

Kareem Abdul-Jabaar Calls Prosperity Gospel War on the Poor

Six-time NBA champ Kareem Abdul-Jabaar is not mincing his words when it comes to the prosperity gospel many televangelists and popular pastors claim.

In a column for *TIME*, Abdul-Jabaar mentions Creflo Dollar receiving his multimillion-dollar jet after protests died down, and how the prosperity gospel is fueling the war on poverty.

“The prosperity gospel is just another battlefield in that war,” He writes. “We could just shrug at the hundreds of thousands who willfully give up their money so their pastors can live in the kind of opulence that rivals that of the Roman Caesars. We could dismiss these worshipful congregants as victims of their own greed. But that would be misreading the situation. While greed may motivate the mansion-dwelling pastors, the congregants are motivated by hope of a better life.”

The prosperity gospel has long drawn divisive commentary from the Christian community.

Though Dollar himself says there is no such thing as the prosperity gospel, he also says other Christians cannot stop him from believing for his plane.

It’s this very attitude that worries Abdul-Jabaar.

“And there’s nothing wrong with wanting to be successful and wealthy. But there is something wrong when some people exploit the poor, the fearful and the desperate to enrich themselves through donations and tax-exemptions by pretending to be

spiritual leaders," he writes. "Like the professional pardoners of the Middle Ages who pedaled indulgences to the highest bidders, they pervert teachings for profit. These are the people that the word shame was invented to describe."