

REV. DR. WALTER ARTHUR MCCRAY

Gospelizer

Biographical Themes

Gospelizer

- **Rev. Dr. Walter Arthur McCray** is a “**Gospelizer**”—a holistic “*Good News messenger*” of the resurrected Lord, Jesus Christ (cf. Luke 4:18). He sees himself shining as “*A Black Light for Christ.*”

Seasoned

- **Minister and Mission**
- A native Chicagoan, Rev. Dr. McCray is a seasoned minister of the Gospel who has pursued this vocation for over **four decades**. Since receiving his call in 1969, the Lord has used him to encourage and edify the saints, to heal and serve the poor and oppressed, and to win the lost to Christ's salvation. His mission is to glorify God in the Name of Christ by being Black and of Christ. Gospelizing the poor, koinonia-izing the Church, and Africanizing biblical teaching are his specific emphasis.

Multi-Gifted

- **Holistic Experience**
- The Holy Spirit has manifested several spiritual gifts that are evident in the life of Rev. Dr. McCray. He has been graced with the *charisma* of **prophecy** (Romans 12:6), the *service* of **apostle** (Ephesians 4:11), and the *workings* of **the word of wisdom** and **the word of knowledge** (1Corinthians 12:8).
- The 40+ year ministry of Rev. Dr. McCray reveals his multi-gifted witness to Christ. He has a broad range of experience as a preacher, pastor, Biblical teacher, national speaker/lecturer, author, editor, publisher, servant-leader, executive administrator, mission supporter, entrepreneur, and consultant in marital and group reconciliation, and in organizational development. Venues for his service have included local churches, Christian organizations, denominational associations and gatherings, community groups and organizations, social service agencies, senior citizens in public housing, the marketplace, the media, and international settings of Africa, and England.
- The words of Isaiah 50:4-5 often quicken him in ministry: “⁴The Lord GOD hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to *him that is weary*: he wakeneth morning by morning, he wakeneth mine ear to hear as the learned. ⁵The Lord GOD hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious, neither turned away back.”

Diverse

- **Denominational Perspective**

- Rev. Dr. McCray espouses a **trans-denominational** perspective. He proclaims the **kingdom of God**, beyond uplifting the distinctions of our various church groups. Alongside many likeminded adherents to Christ in our present Christian age, he increasingly embraces the unitive spirit of Christ for His entire Body.
- Rev. Dr. McCray has diverse ecclesiastical and cross-denominational experience. His earliest roots and basic orientation is **Baptist**, by whom he was first licensed and ordained (1969, Missionary Baptist Church; 1973, Baptist Congregational Church [in fellowship with both the National Missionary Baptist Convention of America, and the **United Church of Christ**]). He also holds an ordination with the **Reformed Church of America** (2007, Illiana Classis). Through the churches he has served over the years, Rev. McCray has shared fellowship with **Pentecostals**, and both white and black **Baptist** groups [United Pentecostal Council of the Assemblies of God, Incorporated (1979, 2008-2012); National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc (1977), American Baptist Churches USA (1996), National Baptist Convention of America, Inc (1996)].

Journeying

- **In Search of Church**

- Since 2002, the Lord has captivated the thinking of Rev. Dr. McCray to consider anew the nature and work of the Church in the local setting. He has embarked upon a search for essential church in the African American experience. Through New Testament Biblical research, he has identified **twelve regular practices of Christ's Church**. They are: *proclaiming, baptizing, worshiping, discipling, devoting, Scripture-living, koinonia-izing, bread-breaking (Lord's Supper), praying, gospelizing, church-multiplying, and church-strengthening*. In the first-century of the Church's beginning, the people of God gave order to their life and witness through these spiritual disciplines.
- In this vein, Rev. Dr. McCray envisions a congregation where the backbone of the ministry becomes holistic gospelizing, *koinonia*-fellowship, warfare-discipleship, and church growth-planting. He sees a ministry that is co-led by several gifted leaders who operate by mutual submission. They reverence Christ as Head and Lord of the Church—His divine Community. Rev. Dr. McCray advocates these truths, and believes they can assist the transformation and reformation of our churches. The teaching can enable the Lord's people to better represent Christ and serve our generation.
- Rev. Dr. McCray prefers to work in a local church setting alongside other servant-leaders who share this vision. He desires to do all to the worship and glory of God our Savior—

the Great Head of the Church. Ultimately, he resolves to faithfully follow the Lord Jesus Christ, wherever the Spirit of God may lead him—despite his preferences.

Black Evangelical

● **Beliefs & Cultural Identity**

- Culturally and theologically, Rev. Dr. McCray identifies himself with **"Black evangelicals,"** and operates cooperatively within those circles. In 2012 he wrote *Pro-Black, Pro-Christ, Pro-Cross: African-Descended Evangelical Identity*. He is the president of the *National Black Evangelical Association* (NBEA, Chicago). NBEA has existed since 1963 as an African-American focused ministry of reconciliation, with the watchword of *"unity in diversity without enforced conformity."*
- NBEA has a primarily Black membership that is cross-denominational, and promotes Biblical and cultural integrity. Leading NBEA, Rev. Dr. McCray advances the **"collective interdependence"** of God's people from diverse backgrounds and contexts. He highly regards *operational* among those who are born-again. Working together is essential for revealing the oneness of believers in Christ, and for doing effective ministry in the world's societies for the kingdom of Christ—especially liberating African-descended people.

Writer

● **Author/Publisher**

- The year 2012 marks Rev. Dr. McCray's **33rd year** of professional writing. Through **Black Light Fellowship**, a publishing company founded in 1979 with his wife **Rev. Dr. Thelma L. McCray**, he has authored numerous books. Some of his various topic areas include:
 - ◇ *Pro-Black, Pro-Christ, Pro-Cross: African-Descended Evangelical Identity* (2012)
 - ◇ *The Black Presence in the Bible* (vol. 1, 1990)
 - ◇ *The Black Presence in the Bible and the Table of Nations* (vol. 2, 1990)
 - ◇ *The Black Presence and the Passion* (of Christ, 2004/8)
 - ◇ *Gospelizers! Terrorized & Intensified* (holistic evangelizing, 2002)
 - ◇ *Black Cherry Rising: Courage Facing A Spiritual Journey of Bittersweet Change and Life* (2008)
 - ◇ *Get Grown! and Keep Growing: The Self-Help Adult Maturity Handbook* (1997)
 - ◇ *Black Young Adults: How to Reach Them, What to Teach Them* (1992)
 - ◇ *Black Folks and Christian Liberty* (principles of freedom/responsibility, 1979)
 - ◇ *How to Stick Together During Times of Tension* (principles of unity, 1983)
 - ◇ *Solid: Nine Vital Lessons on Saving the Black Marriage* (unity in marriage, 1981)

- ◇ *Toward a Holistic Liberation of Black People* (liberation/Lordship in Christ, 1979)
- ◇ *Rationale for Black Christian Literature* (writing Christian education, 1992)
- As a **free-lancer**, Rev. Dr. McCray has performed writing and editorial work for Urban Ministries, Inc.—“the premier independent, African American-owned and operated Christian media company.” From 1985-1987 he served as writer/editor of *Direction Student & Direction Teacher* (Adult Sunday School Literature), and was the inaugural writer/editor for *Young Adult Today & Young Adult Today Leader* (Sunday School Literature for African American young adults ages 17-24).
- Rev. Dr. McCray contributed an essay to the first edition of *The Journal of African American Christian Thought* (Spring 2009). “Our Present Motivation: ‘Black Evangelical’—The Identity Issue,” was published by The Obsidian Society (Pasadena, CA), in conjunction with Urban Ministries Inc (Calumet City, IL).
- For Father’s Day 2009, Rev. Dr. McCray wrote “*Dad Defines Fatherhood: The Senior Single Father-headed Home of Sidney McCray, Sr.—Reflections of a Satisfied Son.*”
- The literary works of Rev. Dr. McCray have contributed substantially to the development of Black evangelical Christian thought since 1979. His early vocational objective was to develop a holistic curriculum of Biblical Christian Black education to strengthen Black American people, and to share the message in this literature with as many people as possible.

Leader

- **Nonprofit Service**
- Besides his experience in business, Rev. Dr. McCray has governance, leadership, and management experience in several nonprofit organizations.
- He has held the presidential office of the **National Black Evangelical Association (NBEA)** since 1999. He joined the organization in 1971, and has served in various positions on the board, executive committee, and administration.
- From 1997-2001 he worked for the *House of Daniel, Outreach Mission Christian Center* (Chicago). The 24/7 shelter offered a full range of services for homeless men. During his tenure, McCray served as Board Chair, President/CEO, and acting Executive Director. The Lord used him to save the mission from collapse.
- He serves on the *President’s Institute of The Summit Group* (a roundtable of African American executives; Newark, NJ).
- He is the *Co-Chairperson Emeritus* of the *National Black Christian Students Conference* (1974), NBEA’s ministry to Black students in college and high school (Chicago).

Educated

- **Degrees**

- **Double major: Bachelor of Arts in Biblical Studies and Christian Education, Cum Laude**, Trinity International University (formerly Trinity College, 1974)
- Rev. Dr. McCray was the first African-American student to matriculate and graduate from Trinity College in four consecutive years.
- **Honorary Doctor of Divinity**, Chicago Baptist Institute (1997)
- The degree was conferred for Biblical research, scholarship, and propagation of the Black and African presence in the Scriptures.
- **Informally Mentored**
- Informally, Rev. Dr. McCray considers it a blessing to have been educated and mentored in Black and Christian studies, ministry, and sacred character and lifestyle by several of the Lord's eminent scholars and servants in the African American community. By the grace of God, his life, ministry, and writings reflect the heritage of these elders, and he stands on their shoulders to reach his present generation.
- **Independent/Guided Study**
- Over the years, the independent and guided studies of Rev. Dr. McCray have continued as evinced through sermon manuscripts, writings, publications, and formal lectures.
- In 2006/7, Rev. Dr. McCray successfully completed the *Ministerial Formation Certification Agency* course requirements, and the Illiana Classis examination for ordination into the Reformed Church of America via the Approved Alternate Route.

***Koinonia-izing* • Koinonia-izing the Church**

- With love and commitment, Rev. Dr. McCray serves the people of God, especially in their local congregations. Since 2003, he has felt the call to nurture the spiritual and social "Koinonia" of the Church. **"Koinonia" is the "union, communion, unity, and fellowship community" that the Holy Spirit effects in the Body of Christ.** Believers who practice the biblical "one another" relations flesh-out the Koinonia in the Church. Key essential and transforming elements of Koinonia in the Church are reciprocal agape-love, gifted-service, mutual submission, and instruction of one other. One resulting fruit of practicing this doctrine is the manifestation of "peace" between members of the Church. Rev. Dr. McCray teaches Koinonia with clarity, insight, and passion.

***Gospelizing* • Gospelizing the Poor, in the Marketplace**

- The primary desire of Rev. Dr. McCray is to equip the Church to do holistic gospelizing ministry. In 2002 he wrote, *Gospelizers! Terrorized and Intensified*. This message challenges our churches to respond to all forms of terror, both in the U.S. and abroad, by intensifying their witness for Christ as holistic "Good News messengers."
- From August 2004 to May of 2009, the McCrays have operated Jubilee Market—a small neighborhood convenience store and fast-food restaurant located in Chicago's Near West community. Jubilee became their setting for "**gospelizing in the marketplace.**" They provided a vital mission-service of food supply for some of "the least of these" their customers who frequented the store. Moreover, many children, seniors, homeless, recoverers, and others have received prayer, salvation, healing, God's Word, help, hope, and a haven of peace at Jubilee. Due to the economic recession of 2008, the store closed its operations. Yet, the dream still lingers.

Africanizing

- **Africanizing Biblical Teaching**
- ***The Black Presence in the Bible*** and ***The Black Presence in the Bible and the Table of Nations*** (both 1990) are a celebrated and inter-nationally recognized two-volume series. This pioneering work opened the floodgates for thousands to gain a deeper appreciation of the Black and African identity of biblical persons and nations. Spreading this message nationally and internationally, Rev. Dr. McCray has received numerous distinctions, citations and awards for his studies in this area. He has lectured both in Ghana, West Africa (1993), and in England (1994) on this important subject. *The idea of the Black presence in the Bible is a truth whose time is now. And Rev. Dr. McCray is a man whose voice rings true.*
- For over four decades Rev. Dr. McCray has presented progressive seminars designed to uplift especially African American people and the Christian Church. He has educated countless believers on topics related to the study of ancient Black and African persons and nations as they are viewed through the windows of Biblical literature, history and culture. His research into this oft-neglected, but vital, body of information stems back into the early 70's. Both the writings and lectures of Rev. Dr. McCray have made a great impact in shaping the community's approach toward understanding the ethnic composition of numerous personalities and peoples of biblical history and experience. As a result of his seminars and writings, countless men and women from all walks of life have gained a renewed respect and appreciation of Africa and her peoples in the sacred literature of the Church.
- Rev. Dr. McCray further contributed to his studies in this area with *The Black Presence and The Passion: A Christ-centered*

Historical Identity Response of a Gospelizer (2004, 2008). As a critique to Gibson's film, *The Passion of the Christ*, McCray's work explores the black/African presence in the world of Christ as found especially in the Gospels.

Married

• **Family**

- Since 1975, McCray has been married to Thelma Lowe McCray (Rev. Dr.).
- They have two God-Children, and other "children" who informally claim them as their own.

Accessible

• **Contact**

- Rev. Dr. McCray is available for teaching, preaching, ministerial and church consultation, strategic guidance, counseling, and media interviews.
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