you right now go get your bank card, and use it like a check? For \$30, listen to what I'm saying, it is not an exaggeration, not total childcare, miraculous lifesaving food; \$30, \$50, or \$100 we can feed and save their lives, stabilize things for three, five, or ten children; \$1,000—100 children. There is a level at which you can help.

Would you right now, would you go get that bank card? Or if you get a check, make it to *LIFE*, that's what you're giving. And would you make the best gift you can right now because you are giving the very greatest gift, you're giving life itself? And we're going to tell everyone you share life and love with about the love of God that led you to share life. And they're going to come to know him because when you see the word, not just hear the word, but you see it demonstrated in deed, not just in word, it changes things.

Would you right now? We have some beautiful gifts to send you. But remember, you're giving the greatest gift, you're giving life.

Begin video clip

ANNOUNCER: Across the continent of Africa, children are suffering and facing severe malnutrition. Lack of rainfall and severe drought has led to one of the deadliest food crises in 40 years.

With food reserves gone and many areas experiencing severe famine, we urgently need to

replenish supplies to keep feeding the 350,000 children who are counting on us. Through *LIFE's* Mission Feeding outreach, your gift of love can be an answer to prayer for a hurting and hungry child in their time of need.

Call now with your lifesaving gift of \$30, \$50, or \$100 to help feed and care for three, five, or ten children for three full months. With your gift of any amount, we'll send you the *LIFE Planner* bound in soft-touch leather. This planner will help you in your daily walk with space for you to record your appointments, goals, inspirational notes, and prayers.

With your gift of \$100 or more, please request the scripture pen set. Perfect companions to the *LIFE* planner, these beautiful wooden pens are inscribed with scripture references to keep your heart focused on God's plans for you.

Finally, with your gift of \$1,000 or more to help feed and care for 100 children, be sure to request our inspiring bronze sculpture, *Let the Children Come*. This beautiful bronze is a reminder to care for children around the world in both word and deed.

Please call, write, or make your gift online today.

End of video

In the studio

JAMES: You know I really sense, Betty, that God heard the prayer we prayed just a moment ago that everybody would do all you can. And I believe that. We're going to send you this book if you'd like to have it. Just ask for it. You help us feed those kids, we're going to try to help you keep from being manipulated by the enemy and become a force.

We're going to talk about the chapter that I want the whole nation to read about how the church doesn't take over anything. We share the love of God that impacts everything in a profound and positive, positive way, and we're going to talk about it in the next program.

Michael, thank you for being here. Dr. Brown, thank you. We'll be talking to you again this week. Okay?

Thank you so much for watching. Thanks for supporting what we're doing.