

# REDEEMING THE TIME

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

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## God's Glory Manifest in His HOLINESS

*"Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts."*

BY OSCAR G. BAUTISTA

*This message was delivered on June 28, 2023, at the 21st World Congress of the International Council of Christian Churches, in Collingswood, NJ.*

### PSALM 29:1-2:

*"Give unto the LORD, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness."*

### ISAIAH 6:3:

*"And one [seraph] cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."*

### 1 PETER 1:16:

*"Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."*

I want to draw our attention to the theme of "God's Glory Manifest in His Holiness." The Bible reveals that holiness is one of God's essential attributes, and it is inseparably linked to His glory. In fact, His holiness is the foundation of His glory, and it is what makes Him worthy of our worship and adoration.

Holiness is the attribute that sets God apart from everything else in the universe. It means that He is pure, perfect, righteous, and utterly without sin.

Let us examine God's glory and see how it manifests His Holiness.

### Understanding God's Holiness

**God's glory envelops His radiant splendor and majesty, revealing His divine attributes and character.**

God's glory is an all-encompassing display of His radiant splendor and majestic presence. It is a manifestation of His divine attributes and character. In Exodus 33:18-19, Moses boldly asked God, "I beseech thee, shew me thy glory." In response, God revealed His glory by proclaiming His name and declaring His gracious and compassionate nature. The glory of God encompasses His holiness, righteousness,

*Continued on page 7*

## MODERN EVANGELICALISM:

*From the "middle way" to total capitulation to the "spirit of error"*

BY BRAD K. GSELL

Recently, a friend in Asia asked me for any information I might have on the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA). It soon became clear that it was a regional affiliate of the World Council of Churches.

In 1993, the CCA and the Roman Catholic Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC) initiated the Asian Movement for Christian Unity (AMCU). With full knowledge that this was an alliance of apostate Protestantism and Roman Catholicism, the Asia Evangelical Alliance (AEA; formerly called the Evangelical Fellowship of Asia) has been a member of this organization since 2006.

The AEA is a member of the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA). We have in previous issues discussed the close working relationship the WEA has with the WCC and the Roman Catholic Church. Here is just another example of how those in the greater evangelical movement have capitulated in joining with the WCC and Roman Catholicism in an unholy alliance.

Two students of Dr. J. Gresham Machen at Princeton Theological Seminary, and Westminster Theological Seminary, went on to make a large mark on 20th century Christianity: Dr. Carl McIntire, and Dr. Harold John Ockenga. McIntire became pastor of the Collingswood, NJ, Presbyterian Church — the largest church in the West Jersey Presbytery. Ockenga became pastor of the his-

*Continued on page 3*



St. Giles Cathedral, Edinburgh, Scotland

# The Second Scottish Reformation

## PART 6

BY MARK W. EVANS

Scotland's vast and zealous response to the National Covenant brought perplexity to King Charles I, his popish advisors, and other supporters of prelacy. From Scotland's noblemen to the lowest commoners, from all sections of the country, came at least 60,000 Presbyterians to Edinburgh prepared to sign and adhere to the National Covenant.<sup>1</sup>

They acknowledged their allegiance to Charles I in lawful, civil matters, but above all, they vowed allegiance to Jesus Christ, the only Head of his blood-bought Church. With tears, shouts of joy, and sometimes with a war cry, they signed their names — some signing with their own blood, some adding the words “unto death.”

Their sacred vows sustained them in the coming escalation of military actions and horrendous, unjust persecutions. Fifty years would pass before the struggle ended and the last Stuart king, King James II, had shamefully fled to Roman Catholic France.

This Glorious Revolution, without bloodshed, placed two Protestants upon the throne, William III and Mary II. At last, the bloodbath ended, and the remaining remnant rejoiced in ecclesiastical and civil freedom. Robert Pollok Kerr, in his book *The Blue Flag of the Covenant*, wrote: “The world would be very different from what it is today if, in the years long gone, there had not been men and women willing to die for the purity of Christ's church and its free-

dom from the control of national rulers. The Covenanters of Scotland believed that the church had but one King — Christ Jesus — and they contended, suffered and died for His crown.”<sup>2</sup>

**When Professor Alexander Henderson was to be forcibly installed as the minister of Leuchars Parish, the congregation barricaded the doors. Henderson and those who were to install him had to climb in through a window. A short time later, Henderson slipped quietly into another church to hear the Rev. Robert Bruce. Bruce began his message by quoting John 10:1: “He that entereth not by the door ... but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.” The Lord used this to convict him of his sin and to bring him to Christ!**

King Charles I had a willing accomplice in his zeal to eradicate Protestantism. The Archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud, joined him in the effort to rid the kingdom from those who put

Christ's sovereignty first. Church historian G.N.M. Collins said of the Archbishop: “The king's evil genius in Church affairs was William Laud, an ambitious pluralist who, by preferment after preferment, reached the primacy of the English Church in 1633. A rabid anti-Puritan since student days, Laud made it his great aim to root out Calvinism in England and Presbyterianism in Scotland.”<sup>3</sup>

The Lord was gracious to provide gifted men of God in each period of Scotland's Reformation. John Knox was obviously used of the Lord to secure deliverance from popish despotism. He faced civil and ecclesiastical leadership with a boldness that could not be quenched by favor or fear.

After John Knox, there arose another leader, Andrew Melville. This intrepid defender of the faith called King James VI of Scotland “God's silly vassal” and proceeded to teach his majesty that there were two kingdoms in Scotland. There was one kingdom over which the monarch was charged to be the head. But there was another kingdom in which he must be a subject and bow to the King of kings.

Soon after the National Covenant had united and revived the Lord's people, it became apparent that another leader was needed. It would need to be one who could discern the machinations of King Charles I, and navigate through the snares inevitably set for the Lord's people, while remaining an uncompromised champion of the faith.

Alexander Henderson distinguished himself as a scholar and professor at St. Andrew's University, but appeared to be at peace with prelacy in Christ's Church. His patron, the Archbishop of St. Andrews, arranged for him to become a minister in Scotland's parish of Leuchars.

When he and other clergymen gathered for his installation service, they approached the church only to find that the door was barricaded, a token of the displeasure of the congregation. The ministers were forced to enter the church through a window.



Later, Henderson learned that the well-known Presbyterian minister Robert Bruce, was preaching at a nearby church. The new preacher disguised himself and sat unobserved in a dark corner of the church. John Howie, in his book *The Scot's Worthies*, wrote: "When Bruce was come to the pulpit, he kept silence for some time as his usual manner was which did astonish Mr. Henderson; but it astonished him much more, when he heard him begin with these words, 'He that entereth not in by the door, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.' This, by the blessing of God, and the effectual working of the Holy Spirit, took such hold on him at that very instant, and made such impression on his heart afterwards, as proved the first means of his conversion unto Christ."

Howie also wrote: "After this he became not only a most faithful and diligent minister of the Gospel, but also a staunch Presbyterian, and had a very active hand in carrying on the covenanted work of Reformation, from the year 1638 to the day of his death."<sup>4</sup>

Alexander Henderson would prove to be an immense blessing from the Lord. His remaining nine years of life were spent in promoting and proclaiming the glorious, saving Gospel of His Redeemer and the "Crown Rights of Christ." The Lord Jesus said, "Fear not, little flock; for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom" (Luke 12:32). •

<sup>1</sup>W.M. Hetherington, *History of the Church of Scotland* (London: John Johnston, 1848), Vol. 1, p. 302.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Pollok Kerr, *The Blue Flag of the Covenant* (Richmond, VA: Whittet and Sheperdson, 1905).

<sup>3</sup>G.N.M. Collins, *The Heritage of our Fathers* (Edinburgh: The Knox Press, 1974).

<sup>4</sup>John Howie, *The Scot's Worthies* (Edinburgh: Johnstone, Hunter and Company, 1870), pp. 180-181.



*The Rev. Mark Evans is the pastor of Hope Presbyterian Church, Greenville, SC, and the Vice President of the American Council of Christian Churches.*

## MODERN EVANGELICALISM: FROM THE "MIDDLE WAY" TO TOTAL CAPITULATION TO THE "SPIRIT OF ERROR"

*Continued from page 1*

toric Park Street Church at the easternmost corner of Boston Common.

Both men had influence far beyond the walls of their respective church buildings, and cities. McIntire became a leading force in the founding of the American Council of Christian Churches (ACCC) in 1941, and Ockenga of the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) in 1942. McIntire later became the first president of the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC). McIntire was a representative of what was known as Fundamentalism, and Ockenga was part of what was called New Evangelicalism.

The two men's friendship was so close that Ockenga asked McIntire to serve as best man at his wedding. McIntire attended the founding meeting of the NAE in St. Louis, and invited the men there to join the ACCC. As the current website of the NAE explains, the delegates: "declined McIntire's invitation, believing that a more positive presentation of the gospel was needed. While they all shared serious reservations about the FCC [Federal Council of Churches], the participants did not feel that militant opposition and direct confrontation with the well-established Protestant council was the best strategy."

Under the tab discussing NAE history, the main headline reads: "**The National Association of Evangelicals was founded in 1942 as a fresh voice for biblical, Christ-centered faith that was meant to be a 'middle way' between the fundamentalist American Council of Christian Churches and the progressive Federal Council of Churches.**"

Indeed there was a foundational difference in the two groups. The ACCC held to separation from apos-

tasy, compromise, and unbelief. In contrast, the NAE held to a policy of "infiltration." While opposing the strong stand of the American Council of Christian Churches (ACCC) and the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC), these New Evangelical leaders encouraged men who stayed in the old apostate denominations to work within, seeking to bring things back closer to Bible teaching. It was simple disobedience to the Scriptures, and it has failed miserably. Instead of bringing the apostates to a Biblical position, it has led to all kinds of compromise within the larger evangelical movement.

As we fast forward to 2024, we see that the World Evangelical Alliance and many of its affiliates have totally capitulated in working hand in hand with the apostate World Council of Churches (WCC), and the Roman Catholic Church.

**This is a clear picture of where compromise ALWAYS leads. What was known as the New Evangelical movement is no longer some "middle way" between the Bible-believing Fundamentalists and those who stand in opposition to the Word of God. While still condemning those who stand militantly against error, and who believe in separation from such heresy, these evangelicals tragically appear to be quite comfortable working with those who have abandoned the pure Gospel of Jesus Christ, for a false earthly gospel which cannot save.**

The Apostle John, in one of the greatest passages in the Scriptures dealing with God's love, and the love we as Christians are to have, warns the believers to be very vigilant. In 1 John 4:1, he writes: "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world." Then, in verse 6, he makes clear that there are two spirits — "the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error." The Word of God speaks nothing of a "middle way." May we stand firmly on the side of "the spirit of truth." •

# Present With the Lord

**MISS JUDITH ELEANOR COLLINS** went to be with her Saviour, on June 7, 2024, after a storied career as a missionary of the Lord Jesus Christ. She was appointed by The Independent Board for Presbyterian For-

ecy, Biblical archaeology, Greek, and current church developments. She also taught Bible courses for awhile in the Kenya public schools.

Her ministry expanded into starting Sunday schools, and conducting



ign Missions in 1970, and served in her beloved Kenya for 54 years.

Born in 1935 in Wolfville, Nova Scotia, Miss Collins studied history and languages at various universities, and received the equivalent of a Bible school degree. She wrote: "I first professed faith in Christ in Truro [Nova Scotia] in 1953, when Miss Viola Cameron led me, floundering in doubt, to the Lord." The next year, Miss Collins graduated from Teacher's College, and became a public school teacher, with experience in all grades. She loved most the teaching of history and Latin at the high school level.

However, Miss Collins felt the call to use her gifts in full-time service to the Lord. In Kenya, she began teaching at the Bible College of East Africa, on such subjects as church history, proph-

gospel outreaches throughout Kenya. She loved to get the Word of God into the hands of as many as possible, and she distributed thousands of Bibles to civilians, the police and to those in the military. She also prepared and edited a unified Sunday school curriculum which was used in many churches in Kenya, and in other countries.

During furloughs, Miss Collins furthered her education by studying in the United States at Faith Theological Seminary and Western Reformed Seminary, where she earned her Master of Arts in Biblical studies in 1988. She also studied at what was then the Institute of Holy Land Studies, in Jerusalem.

For 17 years, she taught at Faith College of the Bible, then in Nairobi. The college is presently located in Eldoret, Kenya, and is operated by na-

tional leaders — a number of whom she trained.

In 2001, she embarked on a very adventurous project. Through connections with one of her students, Peter Lkayo, elders of the Rendille tribe in the Kaisut Desert of northern Kenya asked that she come and start a school in the village of Baalah. In the desolate desert, with no roads, no plumbing, no electricity, and very little water, she put her hand to a task that very few men would have undertaken.

The houses, known as "mins," were made of bent branches covered with goat and camel skins, or any burlap that made its way there. The floors were dirt. When there, Judith had her own "min," where she cheerfully stayed. The Baalah School continues on, training generations of those of the Rendille tribe.

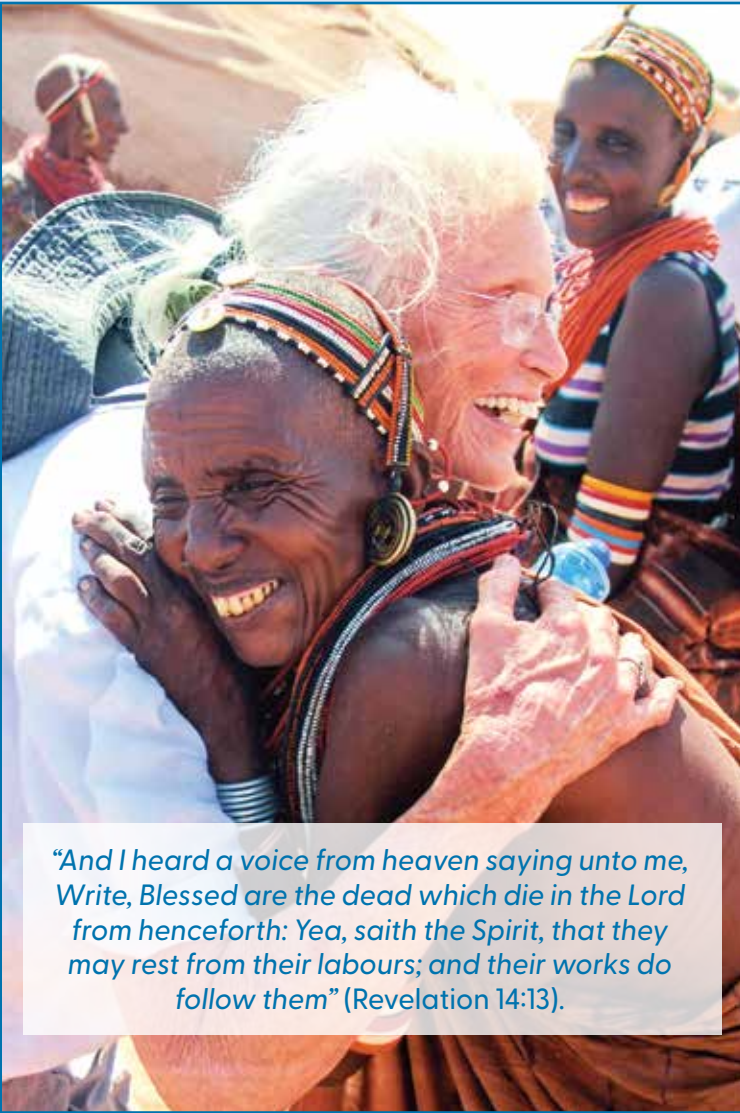
With more and more students and their parents coming to Christ, the need was great for a church in Baalah. Judith carried on a special ministry with the "mamas," visiting them in their "mins," becoming their friends, and presenting the Gospel to them. The first church building was erected in 2008, not far from the school. There are now several Bible Presbyterian churches in the area. Students that she helped train as children, and later to send to Bible college, now serve as pastors.

In all her years of service, imparting knowledge was never the final end for Miss Collins. Through her teaching, many pastors and Christian workers, across several generations, express their thanks to God for the vision she gave of serving the Lord with gladness and with zeal. Everything she set out to do was done with gusto and great purpose.

Miss Collins was laid to rest in her beloved Baalah. Her grave is near the school and church, next to the grave of Mrs. Ilmothi, the first person she led to the Lord there.

Pray that the Lord will raise up young men and women to go as missionaries, to continue on the glorious testimony of the Gospel of Jesus Christ around the world. •





*“And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, 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).*



# A WHIRLWIND VISIT HERE

MISS Judith Collins, of Nairobi, Kenya, was in Ipswich this week during a whirlwind tour of Australia.

“I’m on my way back to Canada to visit my father and came through Australia to visit our churches here,” she said.

Miss Collins, a tall, active and athletic looking blonde, teaches church history, Greek archaeology and modern religious problems at the Bible College of East Africa, Nairobi and, during school holidays, treks through the bush to take the program to village schools.

The college, which is financed by the Independent Board for Presbyterian Foreign Missions, of Philadelphia, USA, provides a three year diploma course for Kenyan pastors.

Thirteen denominations use the services of the college.

“Our biggest problem is training enough pastors for all the churches,” Miss Collins said. “Some of the pastors in the bush churches haven’t even completed primary school.”

The most fascinating part of Miss Collins’ work is perhaps “going bush” to take her teaching to the villages.

Miss Collins, who says she is not a Women’s Lib advocate, now regards Africa as her home. “My father still lives in Nova Scotia, but the rest of the family is scattered,” she said.

• WEARING a dress presented to her by the African Alliance of Churches, Judith Collins shows some of the teaching materials she uses in Kenyan bush schools.



One of many newspaper articles written about Miss Collins over the years



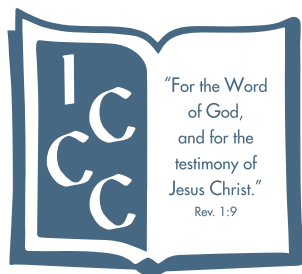




## ICCC Singapore leader visits Peruvian churches

In February 2024, the Rev. Kim-Sin Yap traveled to Callao, Ayacucho, and Iquitos, Peru, to visit a number of member churches of the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC).

Rev. Yap is a member of the Executive Committee of the ICCC, and president of the Singapore Council of Christian Churches.



Be in prayer for the work of the ICCC around the world. We are so thankful for the many churches that refuse to “bow the knee to Baal,” and stand “for the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

**PHOTOS** from the visit to Iquitos, in Peru’s Amazon region (clockwise from top):

- speaking to church members at a restaurant;
- ICCC Third Vice President Rev. Juan Hoyos with Rev. Yap;
- aboard a boat to go out on the mighty Nanay and Amazon rivers;
- in front of one of the churches.



# GOD'S GLORY MANIFEST IN HIS HOLINESS

*Continued from page 1*

love, mercy, and power. It is a testament to His greatness and serves as a constant reminder of His infinite majesty. His glory is beyond human comprehension, but we catch glimpses of it through His creation, His Word, and His redemptive work in our lives.

God's glory is described as great (Psalm 138:5), eternal (Psalm 104:31), rich (Ephesians 3:16), and most highly exalted (Psalm 8:1). We call this His "intrinsic glory." Because of His holy character, this glory is foundational to who He is.

We know that God is distinct in that no other being who has ever lived, or ever will live can be described as having inherent glory. This glory cannot be given to Him by us. He cannot increase in His glory, because He is already perfect. His glory cannot decrease, because He is always the same. His glory is complete, perfect, and everlasting.

## Glimpses of God's Glory

**A. While God's glory is beyond human comprehension, He graciously allows us to catch glimpses of it through various means.**

Firstly, His creation reflects His glory. Romans 1:20 tells us that God's invisible qualities, including His eternal power and divine nature, are clearly seen in what He has made. The intricate design of the universe, the complexity of living organisms, and the breathtaking beauty of nature all point to the glory of the Creator.

Secondly, God's glory is revealed through His Word, the Bible. In Psalm 19:1, David declares, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork." Through Scripture, we gain insights into God's character, His redemptive plan, and His unfailing love for humanity. As we study and meditate on His Word, we encounter His glory and are transformed by its power.

**B. Lastly, we experience glimpses of God's glory through His redemptive work in our lives.** Ephesians 2:4-5 states, "But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)." Through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we were reconciled to God and became partakers of His glory. As we embrace His grace, forgiveness, and transformation, His glory shines through us, drawing others to Him.

## The Beauty Of Holiness

"Give unto the Lord, O ye mighty, give unto the LORD glory and strength. Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (Psalm 29:1-2).

**A. Holiness reflects the perfect purity and righteousness of God.**

In Leviticus 11:44, God commands His people, "For I am the Lord your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy."

God's holiness sets Him apart from all imperfection and sin. It is the very essence of His nature. Holiness is characterized by moral purity, integrity, and obedience to God's commands. It is the

**"And one [seraph] cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory."**

*Isaiah 6:3*

standard by which God judges all things, and it is through His holiness that He reveals His glory.

**B. God calls us to worship Him in the beauty of holiness,** recognizing that His holiness sets Him apart and defines His nature.

Psalm 96:9 declares, "O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness: fear before him, all the earth." Our worship is not limited to attending church ser-

vices; it encompasses every aspect of our lives. When we approach God in worship, we recognize His holiness and submit ourselves to His sanctifying work. It is through His holiness that we are transformed and made more like Him. As we seek to live holy lives, we become vessels that display the beauty and glory of God's character to the world.

**C. Our worship is not just about singing hymns.** It is about honoring God with our lives, surrendering to His sanctifying work, and reflecting His holiness in our thoughts, actions, and words.

Worshiping God in the beauty of holiness goes beyond external tradition or acts of devotion. It involves a genuine heart transformation and a daily surrender and submission to God's sanctifying work in our lives. It means conforming our thoughts, actions, and words with His holiness. In 1 Peter 1:15-16, we are reminded, "But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy." Our pursuit of holiness is a lifelong journey, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and it is a testimony to the transformative power of God's grace.

## The Manifestation of God's Holiness

**A. In Isaiah 6:3, it says: And one [seraph] cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.** This repetition emphasizes the supreme holiness of God, permeating all creation.

This divine declaration highlights the supreme holiness of God. The repetition of "holy" emphasizes the depth and magnitude of His holiness. It signifies the complete separation of God from all that is impure, sinful, and imperfect. The holiness of God is not limited to a specific place or time. It permeates all creation, revealing His transcendence and uniqueness. It is a reminder that

*Continued on page 8*



# GOD'S GLORY MANIFEST IN HIS HOLINESS

Continued from page 7

God is set apart, infinitely pure, and worthy of our reverence and adoration.

**B. The holiness of God is revealed in His law**, which sets the standard for righteous living and guides us in walking in His ways.

The holiness of God is further revealed in His law. In Psalm 119:172, it says, "My tongue shall speak of thy word: for all thy commandments are righteousness." God's law sets the standard for righteous living and guides us in walking in His ways. It reflects His holiness and reveals His moral character. His commandments reflect His perfect wisdom, justice, and goodness. The law serves as a mirror, exposing our own sinfulness and need for His grace. It shows us the path of righteousness and points us to Jesus Christ, who fulfilled the law on our behalf.

**C. We witness God's holiness in His justice, mercy, and grace**, as He lovingly corrects and forgives His children.

His holiness demands justice, and He judges sin accordingly. However, His holiness is not void of compassion. In Exodus 34:6-7, God declares Himself as "The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth...." He lovingly corrects and disciplines His children, calling them to repentance and guiding them towards holiness. He extends His mercy and grace to those who turn to Him in humility and seek forgiveness. His holiness is not unapproachable but draws us closer to Him, offering redemption and restoration.

**D. The ultimate manifestation of God's holiness is seen in the person of Jesus Christ**, who lived a sinless life and sacrificed Himself on the cross to reconcile us to God.

Hebrews 7:26 describes Christ as "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens." Jesus lived a sinless life, perfectly embodying the holiness of God. He

demonstrated God's holiness through His teachings, miracles, and selfless acts of love. Through His sacrificial death on the cross, He made a way for us to be reconciled to God and experience His holiness. In Christ, we find forgiveness for our sins and are empowered to live

**"For I am the LORD your God: ye shall therefore sanctify yourselves, and ye shall be holy; for I am holy...."**

Leviticus 11:44

lives that reflect His holiness. He invites us into a relationship with Him, transforming us from the inside out and conforming us to His image.

## Responding to God's Glory Manifest in His Holiness

"Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Peter 1:16).

**A. Recognize the need for personal holiness:**

As believers, we are called to pursue holiness in every aspect of our lives, aligning our thoughts, desires, and actions with God's Word.

Our lives must always be theocentric, lives focused on giving God the glory.

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the LORD Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him" (Colossians 3:17).

**B. Embrace the transforming power of the Holy Spirit:**

Through the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, we are empowered to live holy lives that reflect God's glory to the world.

**C. Engage in corporate worship:** Gather with fellow believers to exalt God's name and experience the beauty of holiness together. Let our worship be sincere, reverent, and guided by the truth of God's Word.

"Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another ..." (Hebrews 10:25).

Today, many pulpits are focused on preaching from an anthropocentric point of view or perspective. There is much said with a religious sound to it, but far too little about God's glory, and the great power and authority of His Son, who He sent to die on the cross for our sins.

- There is mention of morality, but no mention of the glory of God in Christ.

- There are expressions of cultural concern and political commentary, but no Christ. There are positive thinking and inspirational stories, but no Christ.

- There are plenty of the external trappings of Christianity, but no internal reality of the glory of God revealed in Christ.

## What's Next?

Therefore, as pastors, missionaries, Bible scholars, Christian educators, and church leaders of our Lord Jesus who are faithful to the Word and Truth:

- Let us continue to preach faithfully the Glory and the whole counsel of our great God.

- Let us not grow weary in proclaiming God's Glory in our pulpits because His glory represents the greatness of who He is:

- His name (Proverbs 18:10);
- His majesty (Psalm 93:1);
- His power (Exodus 15:1, 6);
- His works (Psalm 19:1), and
- His holiness (Exodus 15:11).

May we continue to be faithful in our calling and living out God's glory in our lives for "the Word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ." •



*The Rev. Oscar G. Bautista is pastor of the Fundamental Baptist Church of Agudo, in Caloocan City, the Philippines. He is also the treasurer of the Philippine Council of Christian Churches.*





# “Follow the Lamb withersoever He goeth”\*

*“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me” (Matthew 16:24).*

**BY BRAD K. GSELL**

*This message was delivered on July 14, 2024, at the Bible Presbyterian Church of Charlotte, North Carolina.*

It will be helpful for you to read Matthew 16 in conjunction with this message.

**O**ur reading this morning, Matthew 16, is a very pivotal passage of Scripture in several important ways. Christ uses the interaction between Himself and His disciples to teach us the marks of true discipleship, of true servanthood.

## **The leaven of the pharisees and the saducees**

The chapter begins with the unbelieving Pharisees and Saducees up to their usual deceptions. They tried to trap Christ, by asking Him to show them a sign from heaven. But, they certainly did not catch Christ off guard. Christ always knew exactly what they were trying to do, and knew just what reply to give them.

He pointed to the signs of creation which we can all see and understand.

\* The title of this message is taken from Revelation 14:4.

He reminded them in particular of one sign we use to predict the weather — what in our time has been reduced to the maxim: “Red in the morning, sailor’s warning; Red at night, sailor’s delight.”

They could understand that but, as part of a wicked and adulterous generation, they could not discern the signs of the times. Although they were great Bible scholars, who could probably quote from memory large portions of the Old Testament, they were blind as to truly understanding the underlying theme of the Scriptures — that God had, out of His great love, sent His Son to save His people from their sins.

## **“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump”**

Immediately after this encounter, Christ’s disciples came unto Him. He instructed the disciples to: “Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.”

The disciples thought He was talking about the fact that they themselves had forgotten to bring bread to eat. Christ chided them for not understanding that it was SPIRITUAL ERROR He was talking about.

Leaven, such as yeast, is an agent which completely modifies a substance. We think of it particularly when we think of bread. One thing about leaven

is that once it is added, it is impossible to remove. It permeates the entire lump of dough. We usually think of leaven as something that makes another thing better. But, in the time of Christ, it was usually considered to be a corrupting agent.

Even today we see examples. If honey is stored properly, it can be edible for CENTURIES. However, stir a little water into it, and it can actually cause yeast to activate, and quickly ferment the honey. This summer we had a bumper crop of blueberries from our backyard. We store them in the refrigerator dry and unwashed, and they last for many days. However, we had a few that we washed and put in a bowl with a lid on it. In a few days we went to eat them and they were fermented! The moisture had activated something which caused them to go bad.

When Paul was dealing with the error of the Judaizers in Galatians 2, he likewise warned his readers that “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump.”

This is a warning that applies to all of us that even a little error, a little worldliness, a little of the works of the flesh will compromise and infect a believer.

## **The disciples put to the test**

As we proceed in this chapter, we see that Christ often taught His disciples by asking them questions. As they moved into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, He asked the disciples: “Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?”

Christ, of course, already knew the answer far better than did the disciples. They answered that some thought Christ was “John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.”

Christ wanted them to know that it was CRUCIAL for them to KNOW who He was. We cannot create a Christ of our own imaginations. We cannot afford to be ignorant of who the Scriptures say that He is. Several times in recent years, surveys have been taken

*Continued on page 10*

## “FOLLOW THE LAMB ...”

Continued from page 9

which show that many evangelicals, largely out of ignorance, hold to great errors as to who the Christ of the Scriptures actually is.

Christ's next question was: “But whom say ye that I am?” And here, Simon Peter, the disciple who was often impetuous and self-serving, who sank beneath the waves due to lack of faith, who later denied Christ three times, who the Apostle Paul had to “withstand to the face,” gave the glorious answer: “Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

Christ, declared Peter's declaration to be the very rock, or foundation, upon which His church was to be built!

### A right answer, but lack of understanding

But, sadly, Peter gave the right answer, but did not understand all that it entailed.

Immediately, after these verses, it says: “From that time forth began Jesus to shew unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.”

Was this just a reaffirmation of what the disciples already knew and firmly believed with all their hearts? Apparently not. It says that: “Then Peter took him [Christ], and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall not be unto thee.”

Here is a disciple of Christ, who had been taught by Christ every day, and yet he still failed to understand the whole reason Jesus came. He failed to see that Christ was the glorious fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. He did not yet understand the very heart of the Gospel!

Just four short verses after Christ's mighty declaration to Peter about building His church, He rebukes Peter severely: “Get thee behind me, Satan: thou

art an offence unto me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.” Is this man what Christ would build His church upon, as the Roman Catholics teach? No, the church is built on the Lord Jesus Christ.

Further, it is quite significant that just two chapters later, in Matthew 18:18, Christ gives ALL of His disciples the same promise that He gave to Peter in Matthew 16:19.

Even at the end, we see in Luke 24 the risen Christ with some of His followers in Emmaus. Christ had come unto them, but they did not recognize him. They were dejected and said in verse 21: “But we trusted [past tense] that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel.” In verse 25, Christ revealed Himself and declared to them: “O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.” He then preached to them about His finished work on the cross and victorious resurrection from the dead. Following this, He went to Jerusalem and faced the same unbelief with His very disciples. They were frightened. Again He opened the Scriptures, and even presented the nailprints in His hands and feet as proof.

### Christ opened their eyes, just as our eyes are opened today

But verse 45 tells us concerning Christ: “Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the scriptures.” After that, His disciples spent the rest of their lives spreading the Good News of Jesus Christ.

I have sometimes heard someone say, “Did you hear what Mrs. Jones said? Well, that shows me that Pastor so-and-so obviously did not teach the people very well.”

And, I think, “That may not necessarily be true.” He who was the very Son of God taught his disciples PERFECTLY, and yet we see the failings of the disciples on many occasions — even the total betrayal of Christ by Judas Iscariot. We are told several times in the Scriptures: “having eyes they see not, and having ears, they hear not.”

Paul warned Timothy of those who are totally carnally minded. He says that they are “Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.” It is the Spirit of God only who enlightens our hearts to understand the truth of God's Word. And Christ's disciples, with all their failings, did come by faith and were gloriously saved by Christ. They went out, following Christ's ascension into heaven and turned the world upside down!

### Christian Disciples in the 21st century

As Matthew 16 comes to a close, Christ tells His disciples what His disciples of all ages, including those of us sitting here today in these pews need to do to truly be His disciples.

In Matthew 16:24-26, Christ gives us the requirements for us to be His disciples: “Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”

### “How should we then live?” (Ezekiel 33:10)

In Ezekiel 33, God tells the Prophet to warn the people of their sins; to blow the trumpet and call them to turn unto righteousness — to repent! At the end of verse 10, He tells Ezekiel to ask the people: “How should we then live?” Some of you remember that the late Dr. Francis Schaeffer wrote a whole book and produced a documentary film series with this title.

The Word of God gives us the answer to this question. How should we, who are sons and daughters of God, live as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

**1. Of course, a disciple must first be saved** by the Scriptures alone, by



faith alone, by grace alone, by Christ alone, and to the glory of God alone. There are some who think that they just need to declare some cursory belief and then they are free to live like the devil. That is not what the Scriptures teach!

## **2. We must read, study, meditate on, and obey the Word of God.**

John 8:31-32 tells us: “Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

There were several things which led to naming of our denomination the BIBLE Presbyterian Church. One account was that a little boy who was the son of one of the pastors, said something to the effect of: “Since we believe and preach the Bible, why not call it the Bible Presbyterian Church?” Know and obey the Word of God.

Christ also said in John 14:15: “If ye love me, keep my commandments.”

We cannot be obedient to something we do not know. The Christian must read, study and meditate on the Word of God, and “pray without ceasing.”

**3. Our hearts and lives must be centered on the praise and worship of God Almighty.** Nothing we can do of ourselves will amount to anything. Revelation 19:5-6 says: “And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.”

Sadly, in 21st century America, we see the focus of many Christians shifted onto themselves. Some have been taken in by the false “health and wealth” gospel.

Some have flocked to megachurches, because they have every sport imaginable, dinner theaters, and a plethora of self-help and “enrichment” programs.

Plus, it is a good place to “network” — to further your business pursuits. Many of these things are fine in their place — but they are NOT the reason for the existence of the church of Jesus Christ, or why we come to church.

Our Westminster Shorter Catechism Question 1 tells us: “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy Him forever.”

## **When we look at the epistles in the New Testament, written by the Apostles, we do not see them throwing around their power and privilege, or making demands out of their own self interest. No, Paul, Peter, James, Jude, and John all refer to themselves as SERVANTS of God, or SERVANTS of Jesus Christ.**

When we come to church, our hearts must be focused on glorifying and worshipping the Lord. It is not so much for us to “enjoy” the program, although a heart serving God should delight in the services. Psalm 122:1 says: “I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.”

Through our faithfulness to God, our faithful meditation and reading of God’s Word — all through the week — and the faithful preaching of the Word, our needs are met. When we come to church ready to worship Him out of a sincere heart, He in return will give us blessings beyond measure.

If our focus is on serving and glorifying God, GOD WILL give us joy. We need not look for it in any other place. Psalm 16:11 tells us: “Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.”

## **4. We must “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Sav-**

**our Jesus Christ.”** A disciple of Jesus Christ must not remain a baby. He must always move toward spiritual maturity. The work of God in the sanctification of each believer is crucial. By this growth in grace, we become more and more like Christ, and are enabled more and more to die unto sin, and live unto righteousness.”

1 Corinthians 3:1-3: “And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?”

## **5. The “fruit of the Spirit” must be more and more evidenced in our lives.**

Galatians 5:22-23 states: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.” Memorize this, and seek to apply it to everything you do!

## **6. In God’s work of sanctification in our lives,**

we must become more and more the enemies of the practices of the world around us. In fact, one of the definitions of the word “sanctification” is “to be set apart” FROM that which is evil TO be a clean vessel reserved for our Master’s use. The more we are set apart for God’s use, the less the lures and desires of the world will appeal to us.

## **7. We must have genuine love for our brothers and sisters in Christ.**

Dr. Bob Jones, Jr., once said in a sermon: “When I look around at other people, it must be concluded that God is a God of great variety.”

Each of us is at a different place on the road to godliness. Each of us has a different personality, different interests, a different upbringing, different abilities, different strengths, and different weaknesses. We may see things in

*Continued on page 12*

## “FOLLOW THE LAMB ...”

Continued from page 13

others that may delight us — or annoy us. But, God has commanded us to love our brethren, to live peaceably with them, to care for them, to rejoice at their victories, and to sorrow with them in times of distress and tribulation. And, Paul tells us that this love must be genuine, and come from deep within hearts that love the Lord Jesus Christ.

This is so important, that Jesus Christ said: “By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another” (John 13:35).

**8. We must have the Good News of the Gospel on our lips.** Obeying Christ’s Great Commission should be the joy of our lives. We all know Acts 1:8: “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” A true disciple will tell the Good News of Jesus Christ wherever he goes, and it will be evident in his life. There are many ways of doing this.

**9. We must “earnestly contend for the faith.”** Christ and the Apostles very frequently warned believers in the churches about “false prophets, “wolves in sheep’s clothing, “ungodly men” who had “crept in awares,” and so forth. The more we stay close to Christ and His Word, the more we will have godly discernment.

**10. Finally, we must be servants of God.** One of the biggest problems in 21st century America is that most people want to be free to do what they want to do. They want no restraints. They want no responsibility for their actions. They do not want to be subservient to anybody, or any thing — including God.

The “self esteem” philosophy being foisted on our children in the public schools is not teaching them to have

fulfilled lives of using their gifts for the glory of God. Instead, self-centeredness is taught. No concept of our sinfulness and the need for humility is part of the lesson plan.

This has crept into the church in many ways. People want to be entertained. People want the church to serve them. Many look at choosing a church like they do with deciding which grocery store is more to their liking. Yet, if you read God’s Word, obedience and servanthood are at the foundation of being a true disciple of Jesus Christ!

**LET ME REPEAT THAT: OBEDIENCE AND SERVANTHOOD ARE AT THE FOUNDATION OF BEING A TRUE DISCIPLE OF JESUS CHRIST!**

When we look at the epistles in the New Testament written by the Apostles, we do not see them throwing around their power and privilege, or making demands out of their own self interest. No, Paul, Peter, James, Jude, and John all refer to themselves as SERVANTS of God, or SERVANTS of Jesus Christ.

The word used in all of these instances is the Greek word δούλος [doulos], which literally means “slave.” We are slaves to our Master, Jesus Christ.

Another word for “servant” in the New Testament is διάκονος [diakonos]. This word means to serve one another. It is also the word that is used for the office of deacon.

In Mark 10:43-44, Christ uses both of these words to describe what should characterize His disciples.

In fact, it is hard to find any of God’s people in the Scriptures who were not referred to as SERVANTS or SLAVES — Abraham, Moses, David, the Prophets, and many, many more.

Every minister and elder is to be a servant. 1 Peter 5:3 tells us: “Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being examples to the flock.”

Every believer, every church member, who has ever lived is to be a servant and to be subject to God and to each other. 1 Peter 5:5 states: “Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God re-

sisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.”

Ephesians 5:21 says: “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.”

We should each resolve that we will pray diligently before the Lord concerning any deficiencies or imperfections we see in others. We will do all that we can to be examples, to help the other person to progress in their spiritual walk, and to be what God wants each of us to be, no matter what others are doing. The Greek word for “church” is ἐκκλησία [ekklesia]. It means “assembly” or “gathering.” We are not to sit at home every Sunday and watch a made-for-TV service. We are to gather, to assemble.

Hopefully, our meeting with other believers at church is a real joy and blessing to us. I know it is for me!

But, if occasionally someone rubs us the wrong way, hurts our feelings, slights us, or does something else that bothers us, is our response: “I’m leaving that church! No one is going to talk that way to me!” Or, do we take heed to the words of the hymn: “O what peace we often forfeit, O what needless pain we bear, All because we do not carry Everything to God in prayer!”

Do we pray, “Lord, please work in that person’s life. Lord, help me to show forth Christ in my response. Lord, teach me from this experience, so that it will make me a stronger Christian and draw me closer to Thee?”

I think of people like Sara Parks, our church secretary for many years. She was a very godly lady. Even in the few times when there were frictions between some people in the church, Miss Parks seemed to remain a friend with those on both sides. It wasn’t because she just told whoever she was talking to what they wanted to hear. She usually told them quite clearly from the Scriptures what they needed to hear. She was a peacemaker! She was one of those rare individuals who could tell you where you were wrong in such a way that you never stopped loving her.



Miss Parks joined the first Bible Presbyterian Church of Charlotte in 1939, when she was 20 years old. Through various ups and downs through the decades, she was determined to honor Christ, and that she did until her death in 2012, at age 93! That is the spirit of a servant we all must have. A heart focused on Christ will be one that will withstand all the storms that life will invariably throw at us.

Christ has established His church, and our whole life passion should be to serve Him in such a way that His work will flourish. As John the Baptist said in John 3:30: “He [Christ] must increase, but I must decrease.”

God can use mightily those strong, resilient disciples who cling to Christ and have surrendered their lives to be choice vessels in His service. Let all of us strive, with the help of God’s Spirit, to be such SERVANTS of Christ! Let us take up our cross, and follow “the Lamb withersoever He goeth”!

*Not I, but Christ be honored, loved, exalted,  
Not I, but Christ be seen, be known and heard;  
Not I, but Christ in every look and action,  
Not I, but Christ in every thought and word.*

*Oh, to be saved from myself, dear Lord,  
Oh, to be lost in Thee,  
Oh, that it may be no more I,  
But Christ that lives in me.*

*Christ, only Christ, no idle word e'er falling,  
Christ, only Christ, no needless bustling sound;  
Christ, only Christ, no self-important bearing,  
Christ, only Christ, no trace of I be found.*

*Not I, but Christ my every need supplying,  
Not I, but Christ my strength and health to be;  
Christ, only Christ, for spirit, soul, and body,  
Christ, only Christ, live then Thy life in me.*

Ada A. Whiddington



*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.*

appear with him <sup>c</sup>in glory.  
5 <sup>a</sup>Mortify<sup>1</sup> therefore <sup>b</sup>your members which are upon the earth; <sup>c</sup>fornication, uncleanness, <sup>2</sup>inordinate affection, evil <sup>3</sup>concupiscence, and covetousness, <sup>d</sup>which is idolatry:

## Evangelical Conformity to the Morality of This World

One thing about true Christianity is that it does not take its cues from society. It takes its instruction from the Word of God alone. Of course, all Christians who have ever lived are surrounded by the world in which they were born. Paul tells us in 1 Corinthians 5:10 that we all live in daily contact with those involved in sin in this world. Paul states concerning the impossibility of avoiding this: “for then must ye needs go out of the world.”

Unfortunately, many evangelicals are following the mainline denominations in abandoning the clear teachings of Scripture concerning immorality — particularly homosexuality. Of course, it is impossible to know the true statistics, since the term “evangelical” is used very loosely in our day. But there is no doubt about it that there is a steep increase in evangelicals who accept “gay marriage,” particularly younger people. Often, a misplaced sense of “love” and “compassion” are used to seek to neutralize or abandon clear Biblical commands.

The situation has gotten so bad, that *World* magazine had a major article in its October 21, 2023 issue, declaring “The push to accept homosexuality gutted traditional Protestantism. Evangelical churches are headed down the same road.”

Typical of what has happened over the last 80 years, compromising evangelicalism continues today in its great desire to remain respectable within the culture. Such magazines as *Christianity Today* have often published articles which cause the reader to scratch his head trying to figure out where the writer stands on any given issue — or if he takes any stand at all.

*World* confirms this: “Nearly a decade after the U.S. Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage, church leaders face intensifying pressure to adopt current cultural language and messages about sexuality and gender. More pastors are capitulating, nudging evangelicalism down the same road that has gutted mainline Protestantism.”

A number of organizations seeking to promote the acceptance and normalization of the idea of openly “gay Christians” have formed claiming to be evangelical. Andy Stanley, son of the late Dr. Charles Stanley, hosted the Unconditional Conference last year at his North Point Community Church in Alpharetta, Georgia. It was sponsored by an organization named Embracing the Journey. Among the 14 speakers were Stanley and two men who were “married” to other men.

*Continued on page 14*

## EVANGELICAL CONFORMITY...

Continued from page 13

It is little wonder that Andy Stanley has gone down this path. He opined in 2018 that the Christian faith must become “unhitched” from the Old Testament, and joined the chorus of those who say that we should ignore the Bible’s “clobber passages” against homosexuality. Stanley sadly has clearly entered the realm of heterodoxy, when he can ditch the largest part of the Bible, and ignore other passages on a whim. Stanley accused his critics of misinterpreting his “unhitched” comment but, in trying to defend himself, he made his error even more apparent.

Another controversy which hit the news several years ago was the holding of the Revoice Conference in the Memorial Presbyterian Church of St. Louis, Missouri, pastored by the Rev. Greg Johnson. As a member of the more conservative Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), there was much criticism — both within and without the church — of a congregation in that denomination holding such an event. The conference was based on the belief that same sex attraction itself is an inherent condition, rather than a sin which needs to be mortified. Revoice asks the church to apologize for holding to Biblical morality, rather than

accepting them as “gay Christians” who are celebrate. This view has been widely termed “Side B,” for short.

Memorial Presbyterian Church and Rev. Johnson eventually withdrew from the PCA, but the denomination has struggled with this issue in successive general assemblies. Recently, enough votes were finally mustered to amend the Book of Church Order concerning this matter — but only after wording about homosexuality was replaced with more generic language about “sexual purity.”

Another example is Rick Warren’s Saddleback Church. It was put out of the Southern Baptist Convention last year, since this church now allows women to be ministers. Their Lake Forest, California, campus has a chapter of Embracing the Journey, set up to “build bridges between LGBTQ+ individuals, their families, and the church.”

Sadly, the websites, literature and conferences of these organizations are being used by solidly pro-gay secular organizations to tell young people that their sin is OK. The radical Human Rights Campaign, which does much to harass churches and businesses that refuse to cater to the gay agenda, has a pamphlet entitled: “*Coming Home to Evangelicalism and to Self.*” It quotes David Gushee, one of the speakers at the event at Stanley’s church, to try to explain away what the Bible teaches. It also has a resource to help evangelicals find “gay-affirming churches.”

In one section, dealing with “Sacred Texts,” this pamphlet states that the “... call for people of faith to reconcile their concerns and affirm LGBTQ lives can be a tall order. For many, the Bible is crystal clear in its teachings on same-sex behavior.” It continues: “Several passages, spread across the Old and New Testament, appear to name same-sex behavior as a grievous sin and even depict those who practice it as outside the grace of God. **It is sometimes Scripture that offers the greatest challenge to LGBTQ evangelical Christians**, who feel that their inherent nature is in conflict with biblical teachings.” For them,

these Scriptural obstacles need to be reinterpreted, or pushed out of the way.

Thankfully, there are many churches and pastors who will not bend to this growing pressure to abandon what God tells us in the Scriptures. Those who seek to loosen the Biblical standards often do so out of a misplaced desire to show “compassion.” True compassion will always remain unmovable as to the clear teaching of the Scriptures, while presenting the saving gospel of Christ to all who are lost.

**A Christian should “identify” as a “new creature” in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17), not by “the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts” (Ephesians 4:22). Paul tells us to: “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence [evil desires], and covetousness, which is idolatry” (Colossians 3:5).**

Question 138 of the Westminster Larger Catechism states that the Seventh Commandment (“Thou shalt not commit adultery”) requires of us to have: “chastity in body, mind, affections, words, and behaviour...” Question 139 states concerning what is forbidden: “all unnatural lusts; all unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and affections.” Therefore, sins of immorality are not just confined to physical acts, but include equally what is in our hearts and minds.”

In 2017, the American Council of Christian Churches passed a resolution dealing with this “Plan B” philosophy. Instead of a person placing their identity in their sin, as something that is innate and unchangeable, Paul tells us in Colossians 3:5 to: “Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth:

### REDEEMING THE TIME

Editor: Brad K. Gsell

Associate Editor: Mark W. Evans

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e-mail: [redemptingthetime@bellsouth.net](mailto:redemptingthetime@bellsouth.net)

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fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence [evil desires], and covetousness, which is idolatry.”

The resolution continues: “The seventh commandment explicitly forbids the act of adultery. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus declared that this commandment extends beyond the act to include attraction: ‘But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart’ (Matthew 5:28).”

In conclusion, the resolution states that the ACCC “resolves to warn Bible-believing churches and institutions against the subtle compromise of accepting same-sex attraction as harmless, and to speak the truth in love to those experiencing this sinful desire in order to help them find spiritual transformation and victory over the lusts of the flesh. We shall trust the sufficiency of the promises of Scripture in the battle we all face with sinful desires and addictions: ‘If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin’ (1 John 1:7); ‘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); ‘Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh’ (Galatians 5:16).” •

—Brad K. Gsell

Several articles in this issue of *Redeeming the Time* deal with the continuing compromise of many in the overall evangelical movement. However, we praise the Lord that there are MANY evangelical and fundamental churches which remain strong in their stand for what the Bible teaches — despite what is happening in the sinful culture around us. We rejoice with all who have compassion for lost sinners, and for their brothers and sisters in Christ, but stand firmly on the truth that: “The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever” (Isaiah 40:8).



## “An Unholy Communion”

*The consequences of the normalization of drinking alcohol in the evangelical church*

**C**hristianity Today magazine has published a major article in its May/June 2024 issue entitled: “An Unholy Communion.” The byline reads: “As alcohol use among Christians is normalized, women especially are struggling — in secret.”

Writer Ericka Andersen notes that as more alcohol ads were being targeted at women in the 21st century: “Simultaneously, more Christians were shunning the hard boundaries of teetotaling fundamentalism, preferring not to be labeled ‘legalistic.’ This combination of factors meant church ladies and stay-at-home moms joined the ranks of those tipping back far more frequently than ever before. *It’s your right to indulge*, they were told.”

This has given rise to “mommy wine culture,” and “rosé all day” slogans. Andersen presents quite a bit of research showing that alcohol disproportionately affects women in greater ways than it does men. Cases of liver cancer and cirrhosis of the liver have risen exponentially in women in their 20s — blamed in large measure to this increase of drinking.

The article continues: “In many church settings, as alcohol is normalized and even considered missional, there is often little consideration that someone might struggle with substance abuse....

“Many churches serve wine for Communion. In some contexts, it’s common at unofficial church-social gatherings to serve alcohol — and in some churches, at more official events.”

One lady struggling with alcohol, stated: “When I was drinking, I would go out with my church small group on the weekends and drink with them. A mission team I joined had trip-planning meetings at a bar, where people would sip whiskey and wine while brainstorming outreach events. At a church retreat, my cabinmates suggested we ‘sneak’ some wine in — while I was trying to escape alcohol’s call by being at the retreat.”

Andersen continues in the article that churches “should be the perfect place to ask for help. But meetings with titles like ‘Pastors and Pints,’ ‘Wined Down Wednesdays,’ and ‘Beer and

*Continued on page 16*

Mark your calendars ...

## “AN UNHOLY COMMUNION”

Continued from page 15

Hymns’ or other alcohol infused gatherings are confusing and unhelpful while implying that the church is not the place to seek help.”

### Coming from *Christianity Today*?

*Christianity Today* has moved to the far left fringes of evangelicalism in recent years. Thus, few would have expected them to feature such a story. For them to do so shows that it has become a major problem indeed!

The magazine was the flagship publication of what was known as the New Evangelical movement in the middle of the 20th century. It was founded by Billy Graham, and edited by theologian Carl Henry. Its leftward move caused Graham eventually to disassociate himself from the magazine. Several recent articles have caused sharp rebukes from Graham’s son Franklin.

Some had hoped that the naming of Russell Moore as the magazine’s editor-in-chief might bring it back toward the center. Moore previously served as head of the Southern Baptist Convention’s Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission.

However, just last December, the magazine included an article about depictions of Christ in various Asian cultures, and favorably showcased art from Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims — out of “their own faith tradition’s reverence for Jesus.”

Graham replied publicly saying that all know that Christ’s human lineage was Jewish: “Guess what — we don’t get to make God in our own image.... He is Who He is! We must be on guard against anything or anyone who attempts to undermine the authority of the Word of God.”

### A personal note

Growing up in Pennsylvania farm country, it was just a fact in evangelical

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and fundamental churches that “Christians don’t drink.” The Bible has many warnings against strong drink. Proverbs 20:1 is quite clear: “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging; and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.”

I even recited Joshua 1:1-9 in front of an intimidating group of lady judges of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union!

Further, it was considered “expedient” to protect one’s testimony and to avoid at all cost being the cause of someone else falling into sin. 1 Corinthians 6:12 says: “All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any.”

This was reinforced by teaching from the pulpit, in youth groups, at Christian camps and pretty much in the society at large. Of course there were people who drank, but it was not viewed at all positively.

### Social drinking by churchgoers

Social drinking by churchgoers, particularly in bigger cities, was more commonplace. In fact such nicknames as “Whiskeypalians” cropped up to highlight the alcohol culture observed in some groups.

Even such conservative denominations as the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC), make a strong point to condemn insistence on “teetotalism” as going “further than the Scriptures.” Some in that group openly drink. They even condemned some who formed the Bible Presbyterian denomination for telling their young people not to drink alcohol.

Dr. J. Oliver Buswell, president of Wheaton College, and a founder of the

Bible Presbyterian Church, was quoted in the newspapers as saying that he could not remain in a “wet church,” referring to the stand taken by the OPC.

In church history, many evangelicals stood against alcohol and some were very active in the Temperance movement. Some who found what they saw to be excesses in the Temperance movement are nonetheless on record encouraging various young people not to drink.

The destruction of thousands of families, and the onset of numerous social ills caused by alcoholism, became such a blight on society that Bible-believing Christians did not want in any way to be a stumbling block to others. Further, there was much scientific evidence that distillation and other modern methods had created beverages with many times the percentage of alcohol than was even possible in Bible times.

### Today’s young evangelicals

Many of today’s young evangelicals appear less interested in preserving their testimony before others than they are about their supposed “right” to “Christian liberty.” Certainly, we must not add to the Scriptures as to rules for Christian living. However, Paul tells us in Galatians 5:13: “For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.”

As servants of Christ, may we heed the warning of the Apostle Paul: “Let ... no man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother’s way” (Romans 14:13). May we not be the cause of others falling into sin or being ensnared by deadly addiction. •

—Brad K. Gsell