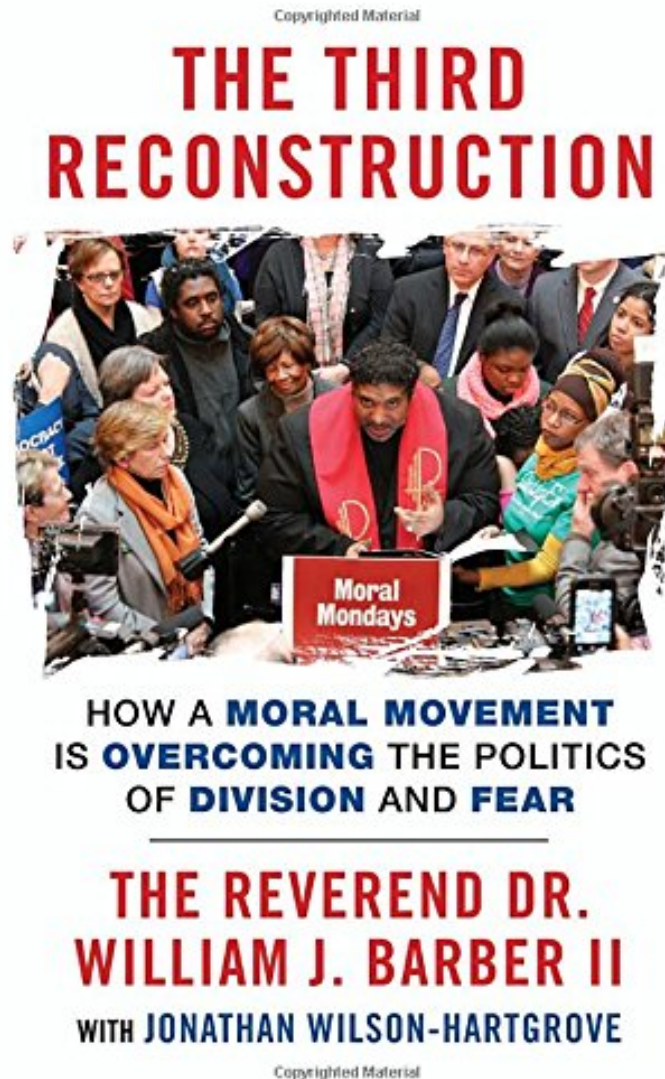


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# The Third Reconstruction: How a Moral Movement Is Overcoming the Politics of Division and Fear

*Rev Dr. William J. Barber II, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove*

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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.

“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  
“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?* About the Author 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*.