

American Council of Christian Churches  
71<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention, October 23-25, 2012  
Cedar View Independent Methodist Church, Kingsport, Tennessee  
Resolution on the Theological Danger of Non-cessationism

The terms *non-cessationism* and *continuism* have been used in recent days to refer to the belief that the miraculous revelatory sign gifts of the New Testament era, such as speaking in tongues, are still active today. The cessationist view, by way of contrast, concludes that these special revelations of the Holy Spirit ceased at some point early in the Church's history, either with the passing of the apostles or the closing of the canon of Scripture. The resolve to stand separated from the Charismatic Movement is not a new commitment for the ACCC. Numerous previous resolutions of the Council have articulated and defended a firm position against this error, a conviction also affirmed by the statements of faith of many fundamental churches and institutions. Fundamentalists of past generations faithfully have confronted charismaticism as a major threat to historic Christian orthodoxy.

Today's Fundamentalist, however, confronts a new temptation for compromise with adherents of the non-cessationist teachings and practices of the Charismatic Movement from conservative evangelicals. Some have expressed concern over this temptation while testing these waters of cooperation once carefully avoided by past Fundamentalist leaders. Other Fundamentalists have expressed a vague willingness to go further. Some have put the cessationist vs. non-cessationist issue into a category of doctrines, like the mode of baptism and church polity, which, in their view, should not divide believers as a test of fellowship. While the common stand and encouraging fellowship of the ACCC has recognized for generations that not every doctrine carries equal force as a test of fellowship, the Council has discerned together that non-cessationism is a first-order theological danger, for it has led to an emphasis on religious experience that undermines biblical authority. Whether the ecstatic gibberish, known to ancient paganism, or the ridiculous claims of modern television personalities to discern maladies of anonymous viewers while pronouncing healing upon them, the currents of non-cessationism in the Charismatic Movement have led to destructive confusion among the adherents of the professing Church.

The apostle John warns us to "believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God, because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1). Called in that context the spirit of antichrist (v. 3), the spirit that is in the world (v. 3), and the spirit of error (v. 6), these false spirits are positively correlated with the rise of false doctrine. Non-cessationism has born this fruit. From the false teachings of Oneness Pentecostalism, to confusion over the necessity of the tongues experience for conversion, to tolerance for Roman Catholicism and the ecumenism of the one-world church of antichrist, the Charismatic Movement has been a popular force for false prophecy in a world so hostile to the Spirit of Truth. The apostle Paul warned not only against another gospel and another Jesus, but also against another spirit (2 Cor. 11:4).

This is not to deny that some non-cessationists have identified historically with the cause of fundamental separatism against apostasy and the compromise of New Evangelicalism. Nor is it to claim that our movement has been unanimous in its interpretation of the relevant passages in Acts or 1 Corinthians 12-14. Yet Fundamentalists have always been united as ardent critics of

the worldliness, confusion, false doctrines, and ecumenism of today's Charismatic Movement—a zeal not shared widely by today's conservative evangelicals infected by this error. In addition, if the cessationist interpretation of these difficult passages is correct, the contemporary phenomena claiming precedent from them cannot be of the Holy Spirit. This is not to suggest that the God of the Bible is no longer the wonder-working, Almighty God of omnipotence. Biblical Christianity is an uncompromisingly supernatural religion. The miracles of the Virgin Birth, the substitutionary blood atonement, and the bodily resurrection of our Lord are at its core. It was the miracle of regeneration that gave us new life in Christ, and our blessed hope is the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ. Yet the Scripture is clear that our enemy also possesses a supernatural power that produces powerful signs and lying wonders (Matt. 24:24; 2 Thess. 2:9).

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, resolves to stand where our fathers have stood, identifying the error of the Charismatic Movement as a danger to the people of God and an important test of fellowship. We determine to “believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God” (1 John 4:1), and to know them by their fruits, examining the doctrines they espouse according to the prophecy of Scripture—our only rule of faith and practice.

We further resolve to resist the current temptation, caused by the desire for closer ties of fellowship with conservative evangelicals, to compromise with non-cessationism. By the grace of God, we determine to leave to those who follow us a firm commitment to that great pillar of historic Protestant orthodoxy, *sola scriptura*. “To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa. 8:20).



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