

## Review of

# **The Third Reconstruction: Moral Monday, Fusion Politics, and the Rise of a New Justice Movement**

**WILLIAM J. BARBER II WITH JONATHAN WILSON-HARTGROVE**

*Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 2015. 168 pp. (paperback) \$24.95*

I had never heard of Moral Mondays until I met Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove in Durham in October 2015. “North Carolina loves its preachers,” he said. “And I am convinced that the greatest preacher North Carolina has ever created is Will Barber.” Then he put a copy of *The Third Reconstruction* in my hand. With that alone as a prologue, I expected a preacher’s memoir.

Such memoirs are certainly in the book. Barber tells the tales of his father, who moved his family back to North Carolina to fight for desegregation in the school system; of his saintly grandmother, who taught him not to help folk, but to ‘*hope*’ folk, to bring hope into their lives; of miraculous healings and angelic visitation. But it quickly becomes clear that the preacher has more to share than just memoirs. Through Wilson-Hartgrove’s prose, the Reverend Barber recounts not only his own biography, but also the grand and multi-layered story in which he has spent his life. It is the story of fusion politics, a coalition of unlikely friends all laboring for social justice in North Carolina; the latest chapter in the long story of liberating faith in the South; the birth-story of a grassroots moral revolution that is spreading across the entire nation. It is the story of the Gospel saving the soul of America.

For those of us who may feel removed from that great story there are still lessons to be learned. Rev. Barber shares the wisdom he and his colleagues have accumulated over the decades: the paramount importance of voting-rights protection, the delicate balance of realism and faith, and the possibilities of fusion politics. Perhaps though, the greatest lesson is simply that faith cannot simply stand-by; faith clings to what is good. “So we hold on to faith and take care of one another along the way.” We can all do that.

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