

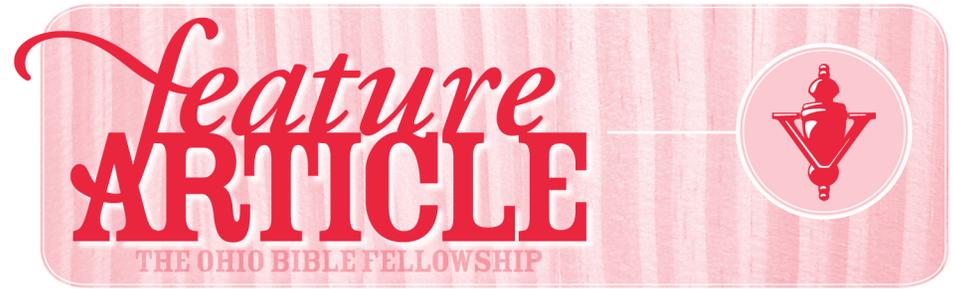
grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, to His glory alone.”

However, there is one vital element of Biblical truth that is missing from the document. There is no call to adhere to the Biblical doctrine of separation. Instead, Article XV states, “We affirm that evangelical congregations are to work together in humble and voluntary cooperation and that the spiritual fellowship of Gospel congregations bears witness to the unity of the Church and the glory of God.” However, what constitutes an evangelical congregation is not readily apparent. It is even less apparent when considering that two of the signers of that document, Albert Mohler and J. Ligon Duncan III, are also signers of the Manhattan Declaration that pointedly affirms that Roman Catholics and adherents of Eastern Orthodoxy are fellow Christians.

The appeal of Together for the Gospel is undeniable. The 2010 conference attracted an attendance that numbered in the thousands. The potential for harm, however, is just as real. The idea that cooperation can be a function of agreeing on the Gospel without referencing the historic lines of Biblical separation sounds eerily like the philosophy of the “new” evangelicalism from the late 1940s and onward. The inclusion of so-called Reformed Charismatics as speakers in the conferences, notably C. J. Mahaney, has been justified by describing them as continuationists as opposed to other speakers who are called cessationists. This assumption that there is a place for charismatics in the evangelical tent is not a new error, but the use of the affirmations and denials makes the argument for that place more attractive to those already inclined against Biblical separation.

This new movement, then, follows previous error in neglecting the Biblical doctrine of separation that has always marked Fundamentalism. Sadly, some fundamentalist institutions have begun to welcome as co-laborers some conservative evangelicals associated with efforts like Together for the Gospel. If such trends continue, what has been known as historic Fundamentalism, with its emphasis on Biblical separation, personally and ecclesiastically, will be seriously eroded if not rendered irrelevant.

Therefore, the delegates to the 69th annual convention of the American Council of Christian Churches, meeting October 19-21, 2010 in Hope Baptist Church, Hanover, PA resolve to remind God’s people that Biblical separatism is a watershed doctrine that has its source in the attribute of God’s holiness and determines what kind of legacy we will leave to the generations that follow our own. Undermining separatism for the purposes of cooperation with those who either define the doctrine more loosely or do not hold it at all has proven costly in the past, and it will do so again. Faithfulness from generation to generation requires that we do not surrender the ground that has been defended by those who have gone before us lest those who come after us have no ground left to defend.



D E C . 2 0 1 0

V O L . 4 3 , N O . 7

RESOLUTION ON CREATION AND EVOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Bible says that in “six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it” (Exod 20:11); and

WHEREAS, the theory of evolution holds that the universe including the earth with all its life evolved over billions of years; and

WHEREAS, science is “systematized knowledge derived from observation, study, and experimentation carried on in order to determine the nature of principles of what is being studied” (Webster’s New World Dictionary); and

WHEREAS, the theory of evolution is not properly science but a philosophy bordering on religion that requires faith, since it is impossible to observe it happening over billions of years and no complete experimentation can be carried out on it during that time; and

WHEREAS, the theory of evolution undermines the doctrine of sin and salvation, since evolution requires death for the survival of the fittest before man ever existed, whereas the Bible states that death did not exist until man sinned (Rom 5:12); and

WHEREAS, certain ungodly philosophies are based upon evolution such as Communism, Nazism, certain forms of racism, and is a foundation for many forms of immorality;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we the delegates and members of the Ohio Bible Fellowship at its 2010 Fall Conference in Bellevue and Willard, Ohio, identify the theory of evolution as one of the great errors and heresies of our age that has led to all manner of sins; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we believe that the Lord created the universe out of nothing in six standard earth days, not more than ten thousand years ago in keeping with a literal biblical chronology; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that we will stand against the theory of evolution and its resulting errors in our teaching and preaching and teach young earth creation according to a literal reading of the Bible.

RESOLUTION ON BIBLICAL SEPARATION AND EVANGELICALS

WHEREAS biblical separatism is based on the holiness of God (2 Cor 6:14–7:1; 1 Pet 1:14–16); and

WHEREAS “ecclesiastical separation is grounded in the character of God Himself,” being an “expression of His eternal holiness” (Rolland McCune, Promise Unfulfilled, p. 138); and

WHEREAS ecclesiastical separation involves having no fellowship in spiritual endeavors with either apostates (Rom 16:17–19; 2 Cor 6:14–7:1; 2 John 7–11), or disobedient brethren (2 Thess 3:6, 14–15); and

WHEREAS there is a legitimate corruption by association that we must fear (1 Cor 15:33; cf. Prov 22:24–25); and

WHEREAS one promotes those with whom he associates (2 Chron 19:2; Gal 2:12–14; 1 Tim 5:22), thereby potentially identifying oneself and one’s ministry with those who do not believe and obey the Word of God in either doctrine or practice (1 Cor 5:6; 2 Thess 3:14); and

WHEREAS there have always been evangelicals who have done good work for the Lord but have either been inconsistent, apathetic, or denied the doctrine and practice of separation from either apostates or disobedient brethren; and

WHEREAS we are alarmed by the growing trend among many separatists, who, basing their separation on something other than God’s holiness, engage in spiritual endeavor with such evangelicals;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that we, the members and delegates of the Ohio Bible Fellowship meeting in our Fall Conference on October 8–9, 2010 at Faith Bible Church, Bellevue, Ohio, and Calvary Baptist Church, Willard, Ohio, make every effort to consistently practice biblical separation, thereby obeying our God and expressing His holiness; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we encourage our separatist brethren and ministries to base their separation on the holiness of God, recognizing that associations affect their testimony, the ministries they represent, and their influence on other separatists; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that we encourage our evangelical brethren to believe and consistently practice the doctrine of separation from both apostates and disobedient brethren, thereby glorifying God by expressing His holiness.

The following resolution recently passed by the American Council of Christian Churches is included as it is consistent with and adds helpful detail to the above resolution passed by the Ohio Bible Fellowship at its recent fall meeting.

RESOLUTION ON TOGETHER FOR THE GOSPEL

The theological and ecclesiastical confusion that has its roots in the middle of the 20th century and that has been flourishing in the first decade of the 21st century springs from the willingness to forsake the Biblical doctrine of separation. The “new” evangelicalism of dialogue and cooperation with those who deny the Gospel departed decades ago from the old evangelicalism, also known as Fundamentalism, which stressed the need for the people of God to maintain separation from those who depart from Biblical truth (Eph 5:11).

Early in the 21st century, another movement has begun as an effort to counter the dilution of Gospel doctrine by the marketing schemes concocted to make church growth easier to generate and consolidate. Part of those schemes emphasized the need to avoid any heavy emphasis on doctrine, particularly doctrine that could make seekers uncomfortable. A certain group in evangelicalism sounded the alarm that some churches, at least, had opted for the road of less resistance and had weakened the Gospel message to such an extent that it was practically devoid of any direction to show people how to be saved or even that they needed to be saved.

In the middle of the century’s first decade, four men agreed to establish a movement that they called Together for the Gospel. Initially, its main purpose was to organize conferences every two years, beginning in the spring of 2006, which they hoped would attract those who had become alarmed at the weakening of the evangelical message. Since then, it has developed into the desire for a loose affiliation of individuals and churches that have been involved in the conferences. The founders of the movement were J. Ligon Duncan III, who until this past June was Moderator of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA); Mark Dever, senior pastor of Capital Hill Baptist Church, a Southern Baptist Church in Washington, D.C.; C. J. Mahaney, who served for 27 years as pastor of Covenant Life Church in Gaithersburg, MD and who now leads Sovereign Grace Ministries; and Albert Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.

Those men drafted a constitutional document for their movement that they called Affirmations and Denials in which they sought to clarify the purposes they were trying to achieve. They began by saying, “We are brothers in Christ united in one great cause – to stand together for the Gospel. We are convinced that the Gospel of Jesus Christ has been misrepresented, misunderstood, and marginalized in many churches and among many who claim the name of Christ. Compromise of the Gospel has led to the preaching of false gospels, the seduction of many minds and movements, and the weakening of the church’s Gospel witness.” They added, “We are concerned about the tendency of so many churches to substitute technique for truth, therapy for theology, and management for ministry.”

These statements along with many other parts of the document express sentiments for which Fundamentalists have been contending for years. The doctrinal affirmations and denials of Together for the Gospel reflect sound orthodoxy. For examples, Article VII maintains, “We affirm that salvation is all of grace, and that the Gospel is revealed to us in doctrines that most faithfully exalt God’s sovereign purpose to save sinners and in His determination to save his redeemed people by