

## ***Christ in Prophecy***

### **Conference 16: “Frank Wright on the Challenge of Government”**

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#### **Opening**

**Dr. Reagan:** The United States of America was founded upon Christian principles, and throughout the history of our nation our Christian heritage has been respected by our government officials, until the middle of the 20th Century. Since that time Christianity has come under increasing attack from government officials at all levels, but particularly from those in our national government. To put this trend in perspective from the viewpoint of an expert on the subject, please stay tuned

#### **Part 1**

**Dr. Reagan:** Greetings in the name of Jesus, our Blessed Hope, and welcome to Christ in Prophecy. Last week we began broadcasting a new series of programs drawn from presentations made during our 2011 Bible Conference; the theme of which was “Christianity under Attack.” In our program last week we focused on “The Challenge of Islam.” This week our topic is “The Challenge of Government,” and our presenter is none other than Dr. Frank Wright, the esteemed President of the National Religious Broadcasters whose offices are located in the Washington, D.C. area. This man and his staff operate daily in the halls of Congress where they are waging a war to protect the rights of Christians against government intrusion. Here now is Dr. Wright.

#### **Dr. Frank Wright’s Presentation**

**Dr. Wright:** It is great to be here with you, to enjoy these cool North Texas breezes. I am telling you my car said 98 degrees the whole way over here last night so it is hot here. Which reminds me of how cold it was in Washington D.C. this last winter, we don’t normally get terribly cold winters, but it was an exceedingly cold winter. So much so that all the high price lawyers and attorneys in Washington D.C. actually kept their hands in their own pockets for a change.

I am going to attempt to do something that I hope will be beneficial for all of us. It has been for me as I’ve considered this and studied this. I’ve not come to give you a report about what’s going on in Washington D.C. so much, I will touch on a few legislative items at the end that I think bear on our ability to freely proclaim the Gospel of Christ. But it was Winston Churchill who once said the farther you look back the farther forward you can see. In other words history is prologue to what is coming next. And I believe that we live in a day when we must look back to clearly see what lies ahead. Especially as it relates to the halls of the corridors of power which in Washington D.C. makes up the three branches of government: the executive branch, the

President, and congress and the courts. All three of those branches today are impinging dramatically on our religious freedoms.

I think it is important to look back because in my opinion the days ahead for us, and I am no Jeremiah, I am not here to deliver a Jeremiad wringing our hands in fear and trembling. I am not of that camp. But I believe the days ahead are fraught with danger; and the greatest danger maybe that if we sit on our hands and do nothing. But there are other dangers as well and I want to speak to some of those. I think that you could argue that we live in the most significantly or a time significantly fraught with peril perhaps more than any other time since the founding of our country. And yet with that danger I think we see the seeds of opportunity as well. I am persuaded that in order to advance truth which is what we really all about isn't it? You know Jesus stood before Pontius Pilot and he said, Pilot said, "So you are a king?" And he said, "For this reason was I born. And for this reason have I come into the world." What? Jesus is telling you the very reason He was born. The very reason He came into the world. What did He say? "For this reason was I born; for this reason I came into the world to testify to the truth." And the mission of Christian broadcasters, the mission of the Church of Jesus Christ is to advance truth; the truth of the Gospel, the truth of the person and work of Jesus Christ.

And I am persuaded that in order to advance truth we have to have a healthy respect and understanding for its foes. For those who oppose truth. As someone who I've known for many years in Washington D.C. once said, "It is good to read the Bible everyday to know what God is thinking. And it is good to read the *Washington Post*, just to get the opposing viewpoint." That's not really very charitable is it to our friends at the *Washington Post*? But the principle is a good one we need to know how the opponents of truth respond to our message in order to do a better job of proclaiming our message. If we aim to proclaim truth we must carefully study how our adversaries opponent. In my years of working of Capital Hill I have observed a standardized approach used by many who contend with us in the market place of ideas. It's a predictable methodology that I see unfold almost every day of the week. It's what I call the politics of opposition. The politics of opposition. In this seven-point framework that I am going to give you, you will see the principle way that ideas are opposed in political, legal, legislative arenas. But also just in the market place of ideas; the very place that we are trying to advance the Gospel of Christ. More than that you'll see I think the principle way that truth is opposed in almost every forum you can imagine.

I want to walk you through the seven stages quickly, through the seven stages of the politics of opposition. Then I want to apply them to our battle to bring the Gospel and the mind of Christ into the culture. That's what's needed isn't it? To proclaim Christ but also to bring the mind of Christ to the institutions of our culture. It was Abraham Kuyper who said that, "Only Jesus can say there isn't one inch of all creation that Christ cannot say mine." It's all His. He is sovereign. He is sovereign over the Church. He is sovereign over the culture. He is sovereign over government, business, law, education, all of it is submissive or should be and one day will be to the sovereign reign of the King of Kings.

Let me begin also as we walk through this I want to apply these things then to our effort to advance the Gospel and the culture and the opposition that we see there. I want you to keep in mind as I begin that I am speaking primarily about a strategy, about a plan of oppositions. Not just some random thing that happens. And it is employed by those who stand in opposition to public policy questions and also values and ethics and truth itself.

The first step in the politics of opposition is a simple one it's quite simply to just ignore your viewpoint. They won't even condescend to acknowledge your idea. In fact they believe that the

very act of acknowledging you would give your position more recognition than it deserves. And so you are summarily and rather haughtily dismissed. We see atheist do that, principally as it relates to believers. Dismissing them all together, not even willing to entertain their ideas.

Step two is to marginalize your opinion by characterizing as it being out of the mainstream. How many times in Washington D.C. have I heard the word mainstream? And boy as far I can tell that stream flows pretty far to the left in Washington D.C. it is not down the middle. Here your opponents will do something different than ignore you. They sort of shake their heads by saying, by saying only those on the fringes on the debate hold the opinion that you hold. In other words you are way out there on the margin and not worthy to be really even recognized. And so they just label you as a fringe type of a person. And accompanied by the appropriate winks and nods and sort of condescending looks they say, "Well these people are just a little extreme." That is what you all are. Do you know that you are extremists? You know he was condemned for saying it by I loved Goldwater's comment all those years ago in which he said, "Extremism in pursuit of virtue is no vice." Extremism in pursuit of truth is not vice.

Third step in the politics of opposition is having tried to ignore you. Having tried to marginalize you they then will attack the factual basis of your opinion. You've got your facts all wrong. Recognizing that they can no longer ignore you or marginalize you they will begin to contend with you. However they will not contend over the perspective you're advancing, but over the foundation on which it rests. So they are going to say to themselves if we can destroy, or discredit the factual foundation than your viewpoint that you are trying to advance goes along with it. And this way your antagonists hope to argue that your stance is not worth considering because it is just factually way off base. It is not worthy of consideration.

So step one is to ignore. Step two is to marginalize. And step three is to attack the factual bases of your idea. But when the efforts to undermine your factual basis begin to fail they begin to challenge you in a different way. By dismissing you, by dismissing your ideas as though the debate over it is over, it has been resolved and you're on the losing side. With the wave of their hand they invoke that favorite mantra, "The debate is over in this matter, don't you know." Here are some of the other words they will use to accompany this dismissal: history has shown, experts agree. Choose your experts. It's now beyond dispute. This matter has been long settled. That is the rhetoric of dismissal. These things that you bring forward they are from old and they have been dismissed and discredited a very long time ago. They attempt to dismiss your ideas. The too subtle point being; that you are a member of the later day flat earth society and that your ideas are so out of touch and have long been discredited that we can ignore them.

Well having declared the debate over and yet still seeing your persistent efforts to advance truth in the market place of ideas your foes will eventually draw the next arrow from their quiver. And here begin the ad hominem attacks. Ad hominem meaning: against the man, the personal attacks. You've brought your ideas forward they've attempted to ignore them, to marginalize them, to attack the factual bases, to dismiss the ideas as debate being over. Now they are coming after you. Now these personal attacks are shaped like this initially: "No serious person believes that," "All reasonable people agree," "Reputable experts are of the same opinion." You get the flavor of that. What they mean by that is that you are not a person to be taken seriously. You're not a reasonable person. In fact you are a little disreputable. Well we're all in that class aren't we, in the class of the disreputable according to the eyes of the unbelieving world. By the way these attacks generally begin with sort of a rhetorical flare using the kind of phrases that I just used. But they quickly descend into rank name calling. Casting aspersions on your character and your integrity, even pelting you with epithets; so much for their greatest mantra of course is tolerance but they have very little tolerance for us. Some of our other speakers here at

this conference can testify in detail as to the mean spirited nature of these attacks once they begin. And these attacks are all designed to accomplish one thing to divert attention from your viewpoint to you. They realize they are losing ground on the idea you're advancing and so they are trying to undermine your personal credibility.

But then these ad hominine attacks are followed by something far more ominous and I believe that is exactly where we are today. The next step in the politics of opposition is to restrict your ability to advance your viewpoint. A dramatic example of this comes from the world of broadcasting. It's the so called Fairness Doctrine which I won't go into a lot of detail about it except to say that the government in days past looked at the limited spectrum available for broadcast and said you know we have a compelling government interest to insure that every viewpoint is heard. And so the Fairness Doctrine is kind of an equal time requirement. That if you advocated on a position of substantial public importance; an idea that was deemed to be controversial you had to make equal time available for an opposing viewpoint. That doctrine reigned in radio and television for 30 or 40 years and it was repealed, but there have been repeated attempts to bring it back. And even though it is sort of struggling in our day, because its opponents have been successful in labeling it a policy not worthy of support in light of our free speech protections, it still seems to rear its ugly head over and over again.

By the way I hope you can hear the two problems with the Fairness Doctrine. First is on matters of substantial public importance, then if you bring a controversial viewpoint, who makes this determination as to which matters are of substantial public importance? The government. Who decides that your viewpoint is controversial? The government. And so you have the government so controlling the marketplace of ideas that your viewpoint is restricted because you have to give up half your time to make opposing viewpoints heard as well. Now I will say that back in the day of limited spectrum with what the FCC calls spectrum scarcity this might have been a reasonable public policy at one point. But today with radio and television, satellite, and wireless and cable and all the means of distributing content electronically you cannot argue that there is spectrum scarcity. Nor can you argue that there is a viewpoint that is not being heard because of it. And so the Fairness Doctrine has been widely discredited. But you need to understand what it is at its essence it is an effort to restrict your ability to proclaim the things that you believe are true. It's declaring Christianity to be controversial. And having made that declaration who is not waiting in line from the ranks of Islam or Eastern Mysticism, or rank paganism to say I have an opposing viewpoint I would like to bring my opposing viewpoint. And by the way which doctrine of the Christian church is not controversial anyway? Might that be the deity of Jesus Christ? No everybody agrees on that. Oh wait a minute no they don't. How about the resurrection? How about the virgin birth? Pick any Christian doctrine you can think of and someone is going to say I find that to be controversial and I demand equal time. So you see what they are trying to do is squelch you. It's an effort to restrict your ability. To constrain your ability to speak truth into the marketplace of ideas.

And finally in our seven steps into the politics of opposition; efforts to constrain your freedom to express your ideas are followed closely by an aggressive effort to legally prohibit them. And that is what stands immediately in front of us in our generation. Here the force of law is applied to stop you and give warning to others who might be of like mind to you. And the recently enacted Hate Crimes Legislation is the very tool that they will use to accomplish to that end. I will talk about that a little bit more.

So let me recapitulate here if I might the seven steps in the politics of opposition are: first you are ignored, then you are marginalized, then the veracity of your argument the factual basis is challenged, then you are attacked personally not your veracity by your integrity, then you are

restricted in your ability to advance your ideas, then you are prohibited from promoting the ideas that you hold as truth.

**Dr. Reagan:** You are watching Dr. Frank Wright President of the National Religious Broadcasters. He is speaking on the challenge that our national government presents to Christianity today. He has been talking about how government attempts to marginalize those with whom it disagrees. As we continue with his presentation he will illustrate how these techniques are being applied to Christianity today.

**Dr. Wright:** What lessons can we learn from this system of opposition that we have seen over and over again a thousand times? What can we learn in terms of our mission to advance truth and bring the mind of Christ to the culture? Well first is step one of the politics of opposition is not all that bad of a thing. When they ignore you when you can fly a little bit under the radar screen you can accomplish a great deal. When you are engaged in cultural reformation in fact it may not be a great idea to hold up a flag and wave it in front of your enemy and tell them what you are doing. It might be a good idea to go about the business of proclaiming truth in attempting to transform the culture without so much fanfare.

Second remember that attempts to marginalize your viewpoint are really a sign of weakness on their part. And it really is a platform for a response from you. When they try to say your views are out of the mainstream it is an opportunity to respond. We could all learn from a technique that I learned from Dr. Kennedy many years ago that he called the Judo Technique. You know in martial arts all forms of martial arts Judo as an example of it typically what's done is you attempt to use the force of your opponents blow, throw them off balance and use that energy, use that force against them to defeat them. And Dr. Kennedy used to talk about using the Judo Technique using the force of your opponents blow and turning it against them. So when he said when someone attempts to assign you to the fringes of the debate you respond by saying, "I am glad you said that my viewpoint is not widely held, because that reveals to me you don't even understand the foundation of what I am trying to say. Let me stop for a moment and explain to you what our viewpoint really is and then you might be able to make a decision about whether you want to oppose it or not." So you take, because when someone comes at you and says your viewpoint is fringe what is the motivation that is driving them? It is their pride. It's their pride and they act condescendingly as though they understand Christian truth, in which they don't. So you can turn that against them and make your case as persuasively as possible having disarmed your opponent. In this way what is essentially let's be honest with it; when you try to dismiss somebody as being on the fringe of an argument that is nothing more than a high school debate team tactic. It is easily overcome as long as you can forcefully proclaim truth.

Third let me say remember that the attacks against the factual basis of your viewpoint are also an opportunity to speak truth and to speak truth to a culture that doesn't believe in truth. I don't want you to miss this point. The culture out there today says we don't believe in truth, we don't believe truth even exists. But when you argue for the factual basis of what you believe and they say that factual basis is false in the world of logic they are arguing that yours is false, something else is true. They are arguing that they do in fact believe in truth. So they are really undermining their own position when they do that. But the very argument that your viewpoint is not true therefore presupposes another viewpoint that is. And this is an important advantage.

And then fourth when someone declares the debate to be over recognize that you have won an important victory. We saw this I think in a lot of ways certainly in the global warming debate. When Al Gore stood up and said, "Listen the debate is over." You knew for sure it was not over. When anybody says the debate is over you can be sure it is not. It means that they are trying to

get away from the strength of your argumentation and trying to declare it something you know beyond debate.

And then fifth we need to recognize that the onset of ad hominem attacks is the first sign that the opposition has become fearful of the strength of your arguments. When they begin to attack you it is a sign that they recognize the strength of your argument and are becoming somewhat desperate in their efforts to restrict it. This is a signal that they are fearful of your ideas and they must strike at your personal credibility in order to undermine it. Some of you who are here have been around long enough to remember the Clinton days and poor Paula White and the accusations that she made against former President Clinton. And here lies a good example of this ad hominem kind of approach. It wasn't until Paula White's assertions became more credible and could no longer be ignored that the ad hominem attacks began. That the Clinton, what they used to call the Clinton attack machine went into action. And it was then that James Carville went on national television and essentially called Paula White, "trailer park trash." Shameful, shameful, but reflective of the fact that they couldn't argue against the facts any longer and had to attack this poor woman who was standing against the most powerful man in the world.

Six we need to recognize that attempts to even restrict the prohibition to advance your ideas signal the onset of full combat. The onset of full combat, I want to come back to that because we can't just deal with all of this intellectually. We are now at the place where all of these things are going to demand from the people of God a response. And when the attacks shift from the ad hominem to efforts to restrict, to efforts to prohibit, we're engaged in a great battle. Not just to defend our ideas, but to defend our very liberties. To defend the First Amendment; which guarantees us the right to free speech and free exercise of our religion. It wasn't too many years ago that there was a Weather Channel commentator her name was Heidi Cullen who argued that meteorologists who don't agree with the global warming consensus should have their credentials revoked. That's what I call prohibiting the expression of your ideas. You're a meteorologist you spent who knows how many years, probably 10-12 years in school studying all this to earn a doctorate and meteorology and then she comes along and says, "If you don't accept the global warming consensus you're credentials should be completely revoked." She is not dealing with the ideas or the facts surrounding the ideas. She is just trying to take you out. Here is a signal that the significant damage being done by your stance is viewed by the other side as something that must be contained, it must be prohibited.

I hope you can also see how the politics of opposition has been used against the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout the ages. It fits perfectly. Initially the Gospel was ignored and yet it spread in exuberantly. Attempts were made by religious and political leaders to marginalize the Gospel by declaring it a small splinter sect of misguided people whose views that no reasonable person held; same thing marginalizing. They attacked the factual basis of the Gospel from the very afternoon of the day Jesus rose from the dead. "He didn't rise from the dead they stole His body." The Bible is not true, it is full of errors. Factual basis of Christianity has been attacked from the afternoon of the day Christ rose from the dead. And after centuries of argumentation during which the Gospel encircled the globe skeptics of the last century also attempted to declare the debate is over. How did they do that? God's dead. Hey, God's dead; did you all get the message? The debate is over. God is dead. Christianity is a falsehood, based on false premises.

## Closing

**Dr. Reagan:** You have been watching Dr. Frank Wright speaking on the “The Challenge of Government” to Christianity. Dr. Wright is the president of the National Religious Broadcasters. If you would like to get a video copy of Dr. Wright’s entire presentation, you can do so by requesting this album: *Christianity under Attack*. The album contains three DVDs that in turn contain all six of the presentations that were made at our 2011 Bible Conference. Each presentation runs approximately 50 minutes in length, so this album contains 300 minutes of fully illustrated presentations by six different speakers on the following topics: “The Challenge of Islam,” “The Challenge of Government,” “The Challenge of Apostasy,” “The Challenge of Evolution,” “The Challenge of Humanism,” and “The Promise of Victory.” You can get the album for a gift of \$25 or more plus the cost of shipping. Just call the number you see on the screen and ask for the album by name: *Christianity under Attack*. Call Monday thru Friday from 8 am to 5pm Central time. You can also request the album through our website at [www.lamblion.com](http://www.lamblion.com).

Next week, the Lord willing, we will continue with this series of programs taken from our 2011 Bible Conference. Our featured speaker will be James Walker, the president of Watchman Fellowship; one of Christendom’s foremost cult watching ministries. His topic will be “The Challenge of Apostasy.” I hope you will be back with us for that program. Until next week, the Lord willing, this is Dave Reagan speaking for Lamb and Lion Ministries, saying, “Look up, be watchful, for our Redemption is drawing near.”

## End of Program