

MOSAIC



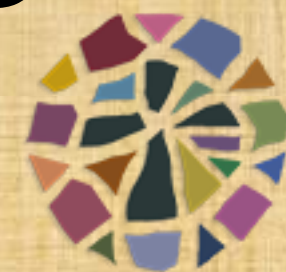
Lampstand Christians

Christian Character & Conduct in a Troubled World



I'm struggling with...

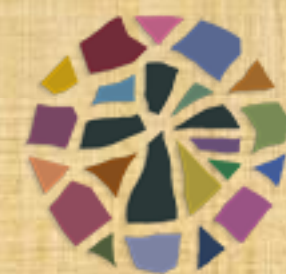
- Homelessness, how to navigate the hurt and hardship everywhere we go; the economy and poverty
- How things are vs. how I thought they would/should be
- The depth of suffering people go through



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I'm struggling with...

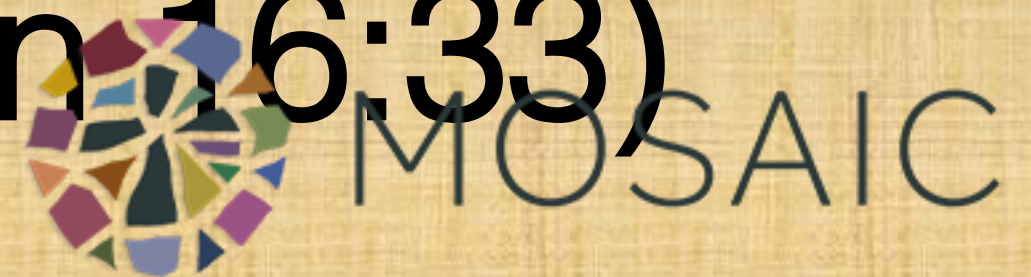
The state of the
world/nation



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Recap: Why do bad things happen to good people?

- He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. (Matthew 5:45)
- I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world. (John 16:33)



Recap: Why do bad things happen to good people?

- God is both all-powerful and all-good
- Evil is of the world, not God
- God repurposes evil to achieve His ends
- We don't know what He knows
- He loves us!

“My heart is not proud,
Lord, my eyes are not
haughty; I do not
concern myself with
great matters or things
too wonderful for me.
But I have calmed and
quieted myself, I am
like a weaned child with
its mother; like a
weaned child I am
content.” ~ Psalm
131:1-2



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Some trust in chariots and
some in horses, but we trust in
the name of the LORD our
God.

~ Psalm 20:7



So I trust God despite the trouble in the world and I am personally content. So why does the state of the world still bother me?



Christ was bothered by the state of the world

When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” ~ Matthew 9:36-38



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“The church is not intended to be a fortress to protect people from the world but rather a launching pad to propel people into the world.”

~ Rev. Dr. John H. Krahn, ELCA Metropolitan New York Synod



A changing harvest field

“More people have left the church in the last 25 years than all the new people who became Christians from the First Great Awakening, Second Great Awakening, and Billy Graham crusades combined...“the largest and fastest religious shift in US history.”

~ The Great Dechurching: Who's Leaving, Why Are They Going, and What Will It Take to Bring Them Back? (2023)

The Nones

Fastest growing group in faith surveys

30% of adults identified with no religion

That group, commonly called **Nones**, includes those identifying as:

Atheist – 7%

Agnostic – 7%

Nothing in particular – 16%



The self-impression of Christians

- A faith you respect
- Good values & principles
- Consistently shows love to other people
- Friendly
- Generous
- Protects the vulnerable
- Moral and ethical
- Teaches the same basic idea as other religions



The “Nones” impression of Christians

- Judgmental • Hateful
- Hypocritical • Racist
- Out of touch
- Political
- Anti-LGBTQ
- Sexist



American Idol

Among white evangelical Protestants:

- 67% believe “America’s best days are now behind us”
- 77% believe “Since the 1950’s, American culture and way of life has mostly changed for the worse”
- 54% agree that “God intended America to be a new Promised Land for European Christians”
- 77% agree that “The Founders of the U.S. Intended it to be a Christian nation”
- 31% believe that “patriots may have to resort to political violence to save the country,” markedly higher than any other religious group



When you stand before the Lord and tell Him your greatest achievement for His Kingdom was “taking America back for Christ,” how do you think He will respond?



Hard Questions

- Who are we taking America back for?
 - Deuteronomy 10:14
 - Psalm 22:28
 - Matthew 28:18
 - Colossians 1:15-17
- Is America the source of God's blessings to the world?
 - Genesis 12:1-3



The Failures of Christian Empire

- Holy Roman Empire
- British Empire
- America's "Divine" Missions
 - New Zion/New Jerusalem
 - Manifest Destiny
 - The White Man's Burden

“All empires of man are empires of dirt in the end. That includes whatever it is of evangelicalism that is of man, not of God. The kingdom of heaven is not an empire.”

~ Dr. Karen Swallow Prior, “The Evangelical Imagination”



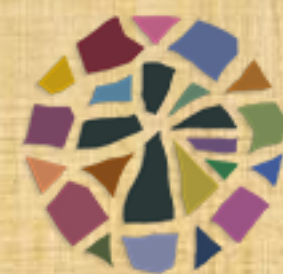
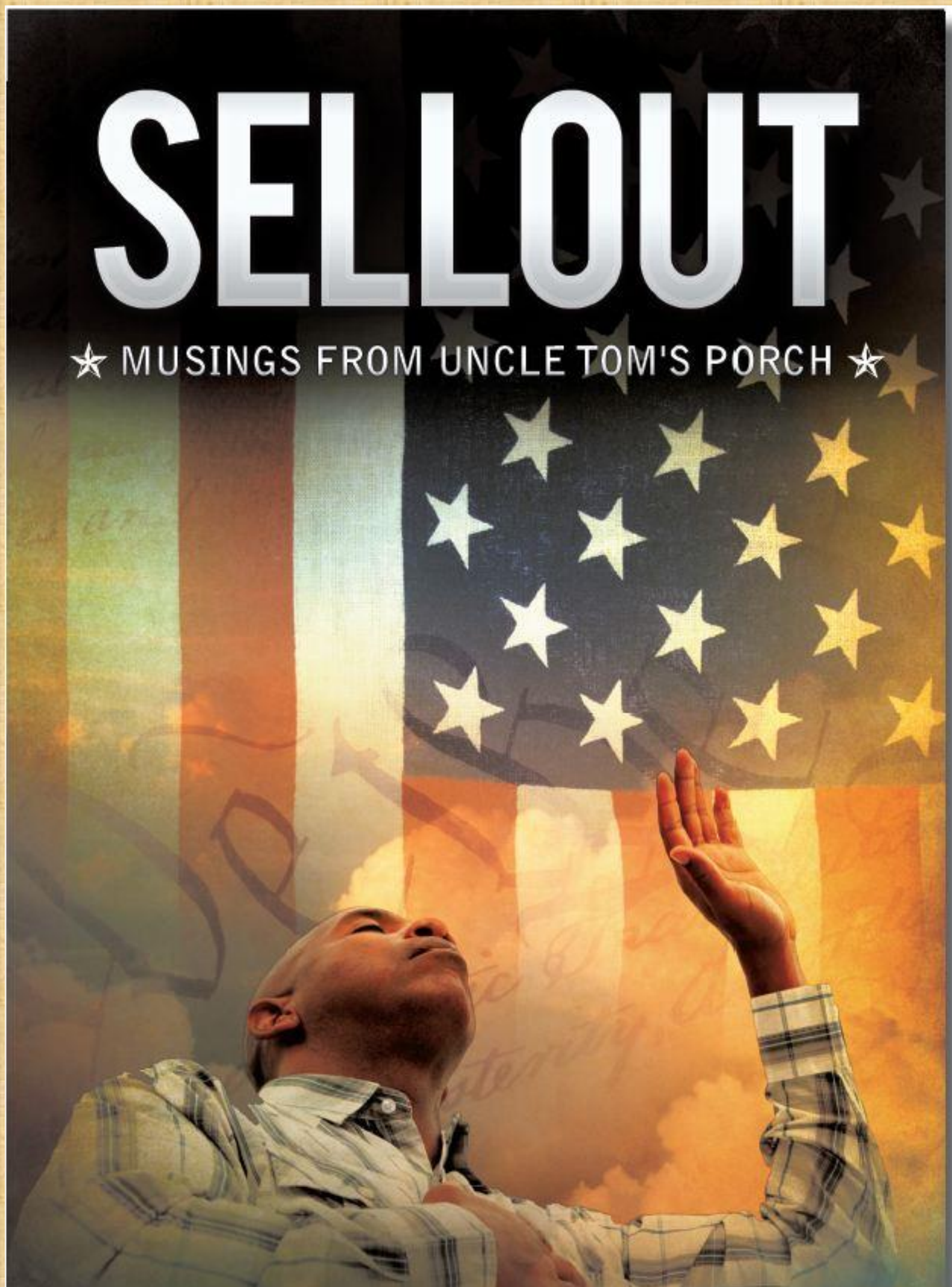
“Jesus answered, ‘My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my servants would have been fighting, that I might not be delivered over to the Jews. But my kingdom is not from the world.’”

~ Matthew 18:36



SELLOUT

★ MUSINGS FROM UNCLE TOM'S PORCH ★



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Jesus isn't a priority in your
life...

He is your life!

~ Walt Davis



Know Jesus, Know Peace

“So here are the facts: without Jesus, without the forgiveness and cleansing from sin that Jesus gives, there is no peace in this world of sin. However, if you and I come to know Jesus in faith, trusting in his redeeming work, we will know peace.”

~ Pastor Pat Quaid

- John 14:27
- Romans 5:1



The World is Watching

“Society has a body camera... It’s not just me that’s watching, the whole world is watching what I see.”

~ Rev. Gregory Drumwright



We are Set Apart

“Ekklesia” ~ a called-out assembly or
congregation

What does it mean to be “called out”?

- To be spoken to in a loud voice
- To be summoned into service or action
- To have something brought out or elicited
- To have attention directed to oneself



Why are we “called out”?

- Matthew 28:19-20
- Matthew 22:36-40

A Peculiar People

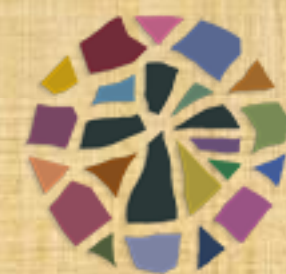
- 1 Peter 2:9
- 2 Timothy 1:7
- Galatians 5:22-26
- Ephesians 2:8-10
- 2 Corinthians 5:17

Living as Called-Out People

- 1 Peter 2:11-17
- 1 Peter 3:8-9, 15-16

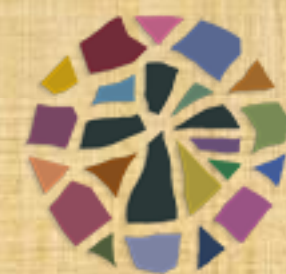
Engaging as Called-Out People

- John 17:14-18
 - Not of, but sent into the world
- Romans 12:9-21
 - Love in action



Engaging as Called-Out People

- Matthew 5:13-16 (salt and light)
 - Salt preserves, adds flavor
 - Light drives away darkness, illuminates, reveals



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“Being salt and light requires
us to have equally radical
commitments towards love and
truth, not one or the other.”

~ Rev. Wilfredo de Jesus



“I used to think it was incumbent upon a Christian to take offense. I now think we should be the most refreshingly unoffendable people on a planet that seems to spin on an axis of offense.”

~ *Brant Hansen, “Unoffendable”*



Practical Steps

- Focus on the day in front of you
 - Matthew 6:34
 - Matthew 6:27
 - Psalm 118:24
 - Matthew 6:11

Practical Steps

- Don't get frustrated if you mess up
 - Lamentations 3:22-23
- Think about the good
 - Philippians 4:8
- Put other people first
 - Philippians 2:3-4

Practical Steps

- When the world's too much, get some rest
 - Psalm 23:2-3
 - Mark 6:31
 - Matthew 11:28-30

Practical Steps

- Focus on Jesus
 - Hebrews 12:1-2
 - “Turn your eyes upon Jesus”



Jesus and Peter on the Water

Matthew 14:22-33

The men were amazed and asked,
“What kind of man is this? Even the
winds and the waves obey him!”

~ Matthew 8:27



“Do not let your hearts be troubled.
You believe in God; believe also in
me.”

~ John 14:1



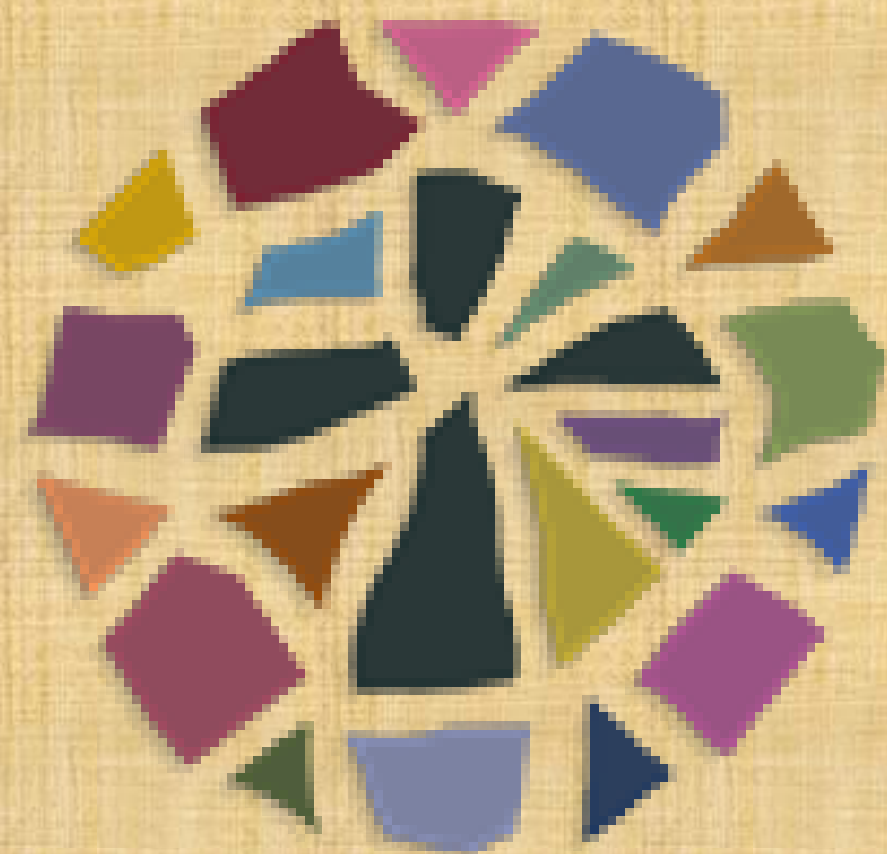
“For in him we live and move and
have our being.”

~ Acts 17:28





Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will." ` Romans 12:2



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