

American Council of Christian Churches  
71st Annual Convention, October 23-25, 2012  
Cedar View Independent Methodist Church, Kingsport, Tennessee  
Resolution: "A Call for Godly Christian Living in Evil Times"

Few will deny that we are living in evil times. The enemy has "come in like a flood." Every perversion imaginable to sinful man is now promoted as "good" or "normal." Basic standards of morality and decency, which once prevailed in the United States, now have been largely abandoned. Sadly, as our society's culture has sunk further into the swamp of moral degeneracy, a love for the world has eroded the standards of many Christians, which were once grounded upon the teachings of God's Word. Selections of music, entertainment, clothing, and other choices necessary to godly living have become more similar to and less distinct from those of the lusts of the world. Many of God's people lack a zeal for putting a cultural difference between the clean and the unclean (Lev. 20:22-26).

The true child of God must reject and resist such worldliness. The Bible warns that the world in which we live is in an important sense the domain of the prince of the power of the air (Eph. 2:2). What God has ordained for life in this world, Satan has sought to corrupt. For this reason, Paul warns in Romans 12:1-2, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."

1 John 2:15-17 commands us to "love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever." To love the world in this sense is to fail to love the Father. To conform to the cultural norms produced by this lack of love for the Father is to communicate a similar lack of love for Him.

Some justify a greater conformity to the world by divorcing what is in the heart of a Christian from his outward appearance and actions. God indeed told Samuel: "for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart" (1 Sam. 16:7). However, what is in the heart will always manifest itself outwardly. "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil" (Luke 6:45). Paul is concerned with both the transformation of the mind and the consecration of the body to holiness (Rom. 12:2). Matthew Henry, in commenting on the holy behavior of older Christian women in Titus 2:3, says that Christians should have "an inward principle and habit of holiness, influencing and ordering the outward conduct at all times."

God has commanded us: "Be ye holy; for I am holy" (1 Pet. 1:16). The Scripture is clear about the fruit of true holiness in the child of God: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law" (Gal. 5:22-23). This fruitful holiness produced by God's Spirit is antithetical to worldliness, the

works of a flesh that produces both sinful desires and a wicked walk (Gal. 5:16-21). Cultural choices are included among the works of the flesh. Any music, clothing, entertainment, speech, or other cultural choice promoting fruitful holiness must not be conformed to styles developed to promote the worldliness of 1 John 2:15-17. This mandate applies equally to our personal lives and our corporate worship. Our love for the Father provides powerful motivation for careful conservatism that draws a clear line well-removed from the gray of compromise in this regard.

Therefore, the American Council of Christian Churches, at its 71<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention, October 23-25, 2012, in the Cedar View Independent Methodist Church, Kingsport, Tennessee, affirms the need for all Bible-believing churches and individual Christians to separate from conformity to the cultural norms produced by this world's love for possessions, pleasures, and pride. As children determined to love our heavenly Father faithfully, we commit ourselves to the promotion and practice of consistently conservative, godly Christian living, regulated by cultural standards that demonstrate the distinctiveness of our calling as pilgrims and strangers in a world ruled by "the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience." It is our desire that in every area of our lives, the change that has called us "out of darkness into His marvelous light" would be seen plainly by others in a way that will "glorify God in the day of visitation" (1 Pet. 2:9-12).



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