

Spiritual Warfare, Contemporary Culture and Politics

When Paula White Cain walked to the podium in Amway Arena in Orlando on June 18, 2019, the crowd was teeming with excitement, anticipating President Trump's announcement he was running for re-election.

Wearing a bright red dress, "Pastor Paula" positioned the mic and began to pray as if she were at a service at New Destiny Christian Center, the large charismatic church she pastors in nearby Apopka, Florida, rather than a political rally.

After invoking the name of Jesus and thanking God for the "great United States," she prayed: "Father, You have raised President Trump up for such a time as this," and invoked biblical blessings. Then Paula began to come against "principalities and powers"—terminology rarely heard or understood outside charismatic churches.

"Let every evil veil of deception of the enemy be removed from people's eyes in the name which is above every name, the name of Jesus Christ," a YouTube video shows her saying. "You said in Your Word ... in Ephesians 6:12, that, 'We are not wrestling against flesh and blood but against principalities, powers, against rulers of darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.'

"So right now, let every demonic network that has aligned itself against the purpose, against the calling of President Trump, let it be broken. Let it be torn down in the name of Jesus. Let the counsel of the wicked be spoiled right now, according to Job 12:17.

"Now I declare that You will surround him and protect him from

all destruction. That the angel of the Lord encamp around about him. Around his family, according to Psalm 34:7. Establish him in righteousness, and let oppression be far from him, according to Isaiah 54:14. I deploy the hand of God to work for him in the name of Jesus. I secure his calling. I secure his purpose. I secure his family. And we secure victory in the name which is above every name, the name that has never failed for this nation and for my life, the name of Jesus Christ. And everybody said, Amen.”

The respected charismatic teacher Dutch Sheets was watching the livestream of the Orlando rally in Dallas. “I have never seen anything like that on TV,” Dutch said. “I literally sat there with my mouth hanging open. I couldn’t believe she had the boldness to do that or was allowed to do it. It was as if she drew a line in the sand spiritually.”

While the Christians who agreed with Paula were rejoicing, the secular press took her apart for her prayer, mostly because she used the phrase “demonic network,” which they misunderstood as demonic news networks even though Paula was using scriptural terminology.

Paula is no stranger to criticism, but she told me that “absolutely nothing” compared to the 12 days of controversy her Orlando rally prayer brought.

Light versus darkness. Good versus evil. God’s plans and purposes versus the enemy’s deceitful agenda. That is the binary way Bible-believing Christians see the world. So the struggle politically isn’t just between differing political philosophies, but between good and evil.

My readers who are Pentecostal or charismatic are probably familiar with the phrase “spiritual warfare.” At times when we are under spiritual attack, we can feel an increased intensity or struggle to accomplish what we feel God has called us to do.

I like the way Daniel Kolenda, international missionary and successor to world-renowned evangelist Reinhard Bonnke as president and CEO of Christ for All Nations, explains where we got the phrase “spiritual warfare.” He writes in his new book *Slaying Dragons* that the term comes from military analogies biblical authors used to describe how Christians should withstand evil.

Kolenda explains it this way: “[Satan] has no real power in this world except what we, the gatekeepers, give to him.”

So if we can accept that there is a devil and he influences humans to do his bidding, then we can conclude that people are subject to these spiritual authorities even if they don’t understand what they are doing or why.

But just as Paula prayed the Scripture in Ephesians 6:12, we Christians know we aren’t fighting against people, but against demonic forces. Spiritual warfare surrounds us all the time. It’s a daily battle the enemy wages in our personal lives, in our homes, in our cities and even in Washington.

Only those with spiritual discernment will understand this and take authority like Paula White Cain did in that public setting.

Stephen Strang is founder of Charisma and author of the new book God, Trump and the 2020 Election, from which this column was excerpted. The book will be released Jan. 14, 2020, but you can order it now on .

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