



PROGRAM TRANSCRIPT

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WELCOME

Daniel Pawlus: Welcome to “30 Good Minutes!” We’re happy you’ve joined us for this half-hour of reflection on faith. I’m Daniel Pawlus.

Lydia Talbot: And I’m Lydia Talbot. Our guest today is sociologist, author and religion commentator, Dr. Tony Campolo. He’ll be talking with us about how to transform the world with acts of love.

Daniel Pawlus: We also welcome back Christine Chakoian. Senior Pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of Lake Forest, for another in our series of reflections on the “Fruits of the Spirit.”

Lydia Talbot: And we begin with the story of Kathy Adam. She’s a wife, mother and religion educator who led a small group of pilgrims to the Holy Land last Christmas, to explore three faiths, two countries and one hope for peace. Let’s watch.

SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Kathy Adam: My name is Kathy Adam and I invited a group of people to come with me to the Holy Land so that they could discover for themselves people who represent three faiths, two countries and their thoughts on one hope for peace in the region. I’ve been to the region before. I love it. I am interested in people learning about this region because I think that we as Americans can learn more than what we sometimes see in our media. Transformation happens when people experience other people, other places and take themselves out of their context to live where they are immersed, where they have an experience. When my husband and I first came to the Middle East on a Footsteps of Jesus tour, I knew there was something more to this land than simply a Footsteps of Jesus tour. I’m an educator and I’ve worked with different types of methods of education and the most effective that I know is when people experience something. Things happen here when they’re visiting this land that can’t happen when they’re reading a book or listening to a lecture or watching media. It’s the experience of being here and meeting the people. Living for a very short time but living here in the streets of Jerusalem and the streets of Bethlehem.

This is tough. This is really tough stuff. And it’s complex. And every time I come it becomes more complex and this time the complexity is almost overwhelming. We came here to talk to people who are interested in peacemaking and Gaza blew up while we were here. It’s very difficult to see people who are canceling their Christmas and New Year’s celebrations in

solidarity with people in Gaza. And to watch live TV from Gaza with Palestinians, it's really tough. I think as a Christian person and maybe even at another level as a human being, I'm hopeful. That's a bedrock of my Christianity. It's hope because without hope I don't know how one can be a Christian.

SPEAKER INTRODUCTION

Daniel Pawlus: Kathy Adam is completing a Masters Degree at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minnesota, and serves as Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministry at Edina Community Lutheran Church. Our thanks to Kathy for sharing her story. And now, let me tell you about today's speaker.

Dr. Tony Campolo is professor emeritus of sociology at Eastern University in St. Davids, Pennsylvania. He's the founder and president of the Evangelical Association for the Promotion of Education, which for 30 years has developed and nurtured schools, orphanages, AIDS hospices, and other long-term service programs in Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Africa, and across the United States and Canada. Tony is an ordained minister in the American Baptist Church and the author of 35 books. We're honored to welcome him back to "30 Good Minutes." Welcome, Tony.

MESSAGE

Tony Campolo: It's good to be here.

I'm going to talk about power and authority. There is a difference.

Max Weber, one of the great sociologists of modern times, says that power carries with it the ability to coerce. Coercion is always in the background when we talk about power. For instance, when the policeman in the patrol car pulls up behind me on the highway with the red lights flashing, I pull over. I don't want to obey. I don't want to yield to his request that I pull over, but I do because I have to. He's got power. It's called a gun and I yield to him because he's got power! He doesn't have to pull the gun. He doesn't have to use the gun. The very fact that coercion is a possibility makes me obedient.

Authority is quite different. My mother had great authority over me. No power. She was a little Italian lady. I could have kicked her down the steps. But when she spoke, I obeyed because she had authority. Where did she get that authority? She got that authority by thousands and thousands of loving sacrificial things she did for me over the years. Her sacrifices, her loving sacrifices, earned her authority.

There is a big difference between power and authority. And what I want to say is this: when the Church tries to play power games, when the Church tries to use, for instance, political power to impose its will on people, it loses even when it thinks it wins. The Church has a need to speak with authority.

Now, a good example of what I mean by authority is in the story of Mother Teresa. There is a city not too far from Eastern University where they have a state hospital. In the state hospital they have people who are emotionally and psychologically disturbed. It's a huge place. Well, the

directors of the hospital wanted to start these halfway houses so that people who were on their way to full recovery could be nurtured from the hospital back into society, by first going to these halfway houses and from there they could get jobs and, little by little, own their own residences. It was a transition stage and that's why they wanted these five halfway houses. Needless to say, the people in the city weren't particularly thrilled with the possibility of this prospect. There was a city council meeting. The place was packed. Five hundred people plus squeezed into this hall, yelling and screaming their opposition to the halfway houses. They didn't want the, quote unquote, "crazies" living in their neighborhood.

Needless to say, the city council voted unanimously against the proposal. Not much discussion. A lot of yelling and a lot of screaming and the city council said no to the proposition. No sooner had they voted that the back doors of the auditorium were opened and in came Mother Teresa. She was in town for a ceremony dedicating a Sisters of Charity program and she heard about this meeting. She came down the center aisle and everybody gasped as Mother Teresa came to the front, got down on her knees in front of the city council, raised her arms and said, "In the name of Jesus, make room for these children of God! When you reject them, you reject Jesus. When you affirm them, you embrace Jesus." And then with her arms upraised, five times in a row she said, "Please, please, please, please, please, in the name of God, make room for these people! Make room for them in your neighborhoods."

Now, you're on the city council, the television stations have followed Mother Teresa into the place and they're grinding away. The newspaper reporters are there. There is Mother Teresa on her knees in front of you. What are you going to do if you're on the city council? You guessed it! "I move we change the decision." And then a second to the motion and they voted unanimously to reverse the decision they had made a few minutes earlier. The newspapers reporting on this the next day said the most remarkable thing is that of the five hundred plus people packed into that hall, not a one of them uttered a word of opposition to the motion. Why? Because of Mother Teresa. She spoke as one having authority. Where did she get that authority? On the streets of Calcutta, loving, sacrificing for the poor and the oppressed of the world, giving of herself to meet the needs of others sacrificially. Sacrificial love earned her authority.

Whenever the Church speaks with authority people listen. But the Church has to be sacrificial. And I'm afraid that the Church has not been sacrificial enough. In these days of an economic downturn there is a tendency in the Church to say, well, we've got to keep our own building intact, we've got to take care of our own staff, we have our own needs. And I'm telling you that the church that forgets itself and sacrifices for the needs of the poor and the oppressed—not only in their own neighborhood but around the world—that's the church that will speak with authority. The church that speaks with authority doesn't have to resort to power. People will listen.

Jesus resorted to authority. They said in Scripture he speaks as one having authority. It says that he emptied himself of power in the second chapter of Philippians. He took upon himself the form of a servant—the word is actually "doulos" which means slave in the original Greek—and made himself of no reputation. And here it is: he humbled himself even unto death, even unto the death of the cross. But listen to me. It doesn't end there. The passage of Scripture from the second chapter of Philippians goes on to say, "therefore God has highly exalted him and given him a

name which is above every name, that the name of Jesus every knee should bow, every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. But we Christians know that his Lordship was not built on power but on a cross. His sacrificial act of love earns him the name that is above every name.

You know this is true in the family, as well. I hear mothers and fathers say to me: “My son, my daughter doesn’t listen to me anymore! When I talk about God, when I talk about Scriptures, they roll their eyes and say ‘Do we have to listen to this?’ They just don’t listen!” I say it’s because you don’t have authority. “What do you mean I don’t have authority?” Well, the kids see you spend \$150 for a ticket to go a football game and throw \$5 into the offering plate for the poor. When you talk about God, that kid knows it isn’t serious. After all, you would have sacrificed in love if it was serious.

The Church, the family, you as an individual need to imitate Jesus who constantly turned away from power, constantly did the temptation experience. “Turn the stones into bread,” said Satan. Economic power. Jesus said no. “Go and jump off the pinnacle of the temple. Show them a miracle down there at the temple.” Religious power. Jesus said no. To the top of the mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world. Political power. Jesus said no. I don’t want political power. I don’t want economic power. I don’t want religious power. I want to change the world by lovingly sacrificing for the poor and the oppressed because the more I sacrifice and love, the more authority I will have. In today’s world we need a Church, we need families, we need persons who are ready to sacrifice to meet the needs of others. That’s what changes the world.

Martin Luther King didn’t have political power, but he changed America. Mahatma Gandhi didn’t have political power. He never commanded an army. He changed a nation. I tell you that they understood Jesus better than most church people do. They understood that the way to change the world is not to impose your will on others but to lovingly sacrifice and earn the authority that when you speak, they will listen. They said of Jesus: He’s not like the religious leaders. He’s not like Herod. He’s not like Pilate. When this man speaks he speaks with authority. Would to God, we learn from Jesus.

CONVERSATION

Lydia Talbot: If you’d like a printed transcript, audio copy or DVD of the message you just heard from Tony Campolo, we’ll tell you how to place an order at the end of the program. Or you can visit our website at 30goodminutes.org to watch the video or read the text anytime.

Now, let’s talk with Tony. Tony Campolo, you have just outlined the real difference between domination, power, and authentic authority. You are the living, breathing example of imitating Christ in the spirit. Can you talk for a moment about how you learned to do the kind of ministry you do in solidarity with the poor and oppressed?

Tony Campolo: Well, first of all, I go to the Bible. The Bible is all about a God that does not twist people’s arms. If you choose to love God, it’s free will. You’re not coerced into religion. And whenever we use political power to coerce people religiously, we deny the essence of religion. We crush the spirit of religion, and certainly Christianity. There are two thousand verses of Scripture, two thousand plus, that call upon us to respond to the needs of the poor and the

oppressed and that's what made Jesus into who he is: his willingness to sacrifice, specifically for the poor and the oppressed.

Lydia Talbot: But how did you learn to do it? Faith without action is no faith at all, right? So how did you learn to take on that kind of action.

Tony Campolo: I talked about my mother.

Lydia Talbot: Mary.

Tony Campolo: Yeah. My dear mother and she was this person that modeled it. You know, whenever anybody in the neighborhood needed a babysitter, if they had trouble, if somebody was sick she was the one who brought chicken soup. Everything about her was a loving sacrifice. She modeled it. And I think that parents need to model sacrifice for their children. They're not doing it enough, to respond to people around you. Your kids are watching you. What they're looking for is not piety. That doesn't impress them to be pious. What they're looking for is loving sacrifice for others. I learned it from her. I learned it from my father who also was that way. I learned it from my pastor. I learned from our church. Our church was very committed to loving sacrifice. You know, when this Katrina thing took place, the government didn't respond very well. But there were loving, religious people all across this country who dropped everything and went down and lovingly sacrificed for the people who were victimized by the hurricane. It raised the stature of the Church and increased respect for Christianity because Christianity gained an authority even as it sacrificed so well for the people there.

Daniel Pawlus: Tony, I know you also find inspiration in the book, in the Bible. Last time you were here we talked a little bit about "red letter" Christians. You've got a new book that delves into that a little bit more. Why don't you speak to that and the book.

Tony Campolo: Yes. A book entitled "Red Letter Christians." There is a whole group of young men and women that are emerging in this country and, even though I'm an old guy, that's where my life is. I speak at university after university. If you go over my speaking itinerary on my website, tonycampolo.org, I'm always on university campuses. A new group of Christian young people are emerging and they have broadened the agenda. They are concerned about the poor and the needy of the world. They want to move beyond the two hot button issues of abortion and homosexuality. They say they are concerned about the environment. We're concerned about the poor. We're concerned about the people in Africa who are suffering from AIDS. They say we're going to live according to the red letters of the Bible.

If you get the old Bible, the red letters are the words of Jesus. You know, they are radical words. When Jesus said love your enemies, whoa! One of my students said he probably meant you shouldn't kill them. Strong statement! When he says sell what you have and give it to the poor, they take that literally. One of the young men was dragged into my office and said his father said, "He read that book of yours, 'Red Letter Christians,' and he's out there on the streets giving away everything he has for the poor and the oppressed!" And then he said, "Don't get me wrong, Campolo! I don't mind being Christian up to a point!" And we all laughed. But, hey, isn't it true of all three of us? We're all willing to be Christians. What? Up to a point. And Jesus calls us to

go beyond that point and to sacrifice in ways that young people are now sacrificing and putting we older people to shame.

Lydia Talbot: You've put your body on the line countless times, Tony. Can you talk for a moment about how your ministry has changed? Who are the faces you see when you think about some of those lives you've transformed through your ministry?

Tony Campolo: Well, what I do really is go to these schools and when I go to the school—let's say Trinity Western University or La Sierra University or Harvard, any of these schools—what I do is I try to challenge young people to come to work with us in the inner-city. And they do and they are changed by the experience. The best story I have, I lectured at the University of Manchester in England and there were two young men who said, "We want to come and work with your team in the cities of America. We want to work in the inner city for the summer, but we have to tell you something. Can we be missionaries with your organization even if we don't believe in God?" I paused for a moment and I said of course, but here's the deal: you've got to pretend you believe in God. All summer long you've got to do Bible studies with the boys and girls, sing gospel songs, play games, go to church with them on Sunday. If you do all the things that a believer would do, you can come. You don't have to be a believer. You know what happened. Both of those young men are Anglican priests in England today. They were transformed by what they did.

Now, people say, "I was transformed by Tony Campolo." Not me! What I do and do well is recruit people to come work among the poor and the oppressed. It's the poor and the oppressed that change them because Jesus comes through the poor and the oppressed to them. When you look into the face of the hungry, the needy, the beaten down kids of the world, if you look deeply you'll see Jesus staring back at you. That's what changes people, not my sermons. All I can do is recruit them. It's the poor and the oppressed that get them hooked on God.

Daniel Pawlus: I want to ask you. We're in a time of transformation in this country right now. We have a new president. You've had some experience in the past as a spiritual advisor to presidents. What would you say to President Obama and this journey that he has ahead in leading our country? And what are you seeing shift out there as you talk to these folks?

Tony Campolo: I would say you're going to have to emphasize over and over again: you can't change America. Everybody is saying, "Barack Obama change America." What he has to do—and what I would advise him to do—is speak back to the American people and say, "Oh no, I can't change America. You can change America. Together we can do it. But you're going to have to sacrifice." Now to use those words. But we've gotten caught up in a consumeristic culture in which we bought houses we can't afford, cars that we can't afford. We've mortgaged our future with credit cards. Our life styles have got to change. He has got to stand up and say we can't go on living this consumeristic, affluent live style that has marked our society. We've got to tone down. We've got to live more simply so that others can simply live.

Daniel Pawlus: And sacrifice, as you said.

Tony Campolo: That's what it is.

Lydia Talbot: And you've touched on our young people today are bombarded with materialistic images from media and all the rest. What are you saying to your four grandchildren these days about this?

Tony Campolo: Well, not only to my grandchildren but to all young people I say this: when you go to school they tell you get a good education because if you get a good education, you make a lot of money, and if you make a lot of money you'll be able to buy a lot of stuff. Get a good education, you'll get a good job. I mean that's what parents tell them and it's so wrong. Get a good education, you'll get a good job, you'll make a lot of money, you'll be able to buy a lot of stuff. They should get a good education but the purpose of a good education—if you're religious, if you're Christian certainly—is not so that you can have the credentials to climb the ladder of success. The purpose of an education is to equip you to better serve the needs of others, to more effectively invest your life in the well being of others. In the end, the Bible says this: don't study to get a better job. Paul writes to Timothy and says: study to show yourselves approved unto God. Don't just get an education for upward mobility. Get an education to equip you to serve the needs of others. That's what my mother told me. That's what was drilled into my head. Sometimes people say, "Tony, when were you called for the ministry?" They get this idea that a voice out of heaven called me. My mother said, "You were brought into this world to serve Jesus and the needs of others. Do you understand this?"

Lydia Talbot: Thank God for your mother, Mary, and other mothers like her and service to others. Thanks, Tony.

REFLECTION INTRODUCTION

Lydia Talbot: We turn now to another in our yearlong reflections on the "Fruits of the Spirit." Today, Christine Chakoian, Senior Pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Lake Forest, Illinois, reflects on faithfulness.

REFLECTION

Christine Chakoian: Many of my friends are deeply faithful people. Some of them recite the entire creed without question, but others of them have to keep their fingers crossed half the time. Is one group more faithful than the other? Maybe; maybe not. I think God looks for evidence of our faith in how we live. Do we behave as people who trust that God is the author of life? Do we treat others as sisters and brothers in Christ? Do we care for the environment as stewards of the Earth? Do we act as if the consequences of our actions mattered, not only for our personal well-being, but also for the well-being of the world? What we believe matters. It informs how we approach the world. But faithfulness comes to life in our actions.

CLOSING

Lydia Talbot: Thank you, Chris, and our thanks again to Tony Campolo, Kathy Adam and you for being with us today on "30 Good Minutes." I'm Lydia Talbot.

Daniel Pawlus: And I'm Daniel Pawlus. As we go, I encourage you to visit our website at 30GoodMinutes.org for more information about today's program and an extensive collection of

other messages, reflections, and stories to deepen your faith. Now, from all of us at “30 Good Minutes,” may peace be with you in the week ahead.