

REDEEMING THE TIME

"Redeeming the time, because the days are evil" (Ephesians 5:16).

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THE GLORY OF GOD Revealed in Jesus Christ

BY JONATHAN SMITH

This message was delivered on June 23, 2023, at the 21st World Congress of the International Council of Christian Churches, in Collingswood, NJ, USA.

Let us turn in our Bibles to John 1. I am thrilled to be here at the 21st World Congress of the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC). I rejoice in the stand that the ICCC takes "for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ!"

Recently, in browsing through some old documents that belong to my father, I discovered a picture taken at the ICCC Third Plenary Congress at Faith Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. My parents, Richard and Helen Smith, were there

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1948 - 2023

POSITION STATEMENT:

Music in the Life of the Christian and the Church

One of the greatest gifts God has given to mankind is music. From Genesis to Revelation we see that music was used in the daily lives of the people and in the worship of God.

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midst of the church in Hebrews 2:12 (quoting Psalm 22:22).

The highest use of music is in the worship and praise of God

The commands to praise the Lord and worship him with instruments, and the many examples recorded are ubiquitous throughout the Scriptures. Praising the Lord through song is a daily and lifelong action of the believer in his private life and in worship. David writes in Psalm 146:1-2: “Praise ye the LORD. Praise the LORD, O my soul. While I live will I praise the LORD: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.” Psalm 150 calls on all instruments and all voices — everything that hath breath — to praise the Lord! Psalm 30:4 tells us to “Sing unto the Lord, O ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.”

The words of the Psalms and other portions of Scripture have held a high position in the hymnody of the people of God throughout the history of the church. Certainly the words of Scripture, sung in proper context are the very Word of God, and can bear no improvement. In addition, many hymns have been written by devout Christians through the ages, and have been a blessing to the church. However, all Christians and church leaders must be scrupulous to examine the words of the songs and hymns chosen to make sure they are true to the Bible, and meet the proper purpose in the worship of God.

In the New Testament, Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16-17 are key passages. We see there that when we worship God we are to “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom.” All believers are to join in singing “psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs” when we gather together in worship. However, it is not only the words that matter. Our singing is not just a ritual, but must come from pure hearts that love God, and it is to be directed to the Lord.

God despises singing and supposed worship if it is not truly coming from

MUSIC IN THE LIFE OF THE CHRISTIAN AND THE CHURCH

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With the secularization of our age, the continual advancement in new technologies, our interconnectedness on social media platforms that are not friendly to Bible-believing Christianity, and the failure of many to recognize the importance Scripture places upon godly music, Christian churches and families must be on guard as never before. We must look carefully at the lyrics of our hymns and songs, as well as the instrumentation, melodies, harmonies, rhythms, and other characteristics of the music itself.

God ordained the use of music in the daily lives of His people

For the Children of Israel, music was used in their daily lives for: joyful occasions (1 Chronicles 13:8), the feasts and festivals (Psalm 81:3), for the offering of sacrifices (2 Chronicles 29:27), calling men to battle (Numbers 10:9), celebrating victory (Exodus 15:1; Revelation 15:3); mourning and lamentation (Jeremiah 9:20), to announce important events (Joel 2:1), to call the people together (Numbers 10:2), and for many other purposes. Even music for proper enjoyment and rest must be considered. Very shortly after giving us the account of creation, Moses tells us

in Genesis 4:21 that Jubal “was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ.” Music has played a role in the lives of all cultures and civilizations since Creation.

**“Praise ye the LORD.
Praise the LORD, O my soul.
While I live will I praise
the LORD: I will sing
praises unto my God
while I have any being.”**

Psalm 146:1-2

Some of the great events in Biblical history are marked by music. Moses and Miriam sang after Israel passed through the Red Sea (Exodus 15), trumpets sounded at the laying of the foundation of the temple (Ezra 3:10-11), Paul and Silas sang while imprisoned in the Philippian jail (Acts 16:25), the trumpet shall sound when Christ comes and Christians of every age are caught up together to be with Him in the air (Matthew 24:31), the seven trumpets played by the angels in the book of Revelation will announce great events in the last days (Revelation 8-11), the 24 elders will play upon their harps in heaven before the Throne of God (Revelation 5:8). Even one of the official feasts of the Jews was the Feast of Trumpets. And, Jesus Christ Himself sang a hymn with the disciples in the upper room (Matthew 26:30), and is said to sing in the

a heart obedient to God's Word, and dedicated to His service. In Amos 5:23, God told the disobedient Children of Israel that He rejected their sacrifices. He further told them: "Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols."

Motion in worship

The Old Testament speaks of dancing for joy in worship on several occasions. The New Testament is silent concerning this. Movement certainly is not bad in itself, and is employed by many faithful churches around the world. No matter what culture or practice we have, our guiding principle must always be what we read in Psalm 96:9: "O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth." If movement is in any way sensual or lewd, or if it mimics actions seen in nightclubs, bars, and any other ungodly circumstance, it makes a mockery of true worship of God, and is in opposition to such passages as 2 Timothy 2:22: "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure

God despises singing and supposed worship if it is not truly coming from a heart obedient to God's Word, and dedicated to His service. In Amos 5:23, God told the disobedient Children of Israel that He rejected their sacrifices. He further told them: "Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols."

heart." We also are commanded to "Love not the world, neither the things which are of the world ..." (1 John 2:15).

Also, "performances," where attention is drawn to the musicians, rather

than to Christ, must be guarded against. Sadly, what our young people see on television and social media, presenting itself as worship, is often just a production to keep people entertained — geared to making sure people continue to watch the show. The wide availability of keyboards, with sounds and rhythms of worldly styles of music, and distracting novel sounds, should come with some instruction about the purpose of worship to those who will be playing them. This applies also to the great availability of musical sound tracks often played over loudspeaker systems. Biblical wisdom, discretion and temperance should be used concerning the use of these modern technological aids.

Actions and practices which come from the worldly society around us, particularly that widely associated with the practices of the unregenerate, or modern emotional "worship" not rooted in Biblical faithfulness, must be rejected. We cannot preach solid Biblical truth, and use music and practices which contradict it. A pastor must use godly wisdom, gained from his diligent study of God's Word and walk with the Lord, to lead his flock in these matters.

Music for Christian instruction

The Bible many times uses music for the instruction and warning of God's people. When Moses lay upon his deathbed, God directed him to write a song, and teach it unto the Children of Israel: "Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel" (Deuteronomy 31:19). It was for their present instruction and to convict them in the years ahead.

In Psalm 107:22, we are told: "and declare his works with rejoicing [singing]." Such music refreshes and renews our knowledge of God's glory, in all its aspects, and is frequently employed directly in our praise of God.

In the New Testament, Paul wrote to the Colossian church that they should be active in "teaching and admonishing

one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16).

Music used for evil purposes

Any good thing that God has created can be perverted by Satan for evil purposes. Daniel 3:7 shows music involved in worshipping a false idol:

If movement is in any way sensual or lewd, or if it mimics actions seen in nightclubs, bars, and any other ungodly circumstance, it makes a mockery of true worship of God, and is in opposition to such passages as 2 Timothy 2:22: "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart."

"Therefore at that time, when all the people heard the sound of the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, and all kinds of musick, all the people, the nations, and the languages, fell down and worshipped the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar the king had set up." David lamented in Psalm 69:12: "They that sit in the gate speak against me; and I was the song of the drunkards." Music was used for worship in pagan temples, and for various lewd and wicked purposes — much as it is today.

From church history we learn that during the Arian controversy in the fourth century AD, the Alexandrian deacon Athanasius wrote that this heresy spread so quickly across the Roman empire because Arius had put "his wretched words of irreligion into dissolute and loose metres." People's remembrance of the false teaching was magnified because it was wedded to music.

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Is any kind of music acceptable in the worship of God and in the life of the believer?

Most will agree that the words to our songs are extremely important. However, some have taken the mistaken belief that the music itself is amoral — that what kind of music one chooses to use is perfectly fine at any time, and is completely detached from of any moral judgment or constraints. When rock and other worldly forms of music began to come into the western churches in the 1960s, there was much opposition in many quarters. The only argument that the advocates of this music could muster was to claim that

music without words is “amoral.” However, this faulty assertion has been uniformly denied, with few exceptions, throughout history.

John Calvin wrote: “There is hardly anything in the world with more power to turn or bend, this way and that, the morals of men.... It has a secret power to move our hearts in one way or another. Wherefore we must be the more diligent in ruling it in such a manner that it may be useful to us and in no way pernicious.”

Martin Luther, in the preface to the Wittenberg Hymnal of 1524, wrote: “These songs ... give the young ... something to wean them away from love ballads and carnal songs and teach them something of value in their place.”

Puritan commentator Matthew Henry observes: “[Those who listen to musical instruments] should feel themselves obliged to preserve them always

Make sure that all practices which accompany music in the church are godly, and will indeed bring praise to God. Worship should not place attention on the actions of man, but rather should be focused on the glory of God.

1 Chronicles 25:1-3, Jeduthin and his sons played “with a harp, to give thanks and to praise the Lord.” Psalm 98:6 tells us: “With trumpets and sound of cornet make a joyful noise before the LORD, the King.”

When Moses came down from Mount Sinai, he and Joshua heard a loud noise in the camp, which Moses discerned to be music. Joshua and Moses discussed the meaning found in the music, apart from the words (Exodus 32:17). They determined just from the sound that this music reflected evil purposes.

In 1 Samuel 16:23 we read that, when an evil spirit came upon King Saul, David played his harp before the King. The result was that: “Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.”

Paul tells us in the New Testament that a trumpet must be played in a way that evokes confidence and authority. He also indicates that even the timbre of the different instruments, and the characteristics of the music played, are quite important. In 1 Corinthians 14:7-8, he writes: “And even things without life giving sound, whether pipe or harp, except they give a distinction in the sounds, how shall it be known what is piped or harped? For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?”

Music of itself does carry meaning. For example, the tune for the hymn “A Mighty Fortress Is Our God,” is strong and solid — like a “foundation,” like “a bulwark never failing.” Whereas, “Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart,” is



It is clear from Scripture that instruments used, and the melodies played, have great significance and elicit specific thoughts and emotions, apart from any lyrics. The trumpets of victory were certainly distinguished from the harps used in mourning.

free from any thing that savours of immorality or profaneness.”

It is clear from Scripture that instruments used, and the melodies played, have great significance and elicit specific thoughts and emotions, apart from any lyrics. The trumpets of victory were certainly distinguished from the harps used in mourning.

There are many occasions where instrumental music by itself carried a message in the worship of God. In

a prayer, which is sung to music which reflects quietness, humility and spiritual introspection in a plea for God's help. The tune for "Onward Christian Soldiers" is in a time signature which matches the common pattern of soldiers when they are marching.

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things" (Philippians 4:8).

Conclusion

The International Council of Christian Churches, meeting in its 21st World Congress, June 21-28, 2023, in Collingswood, NJ, USA, calls on Bible believing Christians everywhere to:

1. examine the music they listen to in their daily lives in the light of all that the Bible teaches about godliness and holiness. 1 Peter 1:15: "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation."
2. only listen to music which will bring glory to God. Colossians 3:17: "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks

Just as a faithful pastor does not compromise the preaching of the Word in order to attract an audience, neither should the motive for using any music be merely to attract the young people, or for other pragmatic reasons.

to God and the Father by him." One of the reasons many churches are using poor music, is because young people are not being taught at home what is good and wholesome. Rather, they are

allowed to consume a steady diet of music which is carnal and sensual.

3. study music, in light of the Word of God, to be able to discern that which is worldly, trite, sentimental and mundane, from that which is excellent, and a worthy vehicle for conveying godly words.

The International Council of Christian Churches further calls on all Bible-believing churches to:

1. establish principles of music in worship which will lead the congregation in genuine praise to God.
2. choose styles of music which in any particular country or culture are not associated with sin, worldliness, and popular secular artists. Just as a faithful pastor does not compromise the preaching of the Word in order to attract an audience, neither should the motive for using any music be merely to attract the young people, or for other pragmatic reasons.
3. choose music which serves as the best vehicle possible for conveying the message of any given hymn or song. God has given Christians around the world a rich and diverse musical heritage. What might be best in one area of the world may not convey the same message in another place. However, all of these things must be taken into account, no matter what the musical norms may be in any given place.
4. make sure that all practices which accompany music in the church are godly, and will indeed bring praise to God. Worship should not place attention on the actions of man, but rather should be focused on the glory of God. Pastors and other church leaders should be involved in directing all aspects of corporate worship. Those involved with the music of the church should be marked

by godliness. Musical decisions should not be left to the discretion of the carnal or spiritually immature.

3. train young people in the churches to sing the best hymns and Christian music at their disposal. The judgment concerning this may be quite different in various

All music should be well crafted. It may be very simple, but must not be trite and superficial. It may be complex, but must not be pretentious or confusing. It should be beautiful, but not geared toward entertainment and carnal desires. It can include great variety, but it must always be appropriate and subservient to the message to be conveyed.

areas of the world. Like everything in life, it is usually best to dispose of the mediocre and inferior, in favor of that which is best. All music should be well crafted. It may be very simple, but must not be trite and superficial. It may be complex, but must not be pretentious or confusing. It should be beautiful, but not geared toward entertainment and carnal desires. It can include great variety, but it must always be appropriate and subservient to the message to be conveyed.

May all things be done to the glory of God alone. *Soli Deo Gloria!* •

"O sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth. Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people."

Psalm 96:1-3



RESOLUTION:

Gender and Sexuality

WHEREAS, God created all human beings as either male or female at the time of Creation (Genesis 1:27); and

WHEREAS, God gave very distinct roles to men and women, in every aspect of life, from the time of Creation (Genesis 2:18); and

WHEREAS, God ordained marriage between one man and one woman, for life, as the only permissible arrangement in His good plan (Genesis 2:24; Mark 10:7-9); and

WHEREAS, adultery (Exodus 20:14), fornication (Colossians 3:5), homosexuality (Romans 1:27), polygamy (Matthew 19:4-6), and all other forms of sexual perversion are a sin against God;

WHEREAS, through Adam's fall, sin passed upon all men, and we are all "desperately wicked" (Jeremiah 17:9);



THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the International Council of Christian Churches rejects such sinful aberrations as our society increasingly presents as good and normal. These include:

1. the destruction of all roles the Bible reserves for men and women respectively, such as fatherhood, motherhood, who is the head of the family, who may be ministers and other officers in the church, etc.;
2. endeavors to blur the God-ordained differences between masculinity and femininity;

God ordained marriage between one man and one woman, for life, as the only permissible arrangement in His good plan (Genesis 2:24; Mark 10:7-9).

3. all attempts to change ("resassign") persons from the sex to which God created them to the opposite sex, by means of surgery, medication, or any other means;
4. the claims that there are many genders, with a wide number of variations on the spectrum;
5. the introduction of a multitude of new "pronouns," with the demand, sometimes even by force of government, that everyone must learn these words and use them according to the dictates of each individual, no matter how untruthful these pronouns may be;
6. all forms of sexual practice outside the Biblical position that marriage is between one man and one woman, as long as they both shall live.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 tells us: "Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with man-

kind, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God." These verses tell us that just as extortion, stealing, alcoholism, etc., are sins, so also are all deviations from how God created the sexes, and all perversions of sexuality.

Yet, Paul tells us concerning those who have come in repentance to Christ for salvation: "And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God" (1 Corinthians 6:11). The Bible gives us the wonderful promise that: "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9). We call upon all who have been captured by these and other sins to come in repentance to Christ, forsake their sins, and look to Him for salvation.

FURTHERMORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the International Council of Christian Churches, meeting in its 21st World Congress, June 21-28, 2023, in Collingswood, NJ, USA, calls on Christians to reject the evil and unbiblical philosophy and agendas pressed upon us by many in today's world, and to study the Bible anew to bring our lives and our churches into complete conformity to all that the Bible teaches on these matters. •

REDEEMING THE TIME

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"Sing unto the Lord, bless his name; shew forth his salvation from day to day."



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Declare his glory among the heathen, his wonders among all people. – Psalm 96:2-3



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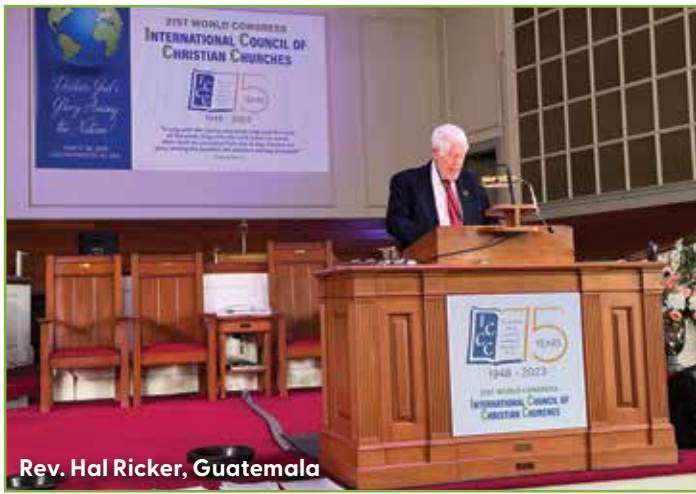
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The Christian Flag



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HAPPY 100TH!

Congratulations to the Rev. Hal Ricker on his 100th Birthday! Pastor Ricker has been a missionary under The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions for an amazing 70 years! He is also the Second Vice President of the International Council of Christian Churches. A surprise birthday party was held for him during the ICCC Congress. He is here pictured with son Stephen, wife Juanita, and sons Samuel and Joshua.



THE GLORY OF GOD REVEALED IN JESUS CHRIST

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on their honeymoon in August 1954. About four months ago, my mother went home to glory, and my father is now 93 years of age. But Jesus Christ is “the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.”

My assigned theme tonight is one of the greatest subjects in the world: “The Glory of God Revealed in Jesus Christ.” The founder and president of both the ACCC and the ICCC, Dr. Carl McIntire, spoke these words in August 1958 at the 4th Plenary Congress in Brazil: “The Christ of the ICCC is revealed to us only in the Scriptures. No name on this earth is so abused, so misused, and so attacked as the name of Jesus Christ. Satan and his legions intensify their attack upon Him as the age comes to a close.

“The name of Christ today is used to cover all manner of unbelief concerning His person and work. The name of Christ is used on the banner of apostasy. Even the philosophy of Karl Marx is called the Gospel of Jesus Christ. God’s people must constantly emphasize that it is the Christ of the Scriptures to whom we must appeal. The ecumenical movement uses His name. It even speaks of His deity, but it leaves the interpretation and understanding of that deity to all manner of ‘thieves and robbers.’ Against this insult and this blasphemy to the name of our Savior, the ICCC bears testimony to the Christ of the Scriptures.”

Amen! It is in the holy Scriptures that we find the glory of God revealed in Jesus Christ! Our text this evening is found in John 1:14. The very first verse of this chapter states: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.” Then, in verse 14, we read: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

As we contemplate the glory of God, it is somewhat like standing at the base of Mount Everest and staring up the 29,032 feet (or 8,848.9 meters), in sheer awe of the vastness, the beauty, and the splendor of that which rises magnificently above and beyond us. And yet there have been over 4,000 who have climbed to the summit of Mount Everest. Some 310 people have died trying to climb that great mountain.

But when we consider the glory of God, God’s glory ascends to an infinitely greater height than Mount Ever-

The glory that distinguished Jesus was not that He was a good man, a moral example, or a notable teacher. And His glory is not as some claim that He was the greatest man who ever lived. No! Jesus possessed the very glory of God, because He was and is God manifest in the flesh!

est. And there is no one on earth who can scale that mountain and live to tell about it.

We might think we want to behold the glory of God and to live in his very presence. In Exodus 33:18, Moses earnestly petitioned the Lord, “I beseech Thee, shew me Thy glory.” The Lord responded in Exodus 33:19-23, “And he said, I will make all my goodness pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the LORD before thee; and will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy. And he said, Thou canst not see my face: for there shall no man see me, and live. And the Lord said, Behold, there is a place by me, and thou shalt stand upon a rock: And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by: And I will take away mine hand, and thou shalt see my back parts: but my face shall not be seen.”

The glory of God is so great that, as sinful human flesh, we cannot see God face to face and live. In Revelation 1, the Apostle John, the disciple whom Jesus loved, saw the resurrected, glorified, exalted Lord of Glory and he fell at His feet as dead! In our weakness and frailty we struggle to comprehend His glory.

Beyond that, how can a mere mortal begin to communicate to others the greatness of this Lord of Glory? The songwriter wrote, “O could I speak the matchless worth, O could I sound the glories forth which in my Saviour shine.” It is my prayer that God will open our hearts and minds to see a glimpse of the glory of God revealed in Jesus Christ.

When we speak of the glory of God, we are talking about the sum total of all the perfections of His Person and Work. His glory speaks of the manifestation of His holy character. Your glory is what sets you apart from others.

For example, Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt is regarded as the fastest man on the planet. In 2009, he set the 100 meter world record, running it in 9.58 seconds. Athletes from all over the world are constantly trying to run faster, jump higher, or lift more than anyone else in the world.

Man ever strives to achieve some kind of glory, in business and wealth, in power and position, in skill and achievement. The glory of God is what sets Him apart infinitely above all others in all of His perfections.

Here in our text, John 1:14, we see the glory of God revealed in Jesus Christ. We see here:

1. The Glory of Christ’s Deity

Here, John, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, gives this title of Deity to Jesus Christ. He is called the Word. The Greek word is *logos*.

Greek philosophers used this term to speak of what they called Reason, a guiding force or principle that orders and directs the world. But the Bible uses this word to speak of expression

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— communication. God gave to us the written Word which reveals to us the Living Word: Jesus Christ our Saviour.

In John 1:1, we see clearly that the Word was God! “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” The Word was eternal because, in the beginning, the Word already existed.

The Word then is identified with Jehovah, the one and only, true and living God — the One who alone is self-existent, the Great “I Am” of Exodus 3:14. This is the glory of the One called the Word: He is the eternal Son of God.

Verse 1 indicates that He is in some way distinguished from the Father because “the Word was with God.” At the same time, He is equal with the Father, because “the Word was God.”

John 1:2 reveals that the Son has simultaneously co-existed with the Father from all eternity past. John 1:3 reveals that the One called the Word is none other than the Creator of the universe: “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

It is the Word spoken of in Genesis 1:1: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.” That was Christ doing what no one else can do. Genesis 1:3: “And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.” Again and again in Genesis 1 we see the phrase, “And God said.” It was the Word who literally spoke the world into existence. He created everything out of nothing. Only God can do that!

We see His handiwork in creation all around us: “The heavens declare the glory of God” (Psalm 19:1). Let us never forget that the beauty and variety we see in creation all came from Christ, the Word! He is God! This is the irrefutable testimony of the holy Scriptures, and the common confession of true believers in Christ throughout the world: Jesus Christ is God.

That truth of the Deity of Christ has constantly been attacked and maligned by those who are energized by Satan and his demons. The atheists deny this truth, the evolutionists deny it, the cults deny it, the liberal theologians deny it. But, those who have been saved by God’s grace know for sure that the Word is God!

The Deity of Christ and the Virgin Birth of Christ were truths upon which the ICCC was founded in 1948. We take our stand with Peter of old when chal-

We can speak of the absolute truth and purity of His life – who never sinned in thought, in word, or in deed. He was “holy, harmless, undefiled,” and “separate from sinners” (Hebrews 7:26). Our Lord was perfect: in love, in joy, in peace, in courage, in faith, in strength, in humility.

lenged by the Lord, “Will ye also go away? Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God” (John 6:67b-69). What Glory we see in Jesus Christ as the very Word of God!

2. The Glory of Christ’s Humility

“And the Word was made flesh.” O wonder of wonders, how could this be? The Lord of glory was made flesh! What an astonishing truth this is! Again the Greek philosophers spoke of the *logos* as impersonal, detached, and unapproachable, with no care or concern for the trials and sufferings of humanity.

Oh how different is the true and eternal Word! “And the Word was made flesh.” In love, the Word came down to us to reveal to us everything that God is. He stooped, He condescended to us in our weakness, to identify Himself with us. “The Word was made flesh.”

There was a vast difference, infinitely greater than the height of Mount Everest, between what He was in the beginning, and what He became at His incarnation! He was eternal God, Creator and Lord of heaven and earth. But He humbled Himself, as Philippians 2 says, “and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men.”

Hebrews 2 tells us He was “made like unto His brethren,” and was “partaker of flesh and blood.” 1 Timothy 3:16 says, “great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh!” What an amazing thing this is: that eternal, Almighty God would humble Himself and clothe Himself in the dirt of human flesh. He was born of a virgin, in abject poverty. He came into the world as a baby. He ate, He drank, He grew, He learned, He wept, He was hungry, and thirsty, and weary, “a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.”

To all outward appearances, He appeared a man, but He was and is fully man and fully God. In His “real and proper humanity” (see the ICCC doctrinal statement), He “was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). He never fell short of the glory of God. He fully kept God’s law and thus displayed God’s glory by His active obedience. In His humanity, His glory was veiled, and yet His glory was there nonetheless. The Psalmist wrote: “For Thou has made Him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned Him with glory and honour” (Psalm 8:5, Hebrews 2:9).

3. The Glory of Christ’s Company

“And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us.” God, in Christ, came down to live with man! He is Immanuel, “God with us”! The word “dwelt” here means to tabernacle or pitch a tent.

There is a reference here to the Shekinah Glory of God from the Old Testament. The presence of God was manifested in the holy of holies in the tabernacle. And truly, the eternal Son of God is seen throughout the Old Testament. Jesus said “Search the Scrip-



tures for in them ye think ye have eternal life; and they are they which testify of me” (John 5:39).

In Isaiah 6, the prophet Isaiah saw the Lord, high and lifted up in the temple. The holy angels proclaimed His praise: “Holy, Holy, Holy, is the Lord of Hosts: the whole earth is full of His glory.” And, in John 12:41, John tells us that Isaiah saw His glory and spake of Him. In the context of John 12, the One Isaiah saw in glory was none other than Jesus Christ, the Son of God. This great and glorious God became flesh and dwelt among us!

In His incarnation, God identified Himself with us. Since Christ experienced life on earth as a man, He now sympathizes with us. “We have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities” (Hebrews 4:15). What fellowship we can have with our Saviour who knows what it is to be what we are, for He lived among us!

In the Old Testament, the Tabernacle was the dwelling place of God, the place where the glory of God was revealed. And, so now Christ, in dwelling among us, was the revelation of God’s glory to us. God is not afar off. He is not watching from a distance. He has come very near in the blessed Person of His Son.

4. The Glory of Christ’s Ministry

“And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His

glory.” We have likened viewing the glory of God to the heights of Mount Everest. We could never scale the mountain of God’s glory. But “the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory!” Christ came down to us and revealed God’s glory.

In that Old Testament tabernacle, the glory of God could be seen only by the High Priest, and only once a year on the Day of Atonement. But now, in the incarnation, God’s glory can be seen in Christ — “We beheld.” “We” here speaks of John and the other apostles,

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as well as other eyewitnesses of Christ, who not only saw Him physically, but believed in Him. The word “beheld” here speaks of gazing intently, observing closely. It refers to what they literally saw, accompanied with the spiritual perception given to them by God.

The disciples were His constant companions for some three and a half years of His earthly ministry. John says, “we beheld Him.” They saw the glory

of His mighty works. They were there at the wedding in Cana of Galilee when He turned water to wine. John 2:11 says, “This beginning of miracles did Jesus in Cana of Galilee, and manifested forth his glory; and his disciples believed on him.” Again and again they saw His glory. They watched Him do what no one else can do. They were with Him in the storm that raged on the Sea of Galilee, but Jesus said, “Peace, be still,” and immediately the winds and the waves obeyed Him. They saw Him heal the sick, and make the lame to walk, and give sight to the blind. He healed lepers and cast out demons. He said to the paralytic, “Take up thy bed and walk,” and the man was healed. He fed the 5,000 with five loaves and two small fishes. He walked on the water in the midst of the storm.

They saw His omniscience: He said to Nathaniel, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree I saw you.” They saw His power to heal even those who but touched the hem of His garment. There on the Mount of Transfiguration, Peter, James, and John, saw the unveiling of His glory: His face shone like the sun, and His garments were as white as the light!

Peter wrote this testimony about that event in 2 Peter 1:16-18: “For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.”

Peter goes on to say, in verse 19, that “we have a more sure word of prophecy” in the Word of God. Why is it a more sure Word of prophecy? Because God’s Word is the full revelation of Jesus Christ; and Jesus Christ is the full revelation of God the Father! Jesus

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THE GLORY OF GOD REVEALED IN JESUS CHRIST

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said, “He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father” (John 14:9).

“We beheld His glory.” They saw Him raise the dead to life. Moments before He raised Lazarus, He said to Martha, in John 11:40, “Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?” When Jesus called Lazarus out of that grave He demonstrated that He can do what only God can do: raise the dead to life!

The glory that distinguished Jesus was not that He was a good man, a moral example, or a notable teacher. And His glory is not as some claim that He was the greatest man who ever lived. No! Jesus possessed the very glory of God, because He was and is God manifest in the flesh!

In the Old Testament, the Tabernacle was the dwelling place of God, the place where the glory of God was revealed. And, so now Christ, in dwelling among us, was the revelation of God’s glory to us. God is not afar off. He is not watching from a distance. He has come very near in the blessed Person of His Son.

In our text, we observe the uniqueness of the glory that we see in Christ. “And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father.” Only begotten here, does not in any way indicate Jesus’ origins, but rather it signifies that Jesus Christ was God’s unique Son, His incomparable Son. Only begotten implies that unique, eternal, Sonship of Christ. You see we can be the sons of God by faith in Him (John 1:12), but Christ is the only begotten Son.

5. The Fullness of Christ’s Glory

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.” This One called the Word, whose glory we behold, is “full of grace and truth.” In Christ is fullness of glory. In His Person and Work, the very attributes of God were displayed.

In Exodus 34, when God displayed His glory to Moses in answer to Moses’ prayer, He hid him in the cleft of the rock. Exodus 34:6 says “And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth.”

In revealing His glory, God declared His moral attributes to Moses, and so also in our text we find that Christ was full of the grace and truth of God. Grace is that unmerited, undeserved favor of God. The Psalmist said “Grace is poured into thy lips,” and as Jesus preached and taught the truths of God, they “wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth” (Luke 4:22).

To the leper, He said, “Be thou clean”; to the paralytic, “Thy sins are forgiven thee”; to the demons in the maniac of Gadara, “Come out of him.” In grace, our blessed Lord proclaimed liberty to the captives. In grace we see His boundless compassion for sinners. He came “to seek and to save that which was lost.” But, He was also full of truth.

In truth, He spoke with the authority of God. In the courage of truth He confronted those who were living in the lies of hypocrisy. In the zeal of truth, He cleansed the temple and drove out those who had made a business out of worship. In truth and wisdom He answered all His adversaries. He always spoke the truth because He is the God who cannot lie!

He boldly proclaimed the truth of who He was: He was the Christ, the promised Messiah. He was the Son of Man from Daniel 7:14. He said, “I am

the bread of life,” “I am the light of the world,” “I am the Good Shepherd.”

He called men to believe the truth that He had come down from heaven, and that He was sent to do His Father’s will. He said, “I do always those things that please him” (John 8:29).

He called God His Father, making Himself equal with God. He called people to believe in Him and promised eternal life to those who did. He claimed that the Father has committed all judgment unto Him.

He warned of the fires of hell, and the judgment of God on those who do not believe. He said, “If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins” (John 8:24). He said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me” (John 14:6).

We can speak of the absolute truth and purity of His life — who never sinned in thought, in word, or in deed. He was “holy, harmless, undefiled,” and “separate from sinners” (Hebrews 7:26). Our Lord was perfect: in love, in joy, in peace, in courage, in faith, in strength, in humility.

Contrast Between Christ’s Glory and our sinfulness

We see the glory of Christ in contrast to what we are. We do not gather here today proclaiming any kind of goodness of the world. We gather here from all over the world, not with any misapprehensions of somehow representing the best in the world. We come together as believers in Christ, acknowledging the truth of God’s Word: “For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).

In contrast to our sinful, human depravity, we proclaim the glory of Christ. As the hymnist wrote, “False and full of sin am I, Thou art full of truth and grace.” But oh what glory it is to see the fullness of grace and truth in His work of redemption!

Even in His death, we behold His glory. His was not the death of a criminal, nor the death of a martyr. He was “the Lamb of God which taketh away

the sin of the world"! On the cross, He took our sins upon Himself. He fully satisfied the wrath of God against our sin. "For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him" (2 Corinthians 5:21). On the cross, He dealt the fatal blow to Satan's head. The veil in the temple was rent in two from top to bottom, indicating that the way was now opened into the very presence of God!

1 Corinthians 2:8 reveals that if the princes of this world would have known the wisdom of God in Christ, "they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." What a paradox that is. How do you crucify the Lord of glory? If you have one who is a lord, a mighty king, a powerful ruler, and you crucify him, he's not lord anymore. He's dead. He rules over nothing. And yet here is One, who though He was crucified, is now called the Lord of glory.

The world says that such a thing is impossible, but the reality is that Christ is the Lord of glory because of His resurrection from the dead. The world that hated and rejected Him did not know the Scriptures nor the power of God. They didn't know that the largest stone in the world could not keep Him in the tomb. All the armies of the world could never keep Him in the grave. "All the demons of hell could not hold Him in the grave." He is risen! He is the Lord of Glory! 1 Peter 1:21 says that God "raised Him up from the dead, and gave Him glory."

Listen folks, there is glory that He had with the Father before the world began (John 17:5). There is glory that is intrinsically His as Jehovah. And then there is even more glory given to Him by virtue of His crucifixion and resurrection from the dead for our salvation.

Time would fail us to speak of the glory of His ascension, the glory of His exaltation at the Father's right hand, and the glory of His intercession for sinners. Hebrews 1:3 sums it up: "Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his

Continue on my brothers and sisters in Christ! We are called to the praise of His glory. Stand true for Him unto that great day when we shall at last be gathered together around the throne of God, a multitude which no man can number out of every kindred, tribe, and nation. We shall with one heart, and one voice sing eternal praises to our Savior and King, Jesus Christ the Lord! "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing" (Revelation 5:12).

power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high."

And dear ones, we have the promise of Christ that He is coming again in power and great glory! We find in Christ, layer after layer of glory, and the layers go up far beyond the heights of Mount Everest! There is a richness and fullness and vastness to His glory that is above and beyond what we could ever express with human language. The hymn "O could I Speak the Matchless Worth," which was referred to earlier, says in verse three, "I'd sing the characters He bears, and all the forms of love He wears, Exalted on His throne. In loftiest songs of sweetest praise, I would to everlasting days, make all His glories known, make all His glories known." And it would take us all eternity to make all His glories known!

We live in a day of increasing darkness and evil all over the world. The need for the ICCG has never been greater. Apostasy and compromise have multiplied in an alarming magnitude of rebellion and opposition to Christ. The

world, and even many who claim the name of Christ have rejected the glory of Christ, and actively seek to diminish His glory.

The World Council of Churches espouses social justice, gender justice, and climate justice instead of the true gospel of Jesus Christ. Ecumenism continues its deceptive and unholy efforts to bring together Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and other religions. Communism continues to plague the world.

They follow the religion of humanism. They praise the glory of man. But we proclaim the glory of God in Christ!

We reflect on the fact that Roman Catholicism continues to be a major source of false teaching around the world. As Bible believing fundamentalists, we must be careful that we not become entangled in the ecumenism of the evangelicals today who seek to cooperate with Roman Catholicism and the mainline Protestant denominations. Roman Catholicism professes to believe in the Deity of Christ, and to praise the glory of Christ, but at the same time they diminish and demean His Person and Work, by espousing prayer to Mary and the saints. The Bible, however, teaches that there is "one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5).

That is the glory of Christ! His glory He does not give to another. Roman Catholicism teaches that salvation comes by faith in Christ plus the keeping of sacraments. But on the cross, Jesus cried, "It is finished!" We cannot, we must not, add anything to His "once for all" sacrifice for us! Hebrews 1:3 says, "when He had by Himself purged our sins!" He alone "is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him!" (Hebrews 7:25).

The world mocks our Saviour. They despise and persecute Christians, even as they did to Christ. But the day is coming when "every knee shall bow, and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

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THE GLORY OF GOD REVEALED IN JESUS CHRIST

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Again, Dr. Carl McIntire said at the Fourth Plenary Congress of the ICCC, “The Christ of the ICCC is the living Christ. He is not the Christ of those today who would join hands to do His work with men who deny His deity. Our Christ does not cooperate with the devil to build His church. It is this emphasis and this loyalty in our hearts to the Christ of the Scriptures which has been blessed of God in bringing us together. This is the Christ who alone tonight we as a Congress and we as Churches would seek to glorify. He is King of kings and Lord of lords.”

Dear brothers and sisters, you and I who have been saved by grace are living testimonies to the glory of God in Christ. “For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (2 Corinthians 4:6).

O dear ones, may our minds be opened by God to see the glory of Christ and believe in Him! May our mouths be filled with praise for the greatness of His glory! May our hearts and lives be changed by His glory as we see Him revealed in God's Word, even as the apostle Paul said, “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord” (2 Corinthians 3:18). And, may we by His power and grace declare His glory to the nations!

What a privilege and joy it is to gather together with faithful believers in Christ from all over the world, to lift our voices together in praise to the glory of Christ, to lift our prayers up to our heavenly Father in the name of Christ, and to preach the eternal immutable Word of God to one another in order to encourage and strengthen each other to stand together against the encroaching advances of apostasy, compromise, and communism all over the world!

14 Kerk en godsdienst



INTERVIEW DR. BRAD GSELL, VOORZITTER INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

Al 75 jaar strijden tegen misleiding en ongeloof

■ Janita van Hooven

Al 75 jaar strijdt de International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) voor het Woord van God en het getuigenis van Jezus Christus en tegen misleiding en ongeloof. Wat heeft deze evangelicale tegenhanger van de Wereldraad van Kerken in al die jaren bereikt?

Honderden mensen uit heel de wereld komen woensdag naar Collingswood in de Amerikaanse staat New Jersey. Daar begint het 75e wereldcongres van de internationale Raad van Christelijke Kerken, die dit jaar haar 75e verjaardag viert. De bijeenkomst duurt een week. Bij de evangelicale raad zijn ongeveer honderd lidkerken aangesloten uit twintig landen. De missie van de ICCC is in al die 75 jaar hetzelfde gebleven, zegt voorzitter rev. dr. Brad Gsell, predikant voor evangelisatie van de Bible Presbyterian Church in Charlotte in de Amerikaanse staat North Carolina. „De ICCC is een raad van

Bijbelgetrouwe kerken die staan voor het Woord van God en voor het getuigenis van Jezus Christus. Wij geloven dat de Schrift van ons verlangt dat we ons inzetten tegen misleiding en ongeloof, zoals staat beschreven in Jozua 3 en 4 en Jezus zelf ons leerde.”

Wat is de loop der jaren wel verschoofd, was de geografische ligging van de aangesloten lidkerken. Toen de ICCC in 1948 begon, kwam het grootste deel van de leiding uit Europa en de Verenigde Staten. Tegenwoordig zijn we een grote toename van het aantal kerken uit ontwikkelingslanden.”

Wat is de reden dat er geen Europese kerken meer zijn vertegenwoordigd in de ICCC?

„Het aantal kerken die zich achter de theologische standpunten van de ICCC scharen is in Europa, net als in de Verenigde Staten, sterk afgenomen. Op de laatste wereldcongressen spraken wel vertegenwoordigers van kerken uit verschillende Europese landen. Er ligt op dit moment een aanvraag van een Europese kerkgenootschap om lid te worden van de ICCC. Die zullen we tijdens dit congres behandelen. De naam daarvan kan ik helaas pas mededelen na het officiële besluit.”

Wat heeft de ICCC in 75 jaar bereikt?

„In de ICCC werken kerken van



Dr. Brad Gsell, hoofd Stephen Zinneker

verschillende etnische, raciale en culturele achtergronden samen. Zo is de ICCC voor de wereld een levend voorbeeld dat het lichaam van Christus niet in één deel van de wereld of in één denominatie wordt gevormd. De kerk van Christus is het universele lichaam van al diegenen die zijn verlost door het bloed van Christus. De echte Bijbeloecumenie is gebaseerd op de waarheid van het Woord van God. De kerken die lid zijn van de ICCC behoren in de achterliggende jaren gezamenlijk gestreden tegen misleiding in vele denominaties, tegen filosofische en theologische ideeën die in strijd zijn met de Schrift en een bedreiging vormen voor de zielen van mensen.”

Wat staat er deze week op de agenda?

„Het thema van de bijeenkomst is ‘Maak Gods glorie bekend onder de volkeren’, genomen uit Psalm 96:3. De nadruk tijdens het congres ligt op de prediking van het Woord van God. In deze acht dagen zullen bijna dertig mensen spreken, voornamelijk predikanten, uit onder meer de Verenigde Staten, Bolivia, Chili, de Filipijnen, Singapore en Kenia. Er zullen ook resoluties worden behandeld over actuele kwesties in het licht van de Schrift. De ICCC weigert de veranderende normen en overtuigingen van de samenleving om ons heen te volgen. In

”Trouw aan God zijn is voor ons belangrijker dan invloed uitoefenen
Rev. dr. Brad Gsell, voorzitter ICCC

Het 20e wereldcongres van de International Council of Christian Churches werd in januari 2020 gehouden in Puerto Morenos in Chili. Hoofd Stephen Zinneker

plaats daarvan proberen we Gods onveranderlijke Woord te gebroekmaken en dat aan de wereld te presenteren. Dit levert vaak kritiek op, maar om de samenleving verder verwijderd raakt van de Bijbeloecumenie.”

Hoeveel invloed heeft de ICCC?

„Dat is moeilijk te zeggen. Trouw aan God zijn is voor ons belangrijker dan invloed uitoefenen.”

Hoe is de verhouding van de ICCC met de Wereldraad van Kerken?

„De Wereldraad van Kerken is tegenwoordig een pleitbezorger van linkse doelen en roept op tot een nieuwe economische wereldorde, klimaatvertrouwen en sociale rechtvaardigheid, waarbij de laatste een oproep is voor een vrees van on-Bijbelse socialisme. Er wordt nooit iets gezegd over het ware Evangelie van Jezus Christus, zoals dat beschreven staat in Johannes 25:40. „Ik ben de Opstanding en het Leven; die in Mij gelooft, zal leven, al ware hij ook gestorven. In een land dat die kerk en in Mij gelooft, zal niet sterven in de eeuwigheid.”

De ICCC verzet zich ook tegen de Rooms-Katholieke Kerk en de Wereld Evangelical Alliance (WEA). De WEA werkt nauwe samen met de Wereldraad van Kerken, in plaats van zich af te scheiden van ongeloofvige zoals de Schrift leert.”

Maakt deze strijd u niet moede- loos?

„We betrouwen de grote afvalligheid die zo veel kerken treft, maar we moeten ons niet door onzinnige bezden laten beheersen. Laten we geloofwaardig zijn aan Christus en aan Zijn Woord. Als we dat doen, belooft God dat Hij bij ons zal zijn. Ik houd veel van het prachtige gezang ‘Blijf bij mij Heer’. Daarin staat: ‘Alles heeft hem, glorie gaat voorbij. Maar Gij, Die niet verandert, blijft bij mij!’”

Geen Nederlandse kerk meer lid van ICCC

De International Council of Christian Churches wees op 4 augustus 1948 in de Engelse Kerk op het Begijnhof in Amsterdam opgericht als orthodoxe protestante tegenhanger van de Wereldraad van Kerken (die in dezelfde maand in stad van start ging). De Christelijke Gereformeerde Kerken besloten in 1977 hun lidmaatschap op te zeggen vanwege het sterk Amerikaanse getinte karakter van de ICCC en de „radicale politieke ideeën” die deze aarhng. Daarna waren geen Nederlandse kerken meer lid van de ICCC. Wel lieven Nederlanders op persoonlijke titel betrokken bij de organisatie.

Reformatorisch Dagblad, a newspaper in the Netherlands, published an article on the 75th Anniversary of the ICCC on June 20, 2023, the day before the opening of the ICCC's 21st World Congress.

Continue on my brothers and sisters in Christ! We are called to the praise of His glory. Stand true for Him unto that great day when we shall at last be gathered together around the throne of God, a multitude which no man can number out of every kindred, tribe, and nation. We shall with one heart, and one voice sing eternal praises to our Savior and King, Jesus Christ the Lord! “Worthy is the Lamb that was

slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing” (Revelation 5:12).



The Rev. Jonathan Smith is the pastor of Tipton Bible Church, Tipton, IA, and is the President of the American Council of Christian Churches.