

# **CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS**

**KINGDOM ETHICS FOR OUR  
POST-ELECTION REALITY**

***David Fitch + Leeann Younger  
Rich Villodas + Krystal Speed***

***Part 2***  
**TRANSCRIPT**



Missio Alliance

## CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS: Kingdom Ethics for our Post-Election Reality (Part Two)

Missio Alliance recently hosted two Facebook Live discussions with leading pastors and thinkers as they reflected on and reacted to the recent national election and shared responses for moving forward. Click [here](#) for the Part One transcript or visit Facebook for a replay of the [first of these discussions](#) with Justin Fung, Stephanie O'Brien, and David Swanson. Today we'll share an excerpt from [part two of this conversation](#) featuring:

- **David Fitch**, B.R. Lindner Chair of Evangelical Theology at Northern Seminary in Lisle, IL
- **Rich Villodas**, lead pastor of New Life Fellowship in Queens, NY
- **Leeann Younger**, lead pastor of City View Church in Pittsburgh, PA

and Missio Alliance's **Krystal Speed** who served as the facilitator. What follows is an edited version of the full transcript.

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**Krystal Speed:** Let's begin by asking each of you how different this election season has been for you individually as well as within the communities where you serve and lead.

**Rich Villodas:** To give context in terms of where I pastor and the community I pastor—and I think my community to some degree is representative of many different communities around this nation—there are four different types of people at New Life. There's the conservative Christian that has a hard time seeing anything wrong with the country. There's the progressive that has a hard time seeing anything right with the country. There is the immigrant who is just grateful to be in this country as opposed to where their country of origin is, so they have no need to offer any kind of critique on what's going on in this country. And then there's the indifferent Christian who says, "Can we just focus on Jesus and pray and praise God?"

And so for us, it's been a big learning experience as we have tried to hear and listen to why people are seeing the world the way they do. It's been good for me, as I've had more time this year sitting with people who have different political persuasions, which has helped me because I've gotten proximate. And not because I've always initiated it; people have just said, "Rich, can we talk about certain things?" But it's been a great learning experience. Some of the distorted caricatures that are often presented on social media or in the media have been able to be put into realistic view where the people who vote in particular ways are not what the world often sees them as. So all those things have been good. Has there been bad or ugly? I mean, there are some difficult conversations, but I don't know if there has been anything ugly or bad that I'm aware of. But that doesn't mean I know everything that's going on in the congregation. So that's how I respond to the initial question.

**Leeann Younger:** I'm going to answer this question from my position in society as a Black woman, because I am the Black pastor of a predominantly white church. I inhabit my Blackness as a part of my leadership in the congregation. I started a multiethnic, multi-socioeconomic church that gentrified over the last 10 years. We are mostly middle-class, mostly white, but still have some diversity. So I'm going to merge all of the good, bad, and ugly together in a single answer for me as a Black woman, and this is what I told my congregation. The good was, how deep my relief was on Saturday when it became clear that the current administration was coming to an end. And what that taught me, my surprise at my relief—I mean, I think we're all surprised that there was dancing in the streets, right?—what that really helped me understand is the depth of the bad. This election season started in 2016 and has been nothing short of four years of constant traumatization from the highest office in the land emboldening a spirit in our country that I'd like to think had been waning. And then that actually leads to the ugly, the struggle of trying to understand the fact that this abuse, this consistent view of minoritized communities over the last four years, got a thumbs up from 70 million Americans. And so, it's a mix of a lot of things.

**David Fitch:** I'm now pastoring a church plant, it's a group of 50 people, and we're about six pastors in an inner suburb of Chicago where many African Americans have come and fled the violence of the South and West side of Chicago. And so we have a lot of issues and problems where we live, but we're still a small little church plant, and I would characterize what's going on in us three ways: I would say there's a sigh of relief, a big sigh of relief. It's almost like this was more about preserving society from authoritarianism even more so than the policy differences. And my goodness, we've got a society again that might survive. But, secondly I think something we're all realizing is that the endemic racism of this country and in our towns and villages are not going to be solved by this election.

This gets to Leeann's point; what a disappointment, 70 million people voted for the existing president. And it just reveals the crazy, nasty antagonistic stuff that's driving our culture right now and it's surprising that an election has been so disappointing. That's probably the bad. And I don't know how to qualify my next reaction, but I just feel like this whole thing has been a rebuke of at least the white evangelical church, but maybe just Christians in general. And we need a reseeding of the church during this time of COVID and, and a very divisive election. We need a reseeding of the church. Maybe that's a hopeful thing we can talk about.

**Krystal:** I'm curious as to what the messages are that you're sharing this coming Sunday and in the Sundays to come as we look at determining what is the way forward for people who follow Jesus.

**Leeann:** This past Sunday, my sermon started with what I just explained about my reaction to the election. And part of the reason for that is that the white folks in my congregation are working very hard to be allies and pursuers of justice. And I think it's important for them to understand the way that injustice impacts bodies like mine. But the general gist of my sermon was to understand this election in the context of the last four years, but also to understand the last four years in the context of our country's history with colonization specifically, and that we

are really still living in the present-day effects of our history with colonization. And so my invitation to these folks was to find their missional space because the work continues. The election's over and the work continues. We are supposed to be people who create more reasons for the oppressed to dance in the street. So let's do that.

**David:** If I had been preaching last Sunday, I think I would have preached on the sermon on the Mount. I would have said something like, “Thank God for preserving our society. But don't get your hopes up that our problems are going to go away.” Let's get back to seeding the revolution of Jesus as a political reality in our town right here in Westmont, which is this wonderful suburb I live in, and let's find our places to make known the presence of Christ and bring the reconciliation and renewal of all things.

**Rich:** I did a five-week series on God, politics, and the church. And I told the congregation that I wrote my sermon prior to election day for the fifth and final sermon, because whoever won I wanted to let them know that the sermon I'm giving is going to be the same. And it was on Ephesians 6, it was against resisting powers and principalities. And at some point in the sermon, I was trying to let them know I believe that Donald Trump is a symptom of a deeper disease in our society. And just because the symptom is gone doesn't mean the disease is eradicated; it's very easy to scapegoat and say, “Thank God he's gone. Whew. The kingdom of God has come.” And that's a very myopic way of understanding the world. Just because the symptom is gone doesn't mean the disease is eradicated. And so over the past five weeks, I've talked about the politics of fear, I've talked about disordered attachments, and why do people vote the way they do? What are the forces beneath the surface that informed the ways people vote? I talked about becoming an alternative community. And this last week was about resisting powers and principalities that find themselves in institutions, ideologies, and in the ways that live according to deceit, division, oppression, all those things. So that's what I covered this past Sunday.

**Leeann:** I wanted to say amen to what Rich shared earlier about having hard conversations, because that was the other invitation to my congregation. Find your place in solidarity with the struggling and engage harder conversations. We might need some skill and help in doing that, but the fear of the other side is understandable; the folks who are now expressing fear is parallel to the fear that minoritized communities were experiencing under the current administration. I wasn't trying to validate those fears, but I was saying, “If you stand in someone else's shoes and you know their story, you can understand why they've made these conclusions.” And as we move toward opposite ends of the spectrum, I want to say that I really resonate with what Rich was saying about talking to everyone.

**David:** And I want to say amen to what Leeann and Rich said. To do what Leeann and Richard talk about, we need a different kind of leader and a different kind of person who can ask questions in extremely unique ways, because the antagonisms that are driving people in our culture are such that we need a way to engage that disrupts their frameworks. I'm going to get all of you mad at me for one second, but I was on Facebook today and I asked a question: “Would you vote for Hitler if he was pro-life?” So ask a question. Say it with a certain facial

expression and a certain engagement, say it boldly and with sincerity, everything the apostle Paul talks about. Can we ask questions of people that will open the space for the Holy Spirit to work instead of trying to control what people think? We're in this time in culture where every one of us is trying to win an argument, and we're getting nowhere. Let's let the Holy Spirit loose by opening up space and breaking into these strongholds.

**Rich:** And if I could just piggyback on that, I think what that requires—and this is the language that I've been using in at New Life for many years, but I have used it a lot more in recent months—is the language of differentiation, which is good family systems theory language. Differentiation is the process of remaining close to yourself while remaining close to others in times of high anxiety and resisting the polar opposites of fusion or disconnection. And that takes self-awareness. It takes prayerfulness. It takes a willingness and an ability to do good self-regulation. It's holding principled positions that are by God's grace and formed by the gospel of the kingdom of God. But at the same time, it's being curious enough to stay close to people. We are all on that spectrum; some of us tend to fuse with others so that we disappear into others, and some of us tend to just disconnect. And the invitation is to remain close to ourselves and our principles, shaped by the gospel of the kingdom, while remaining close to others. That's what I've learned, and I think that's going to grow in light of the divisiveness that we see. And don't get it twisted, in my church in Queens, I know it's New York City, I know 68 percent voted blue, but I would say 30 to 40 percent of New Life voted for Donald Trump and 30 to 40 percent voted for Joe Biden (and 20 percent voted for Kanye or whoever else or abstained). And so creating those spaces are critical. I think differentiation is important language for the time we're in.

**Leeann:** I want to affirm what Rich is saying, and I also think we need to be clear that there are folks who have experienced abject abuse in these last four years. And so, even that self-regulation requires a lot of healing for some folks first. I think the initial work of speaking to the folks who are feeling like they're losing their vision of their America really starts with the folks for whom life wasn't going to change that much regardless of who won. I'm sensitive to that because my congregation is mostly white and mostly middle class. And so I'm saying to those folks, this is your task because some of us have got to go and breathe and heal and deal with the trauma of what we've been through, what we've been through forever in this country. And I think sometimes we in the church can sound like, “You just need to swallow that and move forward.” I know that's not what you're saying, Rich, I follow you on social media. I just think it needs to be said out loud.

**Rich:** That's a good word.

**Krystal:** Now we're going to talk specifically about the fact that the actual ballot counts reveal how deeply divided our country is. What might this mean for how we as kingdom people live faithfully in a divided world?

**David:** Speaking as a white male to a white majority people, I said this morning, “You don't change a culture by voting in government, legislating laws, and forcing them on people who

reject these morals in the first place.” So I'm talking to those who think voting for Donald Trump will get us a pro-life world. And I think there's a power question going on here. I think that all of us think we can somehow change the culture for better by who gets in government. And I want to just say, I think we can preserve a culture. We can preserve a society. We might be able to legislate laws and improve society. But again, this legislature, this election has proven to me that we haven't solved any cultural sins, we haven't overcome any of the real big issues in our culture by this vote.

I do believe it was really important, and we had to preserve culture and get some things changed, so I'm breathing a sigh of relief. But now the church has failed so badly, it's all come out clearly in COVID-19 and in Chicago with the failure of large churches and so on. But can we receive the church to do the work of God's kingdom now? That's what's driving me. That's what I feel we can learn from this election.

**Leeann:** We haven't solved it, you're right. The government can't solve it. But part of the reason is not about the government; part of the reason we haven't solved certain things is because we haven't really named the context. We haven't really named the sin. We name individual sins, but fundamentally I think part of what you're saying is that the failure of the church really is the church accomplishing the mission it was initiated to do in America. Don't get me wrong, not the church when Jesus started it. But the church in America is, has been, and was initiated like all other institutions to perpetuate colonization, to perpetual white-bodied supremacy, racism, misogyny, and while we maybe have moved forward in some of those things, we've never named them significantly enough to make substantial changes.

You could think of any Christian ministry right now that has a dependence on generational wealth, which ultimately always goes back to folks who don't want to hear about racism. They want to have things the way that they were. And so now if you're a pastor or an organizational leader starting to truly do this reseed, do this questioning, do this dismantling, you're going to face significant trouble because as a people the American church has formed folks—and I include some folks of color—to accept the status quo that started centuries ago.

**Rich:** From where I sit and again, this is me trying to respond to what I think are very real questions in my own local context, I think an ongoing, constant reframing of the gospel is required. And I can't tell you how many times I've had to reframe over and over again, what is the good news of this gospel? And so a clear, regularly-repeated articulation of the gospel in all of its cosmic implications is needed. Secondly, we need formational spaces with a long-term vision. There's been a lot of talk about Stacey Abrams and the organizers down in Atlanta and Georgia, and the slow methodical work of getting people registered and trying to insert a different social imagination in that context; this is the slow mustard-seed work of the kingdom of God.

It's like [\*The Patient Ferment of the Early Church\*](#) by Alan Kreider. It is the slow, the methodical, the formational spaces. And I'll give a quick example here. Three weeks ago, we had a forum for about 200 of our congregants, and on the forum, we had two of our elder board members talk

about why one is voting for Trump and why one is voting for Biden. When I first heard about this from my assistant pastor, my first response was, “Are you crazy? We're not going to do that.” At that moment, what was revealed in me was that I don't really believe that the church can be a different space in that one moment. But then I said, “Okay” because they were already down the road, so they went ahead with it. I gave a little lecture, and then the two men went back and forth, and I'd be lying to you if I said I didn't feel awkward, if said it was great or “This was fantastic.” There were times I thought, “Oh, I don't know if I would say it that way.”

And then some of the comments on the Zoom chat started getting a little intense. I thought, “This is awful.” But at the end of the day, there was, “Here's why I'm doing this this way.” And I think the creation of formational spaces to listen, though our problems were not resolved in that moment, but I do think what began to happen is some of the distorted caricatures that are often depicted of people who vote either other way, we begin to see people's humanity. I can disagree with you deeply but not see you in a demonizing kind of a way. And I think if we can do that over the long haul—and that that's going to take a lot of time, this is the mustard seed nature of the kingdom of God—I think we can bear witness to something different than the world. But I think it needs a framework of the gospel and formational spaces.

**David:** I can just add to *The Patient Ferment of the Early Church*; my friend, Donald Dayton, who's now passed away, his book [Discovering an Evangelical Heritage](#), and then there's Charles Marsh's [The Beloved Community](#). All of them talk about how in moments of crisis, the church was siding with the poor, the oppressed, the hurting, and major revivals and social renewals happen. And yet these were very slow; slavery wasn't overthrown by Charles Hodge, sitting in Princeton, making a lot of money. It was overthrown by the abolitionists of the various Holiness movement sitting in little groups with those enslaved, and a new movement happened very slow, but the roots took place and revolutions happened. Tim Keller said two of the greatest Christian movements, the second-century early church, and the 20<sup>th</sup>-century Chinese church were stimulated by a crisis of confidence in their societies. We are in a crisis of confidence in this society. The church must rise up.

**Leeann:** I just wanted to add back to this question of how do we live in a divided society? The divisions are in our neighborhoods. They're the people across the street, they're the people we work with. And so I really have a draw towards a hyper-local mission. We need new projects, like what Richard's saying, formational spaces, but I think some folks need to be given permission, as the formational space that they lead or create can have four people in it and still be about building the kingdom of God. We have a tendency to get starry-eyed about what we can do. And I think we need to get really stripped down to the people across the street from me. Who are they? What do they need? How do we connect?

**Krystal:** I love so much of everything that you are all saying, what does it look like for me in my congregation, my community, my neighborhood, my apartment building to live in the reality of these things. So Jemar Tisby recently wrote an article saying that the [biggest threat to Christianity in the US is Christian nationalism](#). And he cited the AP's survey that revealed that 81 percent of voters who identified as white and evangelical threw their support behind Donald



Trump, which is the same as what happened in 2016. So I have a two-part question: do you agree that Christian nationalism is the biggest threat to Christianity in the US? And what do you suggest we as a church do to respond.

**Leeann:** You're asking me whether I agree with Dr. Jemar Tisby; of course I do. But I would reframe the question or at least the consideration, because I actually wonder if when we think about Christianity as an institution to be preserved, we are actually off track. We are inviting people to a relationship with a living God; I often tell folks this is an adventure with Jesus. The decisions that we make when we start to preserve and protect the institution—don't get me wrong, Christian nationalism is a problem—but I wonder at times if we have if we've forgotten that the organizations that we structure according to the IRS's 501c3, nonprofits with the name "church" are not always the church, or maybe are at times the church and at times not the church.

So are we aiming to preserve Christianity? Are we aiming to preserve or not even preserve an enlightened sense, and follow this wild uncontrollable force we know as the Holy Spirit that's alive and leading God's people today? So I would reframe that way. As far as the 81 percent, I'm a superhero nerd, and I think of it this way. This is a group of people, that 81 percent if it's accurate, it might be more, might be a little less. I think we're struggling with origin stories. We're struggling with why the church was created. We're struggling with how America started. I keep saying it, but ultimately the image of God, our understanding of the gospel, is really fused with the understanding of what it meant to build this country, which meant slaughtering indigenous folks and kidnapping folks from Africa. And all of that is mixed in. And so while no one would say, "Oh, I'm voting because I want to keep racism," what they vote for is comfort. What they vote for is not changing the status quo. And I think we're struggling with the fact that our origin story has some things we need to be willing to give up, and we really need to disciple people to give them up, white people, white evangelicals, especially. And that's a hard, hard thing to do.

**Rich:** In terms of the Christian nationalism, is it the most significant? I've said that the biggest obstacle to Christian witness in the world is not a worldly secularism, but a Christian secularism, whether you want to use those words synonymously, which I think is uncritically shaped by the flag, the gun, and the dollar in the name of Jesus. And that is the biggest obstacle to Christian witness in the world, depending on how you define nationalism and the extent of it. I read a lot of family systems theory, and I talk a lot about the genogram as a tool to understand the positive legacies and negative legacies from our families of origin that have shaped who we are today and what we perpetuate from generation to generation. And I find that to be another helpful tool to help people name the legacies that we've inherited that get perpetuated from one generation to the next. My buddy Dante Stewart posted a picture of some white Trump supporters in front of balloting station for the election as the folks were doing the counting, and they were praying and crying and worshiping with their flags. And he said, "How do you describe with one word or two what's happening?" For me, it was deep, abiding fear. Eighty-one percent voting with deep, abiding fear. And I think that's a big reason for why we do a lot of things.



And so it is the origin story, and there's a lot of fear that people are carrying about XYZ which are deeply formed in us, if we're not helping people to do that subterranean work of identifying what are the fears and in the name of Jesus, what's the response to it. But again, that requires formational spaces, that requires slowness, that requires language to think about the interior life. And I don't know if we have the patience to go there, but that's when I say when I see the 81 percent, I see deep, abiding fear.

**David:** I could simply say amen to everything Leeann and Rich have said. I have an article on Missio Alliance, [“The Value of Reading a Bonhoeffer Biography at a Time Like This.”](#) And if you read these biographies, you see what enticed the German people to love Hitler. It was the preservation of a culture, of the German culture. It is stunning how we are rehearsing that among white evangelicals. I'm a neo-Anabaptist kind of thinker; I've learned a lot from the Anabaptists, and nationalism is the big disease. Anytime you align the church and Christianity with worldly power, bad things happen for 2,000 years. It's always gone wrong; really bad things happen, like slavery, not to mention a whole bunch of other things. So nationalism is a huge problem.

If we can clarify the power question—because everybody just wants worldly power to do the work of God, and we don't trust the power of God and his work trust in social groups to really disrupt and change culture change society—I wish we could understand the way God works and the difference between that and worldly power. And I would say, he works in preserved society in indirect ways with worldly power. If we can understand that God wants to redeem the world through his power, we wouldn't do this nationalistic thing. We wouldn't even get tempted by it. We'd say, okay, good, we need a government, need to preserve society, but now let's change the world. Let Jesus change the world through us.

**Leeann:** I really resonate with what Rich shared about deep, abiding fear. I've been reading a book called [My Grandmother's Hands](#), about the internalized trauma that descendants of the enslaved and descendants of colonizers carry. And an important aspect of that for this conversation is that the descendants of colonizers actually carry trauma, historic trauma, from before they ever came to this land. So in their countries of origin, there were terribly brutalizing circumstances that get passed from generation to generation. I say that because I think some of the folks who are triggered into fear right now are looking at the circumstance and perhaps feeling like they're losing their vision of a country. I would say it never quite existed the way they imagined it, but I would also say they're triggering something else that they don't recognize, that there's deeper fear that's in their DNA, in their bones, to hold on, to fight, to defend, to survive, because of stories they don't know about at all.

And so the formation spaces that Rich talks about are really important, but sometimes they're not about a conscious fear. They're just about needing to learn, to sit in those spaces, and feel whatever comes up.

**Krystal:** In light of where we are today, on the other side of the election, what do you sense is the call of kingdom people in this new season, if it is a new season?

**Rich:** For me, it's discernment and here's why. You don't need the gift of discernment to point out the bad rhetoric and the ways that the president misused his power. The challenge is, many Christians are going to say, "Thank God, let's move forward!" And then not recognize what are the other places of discernment in which we have to now speak truth to power. And I say that to myself. Barack Obama, for example, I was captivated by his charisma, captivated by his jumpshot, captivated by his ability to speak and all of that. And because of that, you know, a number of years ago, I wasn't as discerning about the ways that the church now needed to speak truth to power and to an office that's inhabited by Barack Obama. It's easy to speak truth to power when the sins of a leader are very clear as day. When they're not, how does the church think critically? How do we think theologically, how do we think Christianly about our engagement? But I think it requires prayerfulness. It requires discernment and a willingness to speak an uncomfortable truth. So those are a few, but discernment is the word for me as I try to seek to lead myself and the community that God has entrusted me with.

**David:** I think the buzzword of this conversation is Rich Villodas's "formational spaces." The terms we use in our church are neighborhood houses, fellowships, the wherewithal to bring people together around a table, to share a beverage or food and allow God to work in the conflicts, in the antagonisms. I think that's our work, not only in the church community proper, but in the neighborhood and everywhere we go, between police and black persons who are being abused by the police, in the school systems, which are up for grabs right now on many different levels because of COVID, every place we go, can we create formational spaces where the Spirit can work. I wrote this book, [The Church of Us Versus Them](#), with the idea that antagonisms and conflict are the spaces where God wants to work, but we've got to break the hold of the antagonism long enough to allow God to speak in these places and transform people's lives. And I think that's the future. That's the slow, patient, ferment work of the church. And again, out of these places, I believe a reseeding of the church so true revolution can begin.

**Leeann:** I think we need to read history. There's a part of the church that needs to understand the church's role in giving God's stamp of approval to the structural injustice that we find ourselves with. I've said to my congregation that injustice impacts bodies. And if justice is God's heart, and I believe it is, it's as Cornell West says, it's what love looks like in public. Then we need to put our bodies in the place with the folks experiencing injustice and finding ways where we can walk alongside of folks to bring both charity, but also to ask the question of what impacts us, how can we let go of something? How can we bring our bodies in alignment with those who are struggling?

And one of the only motivations for doing that is understanding that the church has been a tool for creating this injustice. If you don't know that, then it's just a philosophical ideal that you can step into and step out of. But when you really know, and you own it, perhaps grieve, and lament, and even go through the process of resisting that idea at first, when you finally land and understand that what God has called us to do, is isn't always what we've been about here. Not just in slavery, post-slavery right now. And so read a book, read a history book. [Jemar](#)

[Tisby's book](#) is great. And put yourself next to somebody who's actually on the receiving end of this unjust structure that we have created and given God's approval to as the church.

**Krystal:** Here is a question from the audience: do you have any suggestions for how to get past the trauma of repetitive insults that mark the skin and conversations, in formational spaces?

**Leeann:** I feel like we don't have the skills we need to talk to each other and it's really that basic, to create a formational space. Something I appreciate about the work that Rich is doing, it's rooted in emotionally healthy spirituality and there's a whole pathway of developing a skillset so that you can come to a formational space and be about formation and not just about reacting to your internal trauma.

**Rich:** I think we have to highlight trauma as normative language. Psychiatrist Mark Stein said that in terms of developmental trauma—and this actually comes out of Donald Winnicott who was a 1950s psychiatrist in the UK—and he said, developmental trauma happens when there's something that happened that should not have happened, or something that didn't happen that should have happened. And I think we need to recover that kind of language for spiritual formation, that we all have some trauma, something that happened that should not have happened, and something that didn't happen that should have happened. And we can make trauma a little bit more part of the regular conversation on our spiritual growth, spiritual formation, spiritual development. It creates a language to talk about it in these categories as well. Sheila Wise Rowe wrote a book, [Healing Racial Trauma](#), and I think that's a great step in the right direction. So trauma is an important category of formation.

**Krystal:** I want to give each of you an opportunity to share any final words, as we look at engaging and investing deeply into the communities, the relationships, the areas in which we can be partnering with the Spirit and in this work that is slow, but meaningful and powerful.

**Rich:** We need to become a kind of people individually to actually live this out. I mean, this is not going to come by better theological understandings. We have to be a people. And back to that differentiation language, we need to be able to hold that space where I can remain close to myself and remain close to others, and that's hard, and that takes a lot of work. But unless we're embodying that and modeling that—and I'm speaking now to leaders and pastors, especially—if we're not going to embody that in model, how is our congregation is going to do it? And so Paul says, follow me as I follow Christ. I think pastors need to be able to say that very clearly, follow me as I follow Christ in this. But it takes an individual life that is working on this intentionally to do that.

**David:** It's going to take a specific kind of person, a specific kind of leader. Maybe the kind of leaders we haven't seen in a very long time to lead through what we're facing. And I think of the word *parrhesia*, to speak truth boldly. Paul uses it, Acts uses it, Foucault wrote seven lectures on how speaking truth sincerely out of love, with truth, in person, in present, not over somebody, but with somebody, we just haven't had that. We've had a lot of bad leaders using

worldly power crashing in around them trying to hold on for everything they can. We need a different kind, a renewed kind of leader for the future. And I pray Missio Alliance can be the seed bed for that kind of leader, that kind of church, that kind of Christian.

**Leeann:** I will quote a verse that I read at the end of my sermon last week from Amos 5. It's *The Message* version: "Hate evil and love good, then work it out in the public square." I think that's our mission. We've got to do our internal work; ultimately it overflows into the public square.