

REDEEMING THE TIME

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

VOLUME 15, NUMBER 1



WINTER 2023



"ABOUNDING THEREIN WITH Thanksgiving"

"Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving."

COLOSSIANS 2:7

BY BRAD K. GSELL

This message was delivered on November 20, 2022, at a special Thanksgiving service held at the Marcus Hook, PA, Bible Presbyterian Church.

As the Apostle Paul begins the book of Colossians, it is apparent that it is coming from a man of God who is very encouraged. He is rejoicing in the faith of the believers in the church at Colosse, and describing in detail the good things he has heard about their walk with Christ. He commends Epaphras, who had faithfully ministered unto them, and then continues on extolling the wonderful redemption purchased by Jesus Christ.

In just the first 12 verses of chapter 1, he twice offers his thanks to God. These 2,000 years later, we cannot help but to rejoice with Paul! "To God be the glory, great things He hath done!"

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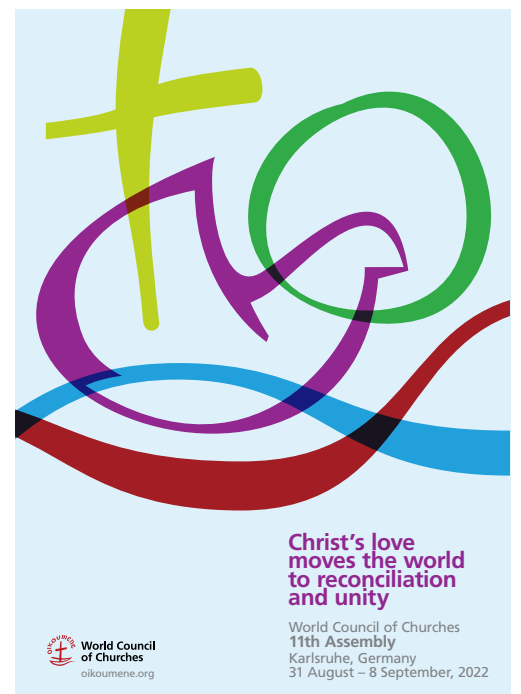
World Council of Churches
11th World Assembly:


Continuing to sail in the **WRONG** direction

Shortly after the founding of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in 1948, Dr. W.A. Visser 't Hooft, the first General Secretary of the WCC, wrote: "[The WCC] is a new type of craft, on its maiden voyage, heading for an unknown destination...." He perhaps was speaking about the temporal future of the Council, but he nonetheless spoke prophetically of its spiritual course as well.

The International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC), formed the same year, in the same city — Amsterdam — knew that its whole purpose and desire was to stand "for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 1:9). For the ICCC, the course and destination

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The Second Scottish Reformation

PART 1

BY MARK W. EVANS

Following the death of John Knox, the Protestants of Scotland faced another long and difficult struggle. Many blessings had come to the land, including the formation of a Scriptural church, replete with particular churches, presbyteries, synods, and a general synod. In the year 1578, at the age of 12, James VI became the King of Scotland. He would later become James I of England. Although the young King had excellent training by the renowned scholar George Buchanan, he turned away from the paths of righteousness and followed immoral “courtiers” in the ways of Rome and debauchery. His guiding star was the doctrine of “The Divine Right of Kings.” By heredity, he believed God gave him the right to reign over every aspect of his realm, including the Church. He viewed the Scottish Presbyterians as enemies to his divine right.

Church historian J.A. Wylie described the king’s theory: “The great King [God] anoints the less; and putting the rod of sovereignty into his hand, says to him, ‘Reign thou over men.’ And in the pedigree of the man so invested does this august function run down. Those only who spring from his loins are the heirs of the prerogatives and powers with which their ancestor was divinely clothed. So does this theory regulate Government and State.”¹ Later, in the next century, Cov-

enant Samuel Rutherford wrote in his book *Lex Rex* (The Law and the Prince): “[N]o man cometh out of the womb with a diadem on his head or a

“There are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland: there is Christ Jesus the king of the church, whose subject King James the Sixth is, and of whose kingdom he is not a king nor a lord nor a head, but a member. Those whom Christ has called and commanded to watch over His church, and govern His spiritual kingdom, have sufficient power and authority from Him to do this both jointly and severally; the which no Christian king or prince should control and discharge, but fortify and assist; otherwise they are not faithful subjects of Christ and members of His church.”

Andrew Melville to
King James VI of Scotland

scepter in his hand, and yet men united in a society may give crown and sceptre to this man and not to that man.”²

John Knox’s departure left a void of leadership desperately needed to

defeat the King’s plan of converting Presbyterian polity into an episcopal government in which bishops rule over the clergy. The King’s motto was, “No bishop; no king.” Many of those who labored with Knox had entered eternity or had become weary with age.

Yet, the Lord was proven faithful in advancing the Reformation. In His providence, Andrew Melville returned to his homeland after some ten years of studying and teaching in Europe. This scholar of immense capacity possessed the courage and willingness to confront Christ’s enemies face to face, including James VI.

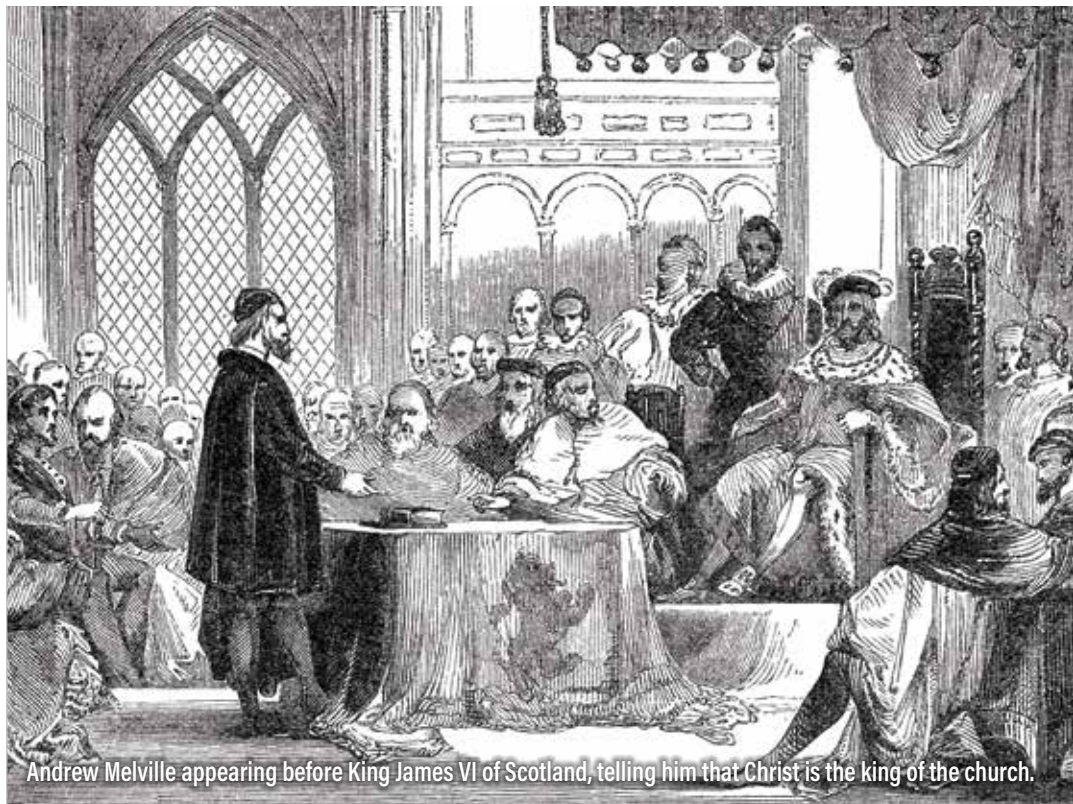
As a minister and professor of divinity, he joined his brethren in their ministerial duties. Melville participated in the writing of Scotland’s Second Book of Discipline, adopted in 1578. This document more distinctly defined the government of the Presbyterian Church and eliminated the office of Bishop. Although this action was an obstacle to the King, it was far from resolving the issue. The attempt of the Stuart kings to rule by bishops did not cease until the Glorious Revolution of 1689.

In 1596, Andrew Melville, along with his brother, James Melville, and other clergymen appeared before King James VI at his Falkland Palace. James began the conversation, but the King abruptly interrupted by accusing the gathering “of holding seditious meetings, and of alarming the country without any reason.”³

To James’ relief, Andrew stepped forward, took the King by his sleeve and called him “God’s sillie vassal.” He then spoke what his biographer, Thomas McCrie, described as “the most singular, in point of freedom, that ever saluted royal ears, or that ever proceeded from the mouth of a loyal subject, who would have spilt his blood in defense of the person and honor of his prince.” Melville said, “Sir, we will always humbly reverence your Majesty in public; but since we have this occasion to be with your Majesty in private, and since ye are brought to extreme danger both of your life and

crown, and along with you the country and the church of God are like to go to wreck, for not telling you the truth and giving you faithful counsel, we must discharge, or else be traitors both to Christ and you. There are two kings and two kingdoms in Scotland: there is Christ Jesus the king of the church, whose subject King James the Sixth is, and of whose kingdom he is not a king nor a lord nor a head, but a member. Those whom Christ has called and commanded to watch over His church, and govern His spiritual kingdom, have sufficient power and authority from Him to do this both jointly and severally; the which no Christian king or prince should control and discharge, but fortify and assist; otherwise they are not faithful subjects of Christ and members of His church. We will yield to you your place, and give you all due obedience; but again I say, you are not the head of the church: you cannot give us that eternal life which even in this world we seek for, and you cannot deprive us of it.”⁴

The king made promises, but soon returned to his devious ways. Some 400 ministers, elders and others gathered in Edinburgh for a General Assembly, March 30, 1596. John Davidson, a proven soldier of the cross, presented an overture “that after a solemn confession of the corruptions and offences of ministries and persons



Andrew Melville appearing before King James VI of Scotland, telling him that Christ is the king of the church.

of all estates, not excepting the courts of justice and the king’s household, they should renew the National Covenant, ‘making promise before the majesty of God to amend their conduct.’”⁵ The overture was sustained and they gathered to seek the Lord. Davidson was chosen to preside and “preached so much to the conviction of his hearers, and in their name offered up a confession of their sins to Heaven with such fervent emotion that the whole assembled ministers melted into tears; and rising from their seats, ‘protesting to walk more warily in their ways, and to be more diligent in their charges.’”⁶

For some three hours, the repentant ministers sought the Lord. As there were those not in attendance, the body determined that “it should be repeated in the different synods and presbyteries, and afterwards extended to congregations.”⁷ Indeed, the sacred resolve spread “till all Scotland, like Judah of old, ‘rejoiced at the oath.’”⁸

These are the ways of the Lord. He told His prophet, Jeremiah, “Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and

shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not” (Jeremiah 33:3). As our country flounders in the midst of ungodly rebellion, it is instructive to learn from the Bible and from history that the Lord answers prayer and will infallibly “build His Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (Matthew 16:18). •

¹James A. Wylie, *Story of the Covenant and the Services of the Covenanters* (Edinburgh: Blue Banner Productions, n.d.), p. 4.

²Samuel Rutherford, *Lex Rex*, (London: Robert Ogle and Oliver and Boyd, 1843), p. 6.

³Thomas M’Crie, *The Story of the Scottish Church* (Glasgow: Bell & Bain Ltd., n.d.), p. 84.

⁴Thomas McCrie, *The Life of Andrew Melville* (The American Presbyterian Press, 1985), pp. 66,67.

⁵M’Crie, p. 86.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 87.

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸*Ibid.*



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REDEEMING THE TIME

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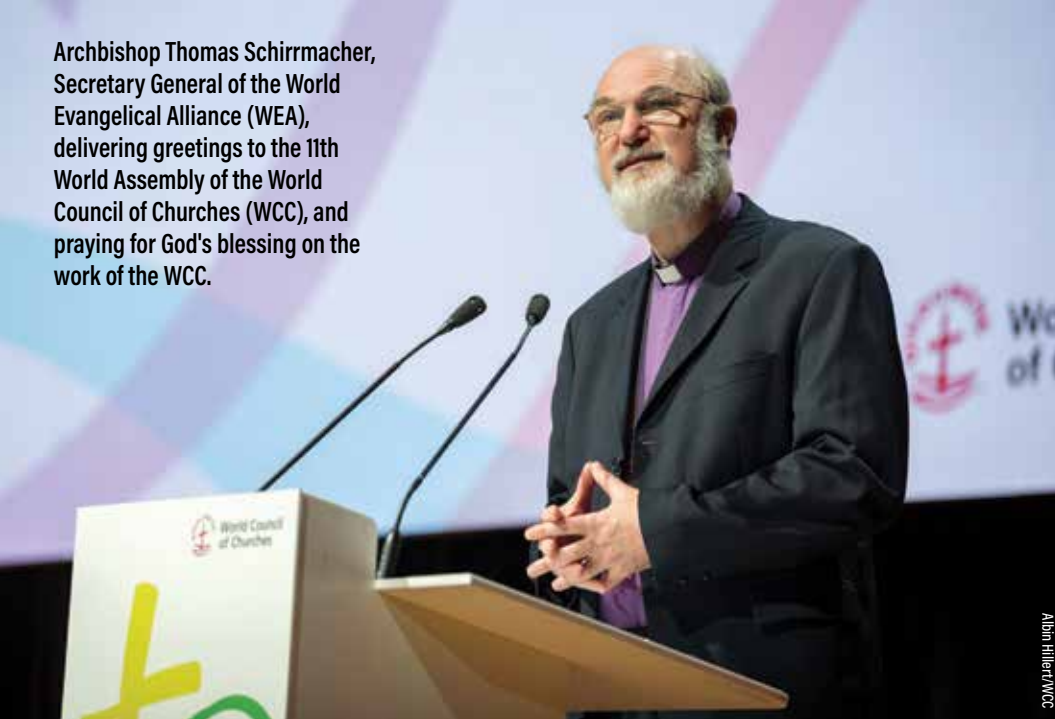
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Archbishop Thomas Schirmmacher, Secretary General of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA), delivering greetings to the 11th World Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC), and praying for God's blessing on the work of the WCC.



Abn Hillert/WCC

The World Evangelical Alliance: One of the "Four Pillars" of apostasy on the path to forming a one-world church

- *World Council of Churches*
- *Roman Catholic Church*
- *World Evangelical Alliance*
- *Pentecostal World Fellowship*

We have on several occasions included articles about the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) and its cooperation with apostasy. Once an organization takes this unbiblical path, it rarely returns to the commands of Scripture to be separate from unbelief.

Lest one should think our headline is mere sensationalism, a news report on the WEA website, June 17, 2022, carried the headline: "WCC, Global Christian Forum (GCF) sign memorandum of understanding affirming mutual quest for Christian Unity."

The WEA writer reports: "Both Sauca [WCC Acting General Secretary at the time], and Essasmuah [secretary of the GCF] expressed joy at the pivotal role of the four pillars — 'namely the WCC, World Evangelical Alliance, Pentecostal World Fellowship and the Roman Catholic Church.'"

The reporter continued that Archbishop Thomas Schirmmacher, secretary general / CEO of the WEA, stated at the meeting that he considered it to be "gracious of the WCC to agree to be just one pillar of several," leaving room for the other three groups.

This was not just the description of a WEA staff writer. Dr. Schirmmacher used this language himself, publicly declaring that the WEA is "one of the [four] pillars."

The report continues that this memorandum of understanding was signed by Fr. Andrzej Choromanski, of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, the WCC's Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca, Rev. Dr. Casely Essasmuah of the Global Christian Forum, Bishop Thomas Schirmmacher of the World Evangelical Alliance, and William Wilson of the Pentecostal World Fellowship.

WEA asks God's blessing on the work of the WCC Assembly

Along with words of ecumenical cooperation from Pope Francis, and representatives of Eastern Orthodox and Jewish groups, were greetings and blessings delivered by Bishop Schirmmacher on behalf of the World Evangelical Alliance (see photo, top left).

Dr. Schirmmacher began by praising outgoing WCC Acting General Secretary Ioan Sauca, a priest in the Romanian Orthodox Church. Speaking of their close "friendship and cooperation," he stated: "Professor Sauca has been a gift of God to the body of Christ for such a time as this."

Pointing out that the WEA and WCC were of approximately equal size, Schirmmacher stated: "We are aware that we have a considerable overlap in membership...."

He continued: "Nowadays, WCC and WEA work together in most areas of ministry. We exchange members on all important commissions. My own involvement in [the WCC] Faith and Order [Commission] has given me enormous insight into the different theological topics that still divide churches and the urgent need for more intense listening to each other."

This close union between the two groups has been apparent for many years. On August 25, 2021, the WEA

official website carried a headline titled: “World Council of Churches (WCC) and World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) Strengthen Their Collaboration [August 2021].”

In his concluding remarks to the WCC Assembly, Bishop Schirmmacher stated: “We pray for God’s blessing on all the ongoing work of the WCC and this Assembly. May God the Father give us all strength to work on behalf of his creation. May Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who saved us from sin and death, be our example in his willingness to give his life for the good of others. And may the Holy Spirit keep us all from evil ways and unjust thoughts and lead us into the growing truth promised to his church on earth.”

The entire message was based almost exclusively on “peace and justice” themes, decrying the war in Ukraine, but fearing that “racism” against Russians would arise from this. He also spoke strongly against anti-semitism. We will not judge Schirmmacher’s intentions, but almost any such speech he and others from the WEA make to ecumenical gatherings fails to explicitly promote the real gospel of salvation by faith in Christ alone.

The WCC also speaks about Jesus Christ saving us from sin and death, but it is virtually always in vague terms, which could be interpreted in different ways. When it is explicit, it virtually always concerns social justice and making “all things new” on this earth.

Instead of an encouragement to fulfill Christ’s Great Commission, as presented in the Bible, Schirmmacher speaks of “work on behalf of God’s creation.” Instead of the Good News, we are to make Christ “our example in his willingness to give his life for the good of others.” Instead of the Holy Spirit illuminating the Scriptures, the sure and complete Word of God, we are to look to Him to “lead us into the growing truth promised to his church on earth.” In the context of social justice, we are to look to the Holy Ghost to “keep us all from evil ways and unjust thoughts.”

“Nowadays, WCC and WEA work together in most areas of ministry. We exchange members on all important commissions.”

WEA Secretary General
Thomas Schirmmacher

WCC and WEA promoting “social justice” at the UN

The WCC and WEA both hold offices at the United Nations, speaking out about all kinds of “social issues.” The WEA holds Special Consultative Status with the UN’s Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), “which serves as the central forum for discussing international economic and social issues, and for formulating policy recommendations addressed to Member States and the United Nations system.”

Shortly after the WCC Assembly, on September 15, 2022, the WEA announced the appointment of a new permanent representative to the United Nations, Mr. Gaetan Roy.

The WEA uses this platform to advocate for “climate care,” and “global sustainability,” together with other issues of “social justice.” In its August 21, 2021, meeting with the WCC, the two organizations agreed to expand their cooperative work for “climate justice.” In 2019, the WEA established the “WEA Sustainability Center (WEASC) in the strategic ‘UN City’ of Bonn, Germany.” The whole goal of the Center is to teach and encourage the churches to take part in “climate care.”

We all desire to see clean water, clean air, and to discourage practices which harm our planet, but this is not the gospel. Further, since the WCC program for “justice” is decidedly Marxist, one must be very concerned that the WEA has such ease in collaborating with the WCC in these matters.

WEA members have no excuse and they should not be defended

In the past, many Bible believers have stood solidly against the apostasy in the World Council of Churches. Many of these, however, think that the American Council of Christian Churches, the International Council of Christian Churches, and Faith Presbyterian, Bible Presbyterian Church, among others, have been too critical of various evangelical denominations and organizations. We are often told that “they do so much good,” despite their compromise and disobedience. Some just choose to ignore the facts, or simply wink at the situation.

As Bible believers, we must not have a censorious spirit, and we should be patient and kind, but nowhere in the Bible are we commanded to support a church or organization because “they do so much good.” It is not there!

Many so-called conservative denominations, including the Presbyterian Church in America, the Associate Reformed Presbyterian Church, the Presbyterian Church of Brazil, the Africa Evangelical Presbyterian Church, to name just a few, maintain their membership in the WEA through the World Reformed Fellowship.

In addition, many popular Christian organizations are members of the WEA. These include:

- Association of Christian Schools International
- Back to the Bible
- Bible Discovery TV
- Biblica
- Compassion International
- Cru (formerly Campus Crusade for Christ)
- Every Home for Christ International
- Faith and Family Foundation
- Jews for Jesus
- Open Doors International
- Operation Mobilisation

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THE WORLD EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE ...

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- Scripture Union International Council
- SIM (formerly Sudan Interior Mission)
- The Bible League of Canada
- The Evangelical Alliance Mission (TEAM)
- The Navigators
- The Voice of the Martyrs (Canada)
- World Vision International
- Wycliffe Associates
- Wycliffe Global Alliance
- Youth for Christ

We call on all churches and organizations in the World Evangelical Alliance to “Come out from among them, and be ye separate.” You simply cannot “work together in most areas of ministry” and “exchange members on all important commissions” with the apostate WCC and be faithful to Christ.

At the WCC Fourth World Assembly in Uppsala, Sweden, in 1968, the WCC condemned “particularism” (*i.e.* insistence on sound Biblical doctrine as a basis for fellowship) and expressed its ultimate dream of having “a genuinely universal council [to] once more speak for all Christians and lead the way into the future.” We believe strongly in Christian unity, but this unbiblical plan for a one world church is not of God. •

—Brad K. Gsell

WCC 11TH ASSEMBLY

Continued from page 1

were sure, since they were established by God, in His Word.

Today, the course the WCC is taking is well documented. As we have shown in earlier issues of *Redeeming the Time*, they have perverted the Gospel into being a here-and-now quest for an unbiblical social(ist) justice of their human creation. In fact, one is hard pressed to find clear proclamations of the true Biblical Gospel.

The “gospel” of unity and justice

The newly elected WCC Moderator, Bishop Dr. Heinrich Bedford-Strohm, a Lutheran from Germany, reflected this in his address to the WCC Assembly: “We trust that God’s ways for us will not lead into darkness but into a new heaven and a new earth.”

Bedford-Strohm made clear that “the new heaven and a new earth,” of which he was speaking, was not that of which the Bible speaks. Revelation 21:1 tells us that this will take place after “the first heaven and the first earth were passed away.” The WCC Moderator instead wrested this phrase from its context and misapplied it to the here and now.

Not one word was uttered as to the blessed Gospel of salvation through Christ. Rather, he challenged the WCC to “give a witness of unity to the world — and thereby help the world to move toward more unity.”

He continued: “This is the calling of the WCC.... What can we do to encourage our governments to support a path that will allow us to limit global warming to a tolerable level?”

In his concluding remarks, he challenged the delegates to “give the Holy Spirit a chance to move us, and maybe through us, move the world towards a just peace.”

Unity Statement

In an official statement on the Assembly theme (“Christ’s Love Moves

“Song and dance inspired by Pacific traditions to celebrate creation,” at the WCC Assembly.



the World to Reconciliation and Unity”), a call for “full visible communion” of the churches is called for in several places. “It is when we are kind to one another as churches, warmly welcoming of each other, building profound and evident friendship in sincerity and respect, when we are drawn to one another out of compassion, fascination, and longing for one another – across our differences and divisions – that we will find the grace to search for that common faith, the truth together held that will overcome our separation.”

The problem is that the “search for that common faith” needs to go no further than the pages of the Word of God. Most certainly we are to love our brothers, even though we are all imperfect. We are to be patient, and kind. But, we are to love the truth, and never compromise it. In love, we should seek to show someone the “error of his way,” but “compassion, fascination, and longing” can never take precedence over the truth.

It is hard to imagine the WCC ever using the words of Christ: “Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God” (Matthew 22:29), or the words of John in 1 John 4:1,6: “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.... Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.”

This fourth chapter of the book of John was the theme of the 20th World Congress of the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) in 2020, with the simple, but powerful, declaration that “God is love” (verse 8). Verse 10 tells us what the love of God actually is: “Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

Our Christian unity and love is based on the truth. John describes both the elect lady and Gaius, in 1 John and 2 John, respectively, as those “whom I love in the truth.”

A great emphasis was placed on “climate change” by the Assembly. It passed a “Statement on the 27th Conference of the Parties of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27).” This was far more than simple advocacy to protect the planet.

The Assembly called for a “fossil fuel-free, post-growth, equitable and sustainable tomorrow,” with “wealthy” countries paying out large sums of money in reparations. The statement advocates “new and strengthened forms of accountability which need support.”

Among these are: “The consideration of such proposals as the creation of a new UN Economic, Social and Ecological Security Council, a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, the rights of nature, ecocide laws, a Climate Crimes Tribunal and an Advisory Opinion on Human Rights and Climate Change from the International Court of Justice.”

To help achieve these goals, the WCC further called for “A New International Financial and Economic Architecture (NIFEA) that promotes an ‘Economy of Life’, contributes to the reconciliation of economic, social, and ecological objectives, and expresses Christ’s compassion for all life through systemic reparation and restoration.”

The newly-elected WCC Executive Committee, meeting in Boley, Switzerland, from November 7-12, 2022, further urged governments to “halt the expansion of fossil fuels now and manage a just transition away from coal, oil and gas.”

Just a few days later, the *Wall Street Journal*, November 20, 2022, carried the headline: “Biden Signs Up for Climate Reparations.” This was a clear reversal of the Administration’s policy.

Political Goals

The WCC condemned “politics that is shaped by deepened individualism, dangerous nationalism or increasing militarism.” These are all “talking

Is the WCC Still Relevant?

Some have asked in recent years whether the World Council of Churches is still relevant. Gone are the days when various WCC leaders appeared on the covers of *Time* and *Newsweek*, and lengthy stories appeared in the great secular journals of our time.

With 75 years having passed since its formation in 1948, the warnings have gone out, with abundant documentation. Thousands have left WCC denominations and have joined churches with fidelity to the Scriptures. Many have already firmly made up their minds as to whether to remain in the apostasy — either out of belief in the teaching or because of family connections — or to be obedient to the Bible and “come out from among them, and be ye separate.”

We still want to sound the alarm, since there are many who simply do not know what is going on, and need to be warned. Certainly, we need to present the true Gospel to those who have sat under a “gospel” message which cannot save. We cannot assume that younger generations know anything about this.

One of the biggest influences the WCC has in our day, together with the Roman Catholic Church of Pope Francis, is the “woke” ideology it is impressing on the minds of many powerful government officials and influential people. Many such people retain membership in large, prestigious churches, and have had a steady diet of this here-and-now gospel.

As we in the United States look at the tearing down of our freedoms, and the atrocious policies our leaders enact, one need look no further than what is emanating from these WCC and Roman Catholic churches.

May every true child of God remove himself from this wickedness.

One of the greatest influences the WCC has in our day, together with the Roman Catholic Church of Pope Francis, is the “woke” ideology it is impressing on the minds of many powerful government officials and influential people....

As we in the United States look at the tearing down of our freedoms, and the atrocious policies our leaders enact, one need look no further than what is emanating from these WCC and Roman Catholic churches.

points” of the Biden Administration and the Left in the United States. Certainly, we are to “love our neighbor as ourselves,” but we are not just specks in the sea of humanity. Each of us is responsible INDIVIDUALLY to God.

Certainly we are to be concerned and help those in other parts of the world, but there is nothing wrong with being proud of one’s own country. It is those who seek after a one-world government who consistently call national patriotism “dangerous.”

Good Christians should stand for righteousness in our wicked world,

but let us never lose sight of 2 Corinthians 4:18: “While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.”

May we be busy in spreading the true Gospel of Jesus Christ — whereby He promises to “save to the uttermost”: “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36). That is the only hope for our troubled world. • —Brad K. Gsell



The spirit of TRUTH and the spirit of ERROR

How the views of "evangelicals" in 2022 compare to the Word of God

The State of Theology” report for 2022 has been released by LifeWay Research and Ligonier Ministries. It compares the beliefs of the U.S. population at large, as well as those of Christian “evangelicals.” The results are sad indeed. With so many churches, including evangelical ones, moving to shorter, more superficial, felt needs-based messages, ignorance and simple unbelief in orthodox Biblical doctrine is increasing at a rapid pace.

This is also accompanied by the growth of “individualized spirituality” — where the creature usurps the place of God in creating his own personalized “designer religion.” In addition, social media has produced a number of evil results, among which are: brainwashing with “woke” ideology, and a plethora of “Christian” websites, promoting aberrant views.

One of the most alarming results of social media is a general shortening of the average attention span. Today’s generation often looks for quick answers in sound bites, rather than in diligent, habitual study. With a world of knowledge at one’s fingertips, many have also stopped memorizing the Scriptures. A spirit of indifferentism also prevails. Christian education at home has decreased, and many sound churches have scaled back their Sunday schools and vacation Bible schools

because of the lack of students showing up to learn.

Following is a synopsis of the findings in this study. Statements one through three show the 2022 statistics for all adults in the U.S., as well as the specific views of “evangelicals.” Statements four through 11 include comparisons between this survey and previous surveys.

1. God learns and adapts to different circumstances.

- All Adults: 51% Yes / 32% No
- Evangelicals: 48% Yes / 43% No

THE BIBLE SAYS: God is both omniscient (all-knowing) and immutable (unchanging). **Isaiah 46:10:** “Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.” See also 1 John 3:20.

Malachi 3:6: “For I am the Lord, I change not....” See also James 1:17.

2. Everyone is born innocent in the eyes of God.

- All Adults: 71% Yes / 21% No
- Evangelicals: 65% Yes / 32% No

“Jesus answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God.”

Matthew 22:29

THE BIBLE SAYS: Romans 5:12: “Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” See also Psalm 51:5.

3. Every Christian has an obligation to join a local church.

- All Adults: 36% Yes / 56% No
- Evangelicals: 68% Yes / 26% No

THE BIBLE SAYS: Acts 20:28: “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood.” See also Acts 2:41-42; 16:5.

4. The Bible, like all sacred writings, contains helpful accounts of ancient myths but is not literally true.

- All Adults: 2022: 53% Yes / 2014: 41% Yes
- Evangelicals: 2022: 26% Yes / 2020: 15% Yes

THE BIBLE SAYS: 2 Peter 1:21: “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” See also Isaiah 8:20 and Psalm 119:89.

5. Gender identity is a matter of choice.

- All Adults: 42% Yes / 2020: 38%
- Evangelicals: 2022: 37% Yes / 2020: 22% Yes

THE BIBLE SAYS: Genesis 1:27: “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” The Bible never gives sanction to anything which defies the teaching that God made only two genders: male and female.

6. The Bible’s condemnation of homosexual behavior doesn’t apply today.

- All Adults: 2022: 46% Yes / 2020: 40%
- Evangelicals: 2022: 28% Yes / 2020: 11% Yes

THE BIBLE SAYS: Romans 1:26-27: “For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet.

7. God accepts the worship of all religions, including Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

- All Adults: not available
- Evangelicals: 2022: 56% Yes / 2020: 42% Yes

THE BIBLE SAYS: Isaiah 45:21-22: "... and there is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none beside me. Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else." See also John 14:6 and Acts 4:12.

8. Jesus was a great teacher, but he was not God.

- All Adults: not available
- Evangelicals: 2022: 43% Yes / 2020: 30% Yes

THE BIBLE SAYS: John 1:1-3: "In the beginning was the Word [Christ], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made." See also John 10:30 and Colossians 1:15-22.

9. Religious belief is a matter of personal opinion; it is not about objective truth.

- All Adults: not available
- Evangelicals: 2022: 38% Yes / 2020: 23% Yes

"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."

2 Timothy 2:15

THE BIBLE SAYS: John 17:17: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth." Isaiah 8:20: "To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them."

10. Sex outside of traditional marriage is a sin.

- All Adults: not available
- Evangelicals: 2022: 94% Yes / 2020: 90% Yes

THE BIBLE SAYS: Hebrews 13:4: "Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." See also Matthew 19:3-9.

11. Abortion is a sin.

- All Adults: not available
- Evangelicals: 2022: 91% Yes / 2020: 88% Yes

THE BIBLE SAYS: Psalm 139:13-14: "For thou hast possessed my reins: thou hast covered me in my mother's womb. I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well." Exodus 20:13: "Thou shalt not kill."

The survey based its "evangelical" designation on the respondent's affiliation with a church considered to be "evangelical," and those who believed: 1. "the Bible is the highest authority for what I believe; 2. It is very important for me personally to encourage non-Christians to trust Jesus Christ as their Savior; 3. Jesus Christ's death on the cross is the only sacrifice that could remove the penalty of my sin; 4. Only those who trust in Jesus Christ alone as their Saviour receive God's free gift of eternal salvation." Large numbers of respondents clearly contradicted even this most cursory of definitions, as they answered specific questions.

A Challenge to All!

The Lord instructed the Prophet Jeremiah to say unto the people of Judah: "Hear now this, O foolish people, and without understanding; which have eyes, and see not; which have ears, and hear not...." Many a pastor can relate how limited is the understanding of some in his congregation who have heard for years the preaching of the Word. However, every pastor must make sure that he preaches

the "whole counsel of God" — feeding bread, not stones.

Christians must carefully, consistently, and humbly study and meditate upon God's Word. "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works (2 Timothy 3:16). •

"I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as much as in all riches. I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word. Deal bountifully with thy servant, that I may live, and keep thy word. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law."

Psalms 119:14-18



Leadership meeting of the East Africa Christian Alliance (EACA), hosted by the Bible College of East Africa in Nairobi, Kenya, November 30 and December 1, 2022. The EACA is a regional affiliate of the International Council of Christian Churches.

"The Memory of the Just is Blessed"

PROVERBS 10:7

We have often presented memorials in the pages of Redeeming the Time of dear saints of God who have gone to their reward, including those of ministers and elders in Faith Presbytery, Bible Presbyterian Church. We regret that there are several that we failed to include at the times of their death. We miss each of them, and they are fondly remembered, with thanks to God. Even though some time has passed, we believe it to be important for all of us to remember the sacrificial love and service to Christ by these choice saints of God.

May we never forget those who have gone before us in Christ's service. They, "being dead, yet speaketh" (Hebrews 11:4).

REV. ELLIS CARL HARRY JOHNSON

1932 - 2018

The Rev. Ellis C.H. Johnson entered into the presence of his Lord on Saturday, April 21, 2018, at age 86. Born in Tampa, Florida, on January 28, 1932, he was the son of the late Ellis G.B. and Charolette Irene Oleson Johnson.

Pastor Johnson received his B.A. degree from Bob Jones University, Greenville, SC, and a B.D. degree from Covenant Theological Seminary, St. Louis, MO. He also earned a Master of Education in Rehabilitation Counseling



from the University of South Carolina.

He served in the U.S. Marine Corps as a chaplain's assistant from 1954-1957, following which he pastored churches in Godfrey, IL; Tampa, FL; Trenton, NJ; Oreland, PA; and Blythewood, SC. He was a former board member and assistant director of the Christian Counseling Center in Abington, PA.

In 1987, he founded the Bible Presbyterian Church of Blythewood, South Carolina, and pastored the church until his retirement in 1997. His son Stephen followed his father as pastor of the church.

In addition, he took active leadership roles in the community, serving as president of the Caughman Road Middle School PTA in Columbia, SC. For 17 years he was the president of the Veterans Affairs Regional Office Retir-

ees Organization, and in 1993 he retired from the Department of Veterans Affairs as a counseling psychologist.

For 18 years he served faithfully as stated clerk of the South Atlantic Presbytery (now Faith Presbytery, Bible Presbyterian Church). He served efficiently and graciously in this role, and was a steady force in leading the Presbytery through good times and those which were more difficult. He was a tremendous blessing and encouragement to all the men of the Presbytery.

At the time of his death, he was survived by his beloved wife of 62 years, D. Ann George Johnson; son Allen Johnson of Blythewood, SC (now deceased); son and daughter in-law Rev. Stephen and Marsha Johnson of Columbia, SC; daughter and son-in-law Debbie and Morris Timms of Blythewood; daughter and son in-law Charolette and Chris Vineis of Carson City, NV; and a number of grandchildren and other family members.

ELDER WILLIAM LAWSON MILLER

1926 - 2020

For many years, Lawson Miller was an elder of the Bible Presbyterian Church of Apollo, PA. He faithfully served the Lord and was greatly loved. Even when he was unable to attend church during his last years, his love for the congregation and his desire to be there were evident.

Lawson was a U.S. Navy veteran who signed up for duty in World War II. He was 16 years old, a few months

shy of his 17th birthday. His father, giving him permission, signed up with him. Lawson went east, his dad west.

At the age of 17, He took part in the D-Day invasion of Normandy, turning 18 while at Omaha Beach. He was signalman on a Landing Craft Mechanized (LCM). He ferried men and equipment to shore for the first three days of nonstop battle. His boat capsized twice. Once, it hit an anti-landing I-Beam and sank. Each time,



Lawson swam to another boat and rode back to the command ship to get another LCM.

Elder Miller served his country and his God. It was a pleasure just to know this man of God. This nation needs more Lawsons.

ELDER EUGENE GANZ

1923 - 2022

Eugene Ganz was born in 1923 on a farm west of St. Louis, MO. Although he attended a one-room Alt School only through grade 8, he was an avid reader. Through the ministry of Charles Fuller, the Lord worked in his heart while milking cows. From then on, breakfast was not complete until after prayer and the reading of the Bible.

Before being called off to war, he attended a Bible Presbyterian Church in St. Louis, where he met Marie Huck. The pastor of the church, Dr. Francis Schaeffer, wrote the young soldier during his Battle of the Bulge tour, three-month hospitalization and time as a guard at Neurenburg. When he returned to the States, he and Marie were married. They attended a Bible Presbyterian Church in Valley Park, MO, pastored by the Rev. Bill Irving, until the Irving family became missionaries to the Navajo Indians, in New Mexico. They remained close friends for the rest of their lives.



ACCC meets in Carlisle, PA, with *Veritas Christo et Ecclesia* as theme



The Executive Committee of the American Council of Christian Churches during this year's Annual Convention, October 25-27, 2022, in Carlisle, PA

The Ganzes and their growing family then attended the Olive Branch Bible Presbyterian Church until starting the Bible Presbyterian Church in Manchester, MO, where he remained as an elder until the Lord called him home in February 2022.

Mr. Ganz was active in the Midwest Presbytery of the Bible Presbyterian Church and served as a board member of The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, when his daughter and son-and-law, The Rev. and Mrs. Raymond Carlson, went to Kenya as missionaries.

Later, he was treasurer of the Presbyterian Missionary Union and then helped Go! International. He traveled to mission ministries on several occasions in the United States, Australia, Singapore, Europe and Africa, faithfully contributing always to the work of the Lord. •

“Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them” (Revelation 14:13).

The American Council of Christian Churches held its 81st Annual Convention from October 25-27, 2022. The meeting was hosted by Faith Chapel, Carlisle, PA, pastored by the Rev. Michael Mayer. Many powerful Biblical messages were delivered revolving around the theme of the Convention: *Veritas Christo et Ecclesia* (“Truth for Christ and the Church”).

The Rev. David Mook, who has pastored the Free Presbyterian Church of Phoenix, AZ, for many years, has been a steady force in his service as president of the Council since 2016. We thank the Lord for his godly influence on the ACCC during these years.

In new elections, the Rev. Jonathan Smith, pastor of the Tipton, IA, Bible Church, was elected as president; Rev. Mark Evans, pastor of Hope Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC, was elected as vice president; Rev. Matthew Reider, pastor of the Evangelical Methodist Church of Gaston, NC, was elected secretary; and Dr. Kevin Hobi, pastor of the New Boston, NH, Baptist Church, was reelected as treasurer. Please be in prayer for



Outgoing ACCC President David Mook (left) with newly elected President Jonathan Smith

these consecrated men of God as they fulfill their offices.

The Council passed some excellent resolutions, including those on the Convention theme, the ministry of the Rev. Franklin Graham, Profane and Blasphemous Euphemisms, Secular and Christian Nationalism, Deconstructionism, and The Overturning of Roe v. Wade (1973) and Planned Parenthood v. Casey (1992). Visit the ACCC website (<https://acc4truth.org>) to read these resolutions.

As always, we are thankful to the Rev. Dan Greenfield, ACCC Executive Secretary, for his excellent job in providing leadership to the Council. •

"ABOUNDING THEREIN ..."

Continued from page 1

When we study any passage of Scripture we deprive ourselves of much meaning if we do not look at who wrote the passage, who it is written to, and the circumstances of both the writer and the recipient. Who wrote this book? This book is one of the Pauline epistles, but it is of note to see that Paul often includes others in his salutations. In Colossians, he says the letter is from himself, as well as from Timothy.

The letter is addressed to the "saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse." This letter was not addressed generally to the citizens of Colosse, but specifically to the faithful believers in this church located in Asia Minor.

And, what were the circumstances? When reading Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon, we must always remember that they are commonly referred to as the "Prison Epistles." The Apostle Paul wrote each of these letters from jail, commonly believed to be in Rome.

It is amazing that Paul can be so joyful in his writing. He could be seeking pity. "Look at poor me. This is so unjust. I am living in these horrible conditions, away from all the comforts of home. What am I going to do? Why has God placed me in this situation?"

But, instead, Paul places the emphasis on the dear saints to whom he is writing, telling them how happy he is to hear of their faith in Christ from the godly pastor Epaphras.

He says, in Colossians 1:9-11: "For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God; Strengthened with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and longsuffering with joyfulness...."

A little later, Paul does acknowledge his difficult circumstances — but not to moan and complain. Only a consecrated child of God could write that "[I]now REJOICE in my sufferings for you"!

Paul, rather than being bitter against God, wrote in verses 12-14: "Giving thanks unto the Father, which hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light:

"In EVERY THING give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."

1 THESSALONIANS 5:18

Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins."

No matter what they might do to his body, Paul was overwhelmed with joy and thanksgiving for the great atonement of Jesus Christ — the Christ he met on the road to Damascus; the Christ who had saved HIS soul. "It is enough that Jesus died, and that he died for me."

Paul is unique, of all the writers of the New Testament, in using this word for Thanksgiving. And he does it often. In every chapter in the Book of Colossians, Paul has at least one reference to being thankful. It is found throughout his other epistles as well.

So often, love, joy and thanksgiving are the theme of this writer who suffered so much. In 2 Corinthians 11:23-27, he lists some of the things he had endured: "in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure, in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft. Of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one. Thrice was I beaten with rods, once was I stoned, thrice I suffered shipwreck, a night and a day I have been in the deep; In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in

the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren; In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness." WOW! Can any of us produce a list that would even come close to this? And, there are only a very few others in the Bible that are in this league.

With some of the debauchery and immorality on TV shows, it is often justified by those who say, "Well, we are just trying to be authentic, and show life as it really is." I have sometimes said to Sheila, "What an excuse. A murder, a bank robbery, an innocent person put in jail, and an exploding car once a week in some small town — that certainly is not reality."

But, the Apostle Paul's sufferings were reality! No one can accuse Paul of being out of touch when he told the people to be thankful. Humanly speaking, he would have had more reasons than any to be unthankful — yet Paul was NOT "HUMANLY speaking"! He was writing as a regenerated, blood-bought, redeemed, sanctified child of God!

When we take a survey of the Scriptures, it is amazing how many times thankfulness is attached to suffering and hardships. I'll give just a few examples:

Job

We all know the terrible ordeal that Job went through, even though he was a just man. His livestock were killed and stolen, his children and servants died a calamitous death, he suffered all kinds of physical affliction. Job 1 is totally taken up with detailing the astonishing number of tragedies Job was facing all at once.

Yet, the chapter concludes, in Job 1:20-22, with these words: "Then Job arose, and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, **and worshipped**, And said, Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: the LORD gave, and the LORD hath taken away; blessed be the name of

the LORD.” And it concludes: “In all this Job sinned not, nor charged God foolishly.”

Even his wife and friends further pushed him down. His wife told him in chapter 2:9 to “curse God and die.” But in verse 10, he rebuked her: “Thou speakest as one of the foolish women speaketh. What? shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?” Again, we are told: “In all this did not Job sin with his lips.” Job was still thankful to God, despite these unimaginable circumstances.

Job continued on in his faith and trust in God. With all these things that happened to him, yet in Job 13:15, he declared: “Though he [God] slay me, yet will I trust in him.”

And, we all love the passage in Job 19:25-27, where he declares: “For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: Whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me.”

What a testimony Job had!

David

Another example is David. The same David who wrote Psalm 13 also wrote such Psalms as 100, 103, 105 and 107, just to name a few.

A very distraught David wrote in Psalm 13: “How long wilt thou forget me, O LORD? for ever? how long wilt thou hide thy face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, having sorrow in my heart daily? how long shall mine enemy be exalted over me? Consider and hear me, O Lord my God: lighten mine eyes, lest I sleep the sleep of death; Lest mine enemy say, I have prevailed against him; and those that trouble me rejoice when I am moved.”

But, this same David continues in Psalm 13: “But I have trusted in thy mercy; my heart shall rejoice in thy salvation. I will sing unto the Lord, because he hath dealt bountifully with me.” Sounds very much like Paul!

Psalm 103 is believed by many Bible scholars to be written by David in the latter years of his life. Verses 1-5 state: “Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: Who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; Who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s.”

One of the very special and unique Psalms attributed to David is Psalm 136. In it, he outlines the many wonderful works of God, and concludes each one with the phrase, “and his mercy endureth for ever.”

Put away men's thoughts, and cling to Christ and His Word. When we are so rooted, and built up, he tells us to “ABOUND therein with thanksgiving.” This word “abound” means that it should be overflowing in your life. It should be constant and continual. It should be over and above, it should come from deep within your heart and soul, and should define you!

The Psalm begins: “O give thanks unto the Lord; for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.” David makes God’s mercy a consistent emphasis throughout the Psalms.

Daniel

Next, let’s look at the Prophet Daniel. He faced being cast into the den of lions. His enemies had the king sign a decree that if anyone prayed to anyone but the King for 30 days he would suffer being torn apart by the lions.

Daniel could have fretted, and spent his time asking God why He had allowed this to happen. He could have even decided to “lie low” as they

say, and pray in secret. But, he had a far different response. Daniel 6:10 informs us: “Now when Daniel knew that the writing was signed, he went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.” Daniel’s trust was in the Lord alone, and he wasn’t going to deny Him by all of a sudden stopping his prayers. He not only did not fret, he offered THANKS unto the Lord. Daniel’s Christian testimony was so strong, that the King told him, in verse 16: “Thy God whom thou servest continually [Daniel was ABOUNDING in his service to the Lord], he will deliver thee.” AND, INDEED, GOD DID JUST THAT!

Jeremiah

As our final example, let us look at the Prophet Jeremiah. He is often called the “weeping prophet.” He indeed was a prophet in Judah at a time of great destruction and peril. In 586 BC, the Babylonian empire had conquered Jerusalem, and desecrated and destroyed Solomon’s Temple, which had stood for 400 years. The people were demoralized, even though their calamity had come largely due to their own rebellion against God.

In addition to the book of prophecy which bears his name, Jeremiah also wrote the book of Lamentations. The very title given to the book means: “the passionate expression of grief or sorrow; weeping.”

One does not have to read very far to see Jeremiah’s distress. Lamentations 3 begins: “I am the man that hath seen affliction by the rod of his wrath. He hath led me, and brought me into darkness, but not into light. Surely against me is he turned; he turneth his hand against me all the day. My flesh and my skin hath he made old; he hath broken my bones. He hath builded against me, and com-

Continued on page 14

"ABOUNDING THEREIN ..."

Continued from page 13

passed me with gall and travail. He hath set me in dark places, as they that be dead of old" (verses 1-6). The laments continue.

But, like David in Psalm 36, Jeremiah shows his faith in God despite utter despair. He continues in Lamentations 3:22-26, perhaps the key passage of this book: "It is of the LORD's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness. The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him. The LORD is good unto them that wait for him, to the soul that seeketh him. It is good that a man should both hope and quietly wait for the salvation of the Lord."

The contrast with the disobedient

In contrast to the thankfulness and trust in the Lord displayed by these and other heroes of the faith, the Bible talks of what is characteristic of those who are disobedient and apart from God. Romans 1:21 tells us: "Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, **neither were thankful**; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened." How many times do we see unbelievers who have more than most people in the world grumbling and complaining and perceiving that they have not gotten their fair share. True thankfulness is something that is given to us by God!

There is no room for saying, "O yeah, I'm saved. I was able to eat a few times today. I had heat in the house, and clothes to wear. Not a big deal!" I fear that many of us in America are spoiled rotten, as they say. We are so used to having plenty, yet we are not **THANKFUL**.

But, the child of God should be profoundly thankful most of all for the wonderful salvation through Jesus Christ, and then for the fact that God "daily loadeth us with benefits" (Psalm

68:19). Most of us have had times of discouragement, when God has given us great delight even with little blessings — a kind word received, a good deed done, a child reaching to a new achievement, escape from even a minor injury, seeing new flowers burst forth in the garden, and the development of fruit and vegetables, and so forth. Be thankful — profoundly thankful — even for the small things!

Enticing words of man's wisdom

Returning to the book of Colossians, where we began, in chapter 2 we see Paul's great concern that the believers in Colosse, as well as in Laodicea, should continue their Christian walk in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. He warns them not to be deceived by "enticing words" of man's wisdom, nor by "philosophy or vain deceit."

Why is it that people always want to go off following a novel teaching, one that seems reasonable to their carnal minds, one that is of man's creation — but one which is not according to the Bible? Sometimes they embrace old heresies.

Men of the world sneer and make fun of the faith of the child of God, but Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 3:19: "For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, He taketh the wise in their own craftiness."

In 2 Timothy 4:3-4, Paul warns Timothy: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables." How many people have we seen who easily become enamored with the latest winsome speaker, regardless of whether he is teaching the truth or not? Going astray into a "way which seemeth right unto a man" will always bring dissatisfaction and a lack of thanksgiving.

After these warnings in Colossians 2, Paul sets the focus on what **IS** true. He tells them in verse 3 that "all the treasures of wisdom and

knowledge" are to be found **ALONE** in the Lord Jesus Christ.

When men put forth all kinds of false teachings — whether new or old — we should sing "Tell me the old, old story, of Jesus and His glory, of Jesus and His love." We should never lose our love for and the sweet taste of Biblical orthodoxy.

Rooted and built up in Christ

Here in Colossians 2 is a verse which really is the key verse of my message. It is of great import. In verse 7, Paul writes:

"Rooted and built up in him [in Christ], and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, **ABOUNDING** therein with thanksgiving."

When we are rooted in the sure teaching of God's Word, we grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you are rooted and built up, you stay on that path. Don't look for another road to take. You press toward the mark and finish the course. If you are one who has strayed from the truth of God's Word, come back to it. Put away men's thoughts, and cling to Christ and His Word.

When we are so rooted, grounded, and built up, he tells us to "**ABOUND** therein with thanksgiving." This word "abound" means that it should be overflowing in your life. It should be constant and continual. It should be over and above, it should come from deep within your heart and soul, and should define you!

Paul uses this word for "abound" several times in his epistles. 1 Corinthians 15:58 tells us: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always **ABOUNDING** in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord." Do you give your very best to your hobbies and interests, but just give the Lord the leftovers. Each of us is to "**ABOUND**" in the things of the Lord. We should be overflowing in our service to Christ.

2 Corinthians 9:8 tells us: "And God is able to make all grace **ABOUND**

toward you; that ye, always having all sufficiency in all things, may ABOUND to every good work.” God’s grace is full and overflowing for us.

John Bunyan, the author of *Pilgrim’s Progress*, also wrote a spiritual autobiography based on this verse: *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners, or a Brief Relation of the Exceeding Mercy of God in Christ to his Poor Servant John Bunyan*. Our good works should likewise be overflowing as we love the Lord and His people. We can do nothing to earn our salvation, but the child of God will “abound unto every good work” in his life.

Like the Apostle Paul, Bunyan wrote this while he was suffering in the Bedford Jail. The year was 1666, and he was imprisoned for preaching without a license.

A thankful witness!

With my involvement with The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, I might get in trouble if I fail to bring in the subject of missions before we conclude! But, this is not just an awkward interjection or add-on. One of the greatest “good works” we can do is to share the Gospel with others. We are commanded by Christ to go “into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). Have you ever seen a person who delights in witnessing, yet is bitter against God and other people — one who is unthankful? I know I have not.

“Give thanks unto the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people.”

1 CHRONICLES 16:8

Our joy in the Lord and thankfulness to Him make us WANT to tell others of Christ. In 1 Chronicles 16:8, we are told to: “Give thanks unto the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the people.”

And Isaiah 12:4-5 tell us: “And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD,



Faith Presbytery, Bible Presbyterian Church, met on September 30, 2023, at the Bible Presbyterian Church of Marcus Hook, PA. It was a great time of preaching, prayer, testimonies, fellowship, business and reports.



call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth.”

Only a heart overflowing with joy and thankfulness could say such a thing. Only one with such a heart will have as his whole desire to glorify God and tell others of the joy of the Lord. Just before these verses, in Isaiah 12:2-3, he writes: “Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. Therefore with joy shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation.”

Conclusion

In conclusion, I know that there are some here who have undergone some VERY, VERY difficult things in their lives. I know everyone in this room has had at least SOME difficult things. Every one of our experiences is different, and no one can truly know what another person is going through. But, we are given great words of comfort in 2 Corinthians 12:9.

The Apostle Paul, who would easily fall into the “VERY, VERY difficult things” category, wrote in 2 Corinthians 12:9: “And he [God] said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness.” He concludes: “Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

For the Christian, our joy and thankfulness are not dependent upon our circumstances. Paul wrote in 1 Thessalonians 5:18: “In EVERY THING give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.”

Let each of us “ABOUND therein with thanksgiving,” regardless of the circumstances. “Be thankful unto Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good, His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endureth unto all generations” (Psalm 100:4-5). •



The Rev. Brad Gsell is a minister of the Bible Presbyterian Church of Charlotte, NC, and President of the International Council of Christian Churches and of The Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions.



*Declare God's
Glory Among
the Nations!*

*"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."*

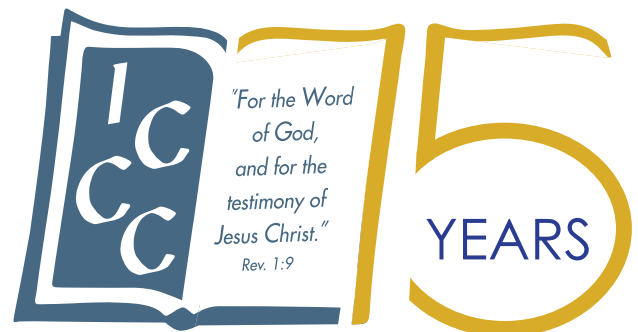
PSALM 96:1-3

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