

Christ in Prophecy
Prophetic Voices 3: Erwin Lutzer

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Opening

Tim Moore: Some of the prophetic voices to America have come from outside. Peter Marshall came from Scotland, and Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn came from Russia. Both of them observed with great clarity the challenges and trends evident in American culture several decades ago. One of the living Prophetic Voices featured in Dr. Reagan's book also immigrated to America—bringing a fresh perspective on what made America a city on a hill and what threatens to relegate her to the trash heap of history. Stay tuned to hear from this visionary!

Part 1: The Moody Church with Erwin Lutzer

Tim Moore: Greetings in the name of Jesus our soon returning King, and welcome to this episode of Christ in Prophecy. I'm here in Chicago, America's windy city, where I am at the Moody Church. And with me today is Pastor Erwin Lutzer. Pastor Lutzer, thank you for welcoming me to Chicago, and to the Moody Church.

Erwin Lutzer: So glad that we can be together, Tim, and talk about common interests, but also to encourage the Church at this critical moment.

Tim Moore: Well, it certainly is a critical moment. And you have hit the nail on the head, as a matter of fact you have been very outspoken in speaking to the trends and challenges. And you had a very impactful ministry here at the Moody Church, but you also are recognized as a prophetic voice, because you began to reach out, not only with your speaking but with your writing, and impacting lives all across America and around the world. And so, I consider you a watchman who has been insightful about the dangerous trends in our culture, and our nation. And I'm just curious what inspired you to share those insights beyond the congregation here at Moody Church?

Erwin Lutzer: When I came to Moody Church, I think oftentimes it was perceived as a place where Christians came to worship, but then they went home later. It was a wonderful ministry for many, many years. But at the same time, I said to myself, I really do think that the people of the community have to look inside of our walls. And Tim, the only way we could do that is to make sure that we would go beyond our walls and begin ministries within the city. So, for example we began the Moody Business Network, that connected us with businessmen in the city. We encouraged a ministry called, By the Hand Club for Kids. Which is still being run under the auspices of Moody Church, which is really transforming communities, especially through its children. And in these ways what we wanted to do is to help people to understand that we were a church that was meeting the needs of our community and building those critical bridges to our communities.

Tim Moore: Well, the interesting thing is, you not only reached out to this community here in Chicago, but obviously throughout the state of Illinois, and then the entire nation, because

you've had an impact far beyond even right here in Chicago. And so, I am curious, as you look back, you began pastoring in 1971, and as a Canadian what was your image of America prior to coming to the states? And what did you find upon arriving?

Erwin Lutzer: Of course, as a Canadian when we looked at the United States we thought that it was a nation of prestige. I mean it was as you mentioned a city on a hill, so to speak. Canada was not nearly as progressive as the United States, so the United States was the place to be. But the thing that I discovered is that people are alike all around the world. They have certain needs, certain expectations. And you know I hope we have an opportunity to even talk about preaching, because what I discovered is when you preach to human need, you never lack an audience.

Tim Moore: No, you do not. And you have clearly preached to human need, but from the truth of God's Word. And that is why I appreciate your message, and really just being a conduit of God's declared truth so faithfully. And I'm grateful for that. One of the other prophetic voices, who has already passed away as I mentioned, was Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. His writings implied that the ideal of America offered him a great deal of hope, even as he suffered in the Soviet Union's gulag system. And then once he actually arrived in the United States he was dismayed to discover that the intellectual elites who tend to be on the forefront of a nation's culture had already abandoned the very foundations that made America great. And he came and spoke at various colleges and universities initially hailed as a survivor of the Soviet system, but eventually was ostracized for speaking truth to those who no longer even believed in truth. So, I want to hear about your experience trying to proclaim truth to a culture that oftentimes now dismisses and scoffs at truth itself.

Erwin Lutzer: You know, Tim, what I try to do as a pastor is to speak to the controlling realities of our culture. There are two things that I avoided, number one there are those who divide the church because of social justice theories that are not biblical justice.

Tim Moore: Right.

Erwin Lutzer: And they oftentimes divide congregations in terms of the color of their skin. On the other hand, you have churches that we could say almost are so political, identifying with political parties, with political candidates, that they divide over the issue of politics. So, here was my philosophy: I believed it was so important to speak to these cultural issues, and not avoid them. Now, I believe in the exposition of Scripture, going throughout books, and I did that too, but at the same time I spoke about same-sex marriage, I spoke about transgenderism. What I tried to do is to say what are those concerns that are so obvious that I believe we as pastors need to speak to? But that balance, avoiding these two extremes, I think helped me in terms of being acceptable, and oftentimes widely listened to.

Tim Moore: Well, Pastor Lutzer, many things remind of us Chicago from Upton Sinclair's book about "The Jungle" set here. To many other movies and television shows that are set in this quintessentially midwestern city; everything from the "Bob Newhart Show" to "The Blues Brothers" and a whole host of "National Lampoon" movies. We of course realized this is also the hometown of Al Capone, Oprah Winfrey, and President Barack Obama. And for the last few years its trended in a more leftward direction. So as the 16th pastor who served here for 36 years at the Moody Church following in the footsteps of great men like Dwight L. Moody, how did you thrive? And how did this church thrive and grow here in Chicago during all of those years?

Erwin Lutzer: Once again, the word that comes to my mind, Tim, is balance. In other words, what we tried to do is to focus on Jesus Christ and the Gospel, without chasing what we could call rabbit trails in various areas. But the other thing is this: I believed it was very important for us to be a welcoming community even though we couldn't be an affirming community.

Tim Moore: Big difference there.

Erwin Lutzer: Big difference there. So, what we wanted to do here at the church is to create an environment, you know we had a statement: That Moody Church is a Trusted Place Where Anyone Can Connect with God, and Others. And may I say to the glory of God, that any Sunday morning here at the Moody Church there were more than 70 different countries of origin represented. I used to tell the congregation that we are really getting ready for Heaven, because in Heaven you have people from every tongue, and nation all around the throne. And so, what we wanted to do is to have the diversity of our community, but at the same time without dividing people on secondary issues and preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ with a sense of conviction and clarity. And wherever the Gospel is preached, if it touches human need, and people see their need of a Savior, you'll find a fruitful ministry.

Tim Moore: I could focus on many of your books, Pastor Lutzer, and you have been very prolific in your writing, but one that impacted me tremendously is your latest book, I think its your latest, unless you've got one in the works that is just coming out, called, "We Will Not be Silenced." And what an incredible visionary book, just published last year, as we are interviewing today, but it touches on all the drama and trauma that has descended upon our nation in the past number of months. What inspired you to write this book for such a time as this?

Erwin Lutzer: Tim, this is very important to me. I began to realize that the radical left in America does not believe that America can be fixed; it has to be destroyed. That is to say its institutions have to be destroyed and rebuilt upon a Cultural Marxist foundation. Now, Cultural Marxism differs from Classical Marxism because Cultural Marxism says we can bring about Marxism incrementally if we capture the media, and education, and law, and vote for the right people, we can bring about a Marxist state. So, once I began to understand that it explained why the vilification of our history, the tearing down of monuments and what have you, and Judeo-Christian values being destroyed, and spoken against. Then I applied it to race; and I discovered that the whole intention of all of these diversity studies in our university, the whole intention is to keep the various races, and ethnicities at war with one another, that's intended.

Tim Moore: Yes.

Erwin Lutzer: And that goes to Saul Alinsky and so forth going way back to him. But I also applied it to freedom of speech. I didn't realize, Tim that the view of Marx was that if we allow freedom of speech the Capitalist might win because after all they are the oppressors. And so, what we have to do is to have two standards; it is time for the oppressed to speak, and they are the ones that should have freedom. But all of those oppressors, they should be quiet. And then I applied it to the breakup of the family, so the bottom line is once you understand what Cultural Marxism is, everything begins to fall into place, and we can understand what is happening in our society.

Tim Moore: Oh, we certainly can, and you've hit the nail on the head, so many of the trends that we are witnessing right now are based on Marx's ideology, and Marx was the ultimate

critical theorist in the terms of tearing down. He wasn't criticizing constructively, he wanted to tear down every structure, beginning with society, government, but definitely including the family and religion and he held out most of his hatred toward Christianity in particular. And you mentioned Saul Alinsky, another product of Chicago. But the radical ideas embraced by these atheistic advocates of upheaval, and anarchy have become mainstream in our own day and age. How did we get here as a society?

Erwin Lutzer: We got here because there is something that is very attractive about Cultural Marxism, and that is in our society it is the misuse of words, words such as equality. Who is going to argue against equality?

Tim Moore: Or fairness?

Erwin Lutzer: Or fairness? But what you have is marriage equality, which is same-sex marriage. You have income equality, which is socialism. And then of course the misuse of the word justice. You have environmental justice. And you have reproductive justice for women. So, what you do is you couch all of these ideas in lofty language. And I always say, especially when it comes to such things as propaganda, when you see the label on a box what you have to do is you have to open the box and see what is inside of it. As a matter of fact, in this book that we are talking about, "We Will Not Be Silenced" I have a chapter on propaganda because I have to say this very quickly, the purpose of propaganda is to so shape people's view of reality, that no matter how much evidence is produced against it they will not change their minds, and I explain how that happens.

Tim Moore: Well, you wrote this in your book, and I love this statement, "I see much of Christianity submitting to the culture in many areas of life, especially in matters of sexuality. I fear we are allowing culture to inform our thinking, and even raise our children." And as an aside, I would note that President Biden's recommendation this year that we bring children into the government's sphere of education, beginning at age three, is an example of that recent advocacy for letting our children be raised by others than their parents. But then you assert, "That the day of casual commitment to the Gospel must come to an end." And that reminds me of the warnings by Jesus, Himself, as well as Peter and Paul throughout the New Testament. And so, you wrote this, you testified, "I write not so much to reclaim the culture, as to reclaim the Church." How bad is this cultural virus that is infecting the Church today?

Erwin Lutzer: Tim, you've actually raised a host of issues, and I wish I had time to parse each one and comment on it.

Tim Moore: Which is why people have to read your book, yes.

Erwin Lutzer: That's right. But I want to say this, that the Church has bought into the culture in a way that is very detrimental. You know I was asked one time to speak on the topic of how to reclaim America. I'm not sure we can reclaim it in this sense, we cannot reverse same-sex marriage and some of the other trends, and that's so why you quoted me there. I wrote the book not so much in order to be able to reclaim the culture, as to reclaim the Church. How is the Church submitting? Sometimes the confusion of social justice with biblical justice, but especially in the issue of sexuality.

Tim Moore: Oh, my.

Erwin Lutzer: And Tim this is happening under the guise of love. People don't realize that love can oftentimes be very detrimental and evil. When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden they didn't stop loving, they just started to love themselves, and love pleasure, and they became lovers of money. So, just because you want to "quote" love that doesn't make things right. "Herein is love that you keep my commandments." So, my hope is that what this book does is to help people to understand, and by the way, every chapter has the response of the Church, because that is where my heart is. How do we live faithfully in a culture that has lost its way? That's really I think the question that all Christians should be asking.

Tim Moore: Pastor Lutzer in my last election my opponent was an avowed progressive, and that word masks a shameless advocacy of abortion on demand, sexual deviancy, and unchecked Socialism. So, I love the analogy that you use in your book about making a wrong turn on the highway. You say, "Progress in the wrong direction is not something to celebrate."

Erwin Lutzer: Exactly. You know when you stop to think of all the things that are called Progressive, you listed many of them there, they are actually detrimental and are leading us along a very dangerous road. Now, something for your people to understand, and everyone who is listening, let us remember that in the eyes of the radical left it is not enough to take evil and to call it good, that's only half their agenda, the other half is to take that which is good, and call it evil. And then what you have to do is to celebrate the evil. Someone here at the Moody Church who teaches in the school system here in Chicago said he was told, "It is not enough if you simply tolerate same-sex marriage, if you don't celebrate it you will lose your job." So, it is not enough simply to have evil win, evil needs to be celebrated. And that is considered to be progress in a nation that has lost its way.

Tim Moore: Well, our nation at one time understood the way. You cite John Adams who wrote this, "Our Constitution was made only for a moral and religious people." By which he meant people living according to what we would call a Christian worldview. Whether they were Christian or not they lived according to that worldview. And then you continue, "It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other." You also quote D.H. Lawrence who said, "Men fight for liberty and win it with hard knocks, their children brought up easy let it slip away, poor fools, and their grandchildren are once more slaves." How close are we to that final stage of becoming enslaved again to this ideology or to a government run amuck?

Erwin Lutzer: Tim, this is very scary when you realize that many Millennials believe that we should not have freedom of speech. And when you stop to think about what is happening in our society when you have de-platforming, which of course for many of us was a new word, you have collective demonization. Now, this was perfected in the Soviet Union, once the state demonized someone everyone else chimed in, they wanted to prove that they were on the right side of history. And you think of Nazi Germany there were churches that put up swastikas and they did that in their churches, on their doors because what they were saying is when you come for the Christians don't come for us because we are on your side. Now, I would like to quote the words of Winston Churchill who said, "An appeaser is someone who feeds the alligator with the hope that the alligator will eat him last." So, you have all these people appeasing one another to make sure that they are so woke that they can be seen as virtuous.

Tim Moore: And sadly, many of them who are trying to be woke are not woke enough and so the alligator is already consuming its own, as always happens in revolution. You know Lamb & Lion Ministries, Pastor Lutzer, for many years has been comparing the modern church to the

church of Laodicea; about which Jesus said, "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. And because you say, 'I am rich and have become wealthy and have need of nothing, and you do not know that you are wretched and poor and blind and naked.'" That of course in Revelation chapter 3. But you make a strong case that we actually harken to the church in Sardis of which He said, "You have a name that you are alive, but you are dead. Wake up! And strengthen that which remains which the things that were about to die." And I appreciate the case you make, so make that case for us.

Erwin Lutzer: Tim, I'm going to make that case, but I want to back up to the church in Laodicea for just a moment. You'll notice that its problem was not that it was blind, and deaf and so forth, its problem was it didn't know it. You know not that you are poor, wretched, miserable, and blind. They thought they were doing very well, thank you very much. But Jesus as a consultant had a very different opinion. Now, a word about the church at Sardis. Jesus said to the church "strengthen what remains." He says, you know as you mentioned, "You have a reputation for being alive but actually you are dead." But here is the challenge I want to leave with people today. As you go through the letter Jesus asks the church to repent, but then He says, "But there are still a few names in Sardis who have not soiled their garments and they shall walk with Me in light, for they are worthy." And I say today, Tim, for everyone who is listening even if your church isn't all that it should be, certainly the church in Sardis wasn't, there are those within our churches who are very attentive to their spiritual walk, they want to be faithful, and Jesus takes note of them. So, I encourage people be among those who are going to walk with Jesus Christ in white.

Tim Moore: Amen. You know you actually make a point that didn't dawn on me until you just said what you did, unless we recognize our utter hopelessness, the Gospel does not appeal. In other words, unless I recognize that I am a sinner and have no merit for God's grace and love, until I realize that then the offer of salvation is meaningless. And so, too often today we tell people, I say we, the church tends to tell people that they can have their best life now without making them aware of their blindness, their wretchedness, before the eyes of a holy God, and then introducing them to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Erwin Lutzer: And Tim, we are not naturally attracted to the Gospel, because we are born self-righteous, we are born covering our sin, and so that is where preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ comes in because our preaching and our sharing the Gospel creates a need within them that they don't even know they have, and Jesus Christ is the answer. And do we meet their needs? Their felt needs? Absolutely, but standing in the presence of God they are going to realize that their greatest felt need is for the righteousness of Jesus Christ. So, we have to help them to see that, and that is where sharing the good news of the Gospel comes in.

Tim Moore: And for Christians one of the reasons that we love sharing the prophetic Word is so that we can inspire people the same response that the disciples had on the road to Emmaus when the prophetic Word pointing to Jesus Christ was revealed to them, by the Lord Himself as He walked along with them. They said, "Didn't our hearts burn within us to understand what God had revealed, pointing to Jesus Christ."

Well, you know what, as we in America and around the world, wherever our viewers are today, because we talk about America but really Christians are in every country, and every continent. And sometimes they are in even harder circumstances, but we can advocate for truth. One of the challenges today is the Christian liberty that you spoke of, and we should not relegate

Christian liberty, and religious liberty to just going by the wayside, we do need to advocate. But whether or not we are allowed to speak by the government officials as Peter and the other apostles testify, we must obey God rather than men.

Erwin Lutzer: You know, Tim, throughout Church history Christians have always learned the lesson that there are consequences to being obedient to Christ. And we in America need to learn that. We've always had a government that has been favorable to Christianity. But as that begins to change the question is this: Will we be willing to take the cross of Jesus Christ into the world, the cross that is an offense to unbelievers, will we consider persecution, alienation, and even de-platforming as a badge of honor in the midst of a nation that has lost its way?

Tim Moore: Well, Pastor Lutzer I always try to end on a hopeful note, and I intend to do so today even though this is a very challenging topic. I do encourage you all who are watching to get a copy of Pastor Lutzer's book because you will be challenged and you will be insighted I think to be the person who stands up for truth in your congregation, in your home, in your community. But let's go back for just a moment to a shocking way to affirm that very hope that is within us. You echo the utterly Christian sentiment that is attributed to Swiss reformation leader, Huldrych Zwingli who said, "For God's sake do something courageous." But you also related a very clarifying mission presented to you as a pastor, when someone said, "Your responsibility is to teach your people to die as martyrs for the faith." Tell us how that can be a hope filled statement?

Erwin Lutzer: Well, let me put that statement in context, okay. I attended a meeting where a man who was converted out of Islam, a scholar, gave a lecture on what Sharia Law really was. After the lecture we happened to meet in a dining room, and I said, "Let's have coffee together." So, we were talking about what can we do and so forth? And that's when he took his finger and poked it right into my chest and said, "God is calling you to teach people how to die for the faith." Now, Tim you wanted to end on a very optimistic note.

Tim Moore: Yes.

Erwin Lutzer: And I'm going to do that. Let us remind ourselves that when you look at church history it is not necessary for us to have freedom in order to be faithful, just ask the martyrs, and they will let you know that you can be faithful in the midst of a culture that is antagonistic to Christ in the midst of a culture where there is no religious freedom. And I say to everyone out there I have some very good news, and that is the words of Jesus, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." So, carry on.

Part 3: Christ in Prophecy Set

Tim Moore: I really enjoyed spending time with Erwin Lutzer in Chicago, Illinois. His recent book "We Will Not Be Silenced" is a clarion call for Christians to contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints—and to serve as salt and light within our culture. We would be glad to send you a copy for a donation of only \$20. Just call the number on the screen or visit our online store.

In 1912 a Scottish pastor named John Harper was invited to lead a revival at the Moody Church. He set sail for America aboard the brand-new ship, Titanic. When the immense ship struck an iceberg in the North Atlantic, Harper ensured that his 6-year old daughter Nana and niece

Jessica were on board a lifeboat and then began earnestly sharing the gospel with men he knew would not survive the night.

Even as he floated in the frigid sea, he preached Jesus Christ.

One survivor later testified, "I was a careless sinner when the Titanic went down. Pastor Harper called out to me, 'Is your soul saved?' and I replied, 'No, it is not.' He responded, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." We drifted apart and back together several times, and each time he cried out, "Is your soul saved? Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and your soul shall be saved.' Watching others sink beneath the waters to eternity, in my desperation I cried to Christ to save me. I believed and was saved."

Are you that dedicated to crying out in order to share Christ with those facing eternal doom?

I pray that you will not be silenced but will sound the alarm as watchmen—even as we remain watchful for our soon-returning King, Christ Jesus Himself. Until next week, Godspeed!!

End of Program