

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 Welcome Offered at Wheaton College to the Ecumenism of Dr. John Armstrong (WCC/NCC) and Cardinal Francis George

Wheaton College, near Chicago, has continued its long track-record of violating the biblical doctrine of separation. Under the administration of Dr. Philip Ryken, former pastor of Philadelphia's Tenth Presbyterian Church, the college recently hosted "A Conversation on Unity in Christ's Mission." Featuring Cardinal Francis George, the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Chicago, and Dr. John Armstrong, a minister in the Reformed Church in America (a member of the World Council of Churches and the National Council of Churches), the event convened March 26, 2012, in Edman Chapel on the college campus. Dr. Armstrong has been an effective advocate of ecumenical cooperation between Evangelicals and Roman Catholics. Drs. George and Armstrong conducted this "conversation on unity" and then responded to questions from the audience.

While Wheaton College displayed some sensitivity about the possibility of receiving criticism over the event, the institution nevertheless promoted this ecumenism with an invitation on its website: "Everyone is cordially invited to share in this Christ-centered conversation on Christian unity in the mission of Christ." By allowing one of its featured campus buildings to be used as the venue for this event, Wheaton demonstrated sympathy for its aims, disobeying the clear command of the apostle Paul: "And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them" (Eph. 5:11).

An early supporter of the compromise of New Evangelicalism, Wheaton College has kept its distance from biblically separatist fundamentalism. But by allowing one of Roman Catholicism's most prominent leaders in the United States to direct what they advertised as a "Christ-centered conversation on Christian unity," Wheaton College displayed just how damaging new evangelical compromise can be to a clear understanding of the gospel.

The testimony of Scripture is very clear concerning the gospel. Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. The contributions of human merit are worthless. As a professedly evangelical institution, Wheaton College claims allegiance to this view. But by its increasing involvement in ecumenical disobedience, Wheaton casts great doubt on this

claim. As the apostle John warns: “For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds” (2 John 11).

The deceptive effort of Cardinal George to be regarded by gullible Evangelicals as a leader of Christian unity is not a new danger to the true people of God. Paul passionately warned the Corinthian believers of this threat when he spoke of “false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ” (2 Cor. 11:13). As a faithful son and servant of Roman Catholicism, Cardinal George advocates a justification that is God’s response to human works, involving an infusion of righteousness at baptism rather than an imputation of righteousness at conversion. Paul warns us to avoid corruption from the simplicity that is in Christ, a corruption that comes from those who preach a heterodox gospel (vv. 3-4). Christian colleges should not marvel at the need to defend the cause of Christ from such people, “for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light” (v. 14).

The American Council of Christian Churches continues to maintain its stand in defense of the gospel proclaimed in Scripture, that there is only one way of salvation, and that this way is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. 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, reasserts its loyalty to the Holy Scriptures and to the doctrine of salvation, which they teach so clearly. We rebuke Wheaton College, including its president, Dr. Philip Ryken, for allowing its facilities to be used to promote false ecumenism, and we call on the Lord’s people to maintain their defense of the faith and the gospel we have received, that salvation is all of grace and not of works in any way (Eph. 2:8-9). In addition, we renew our resolve to be faithful separatists, guarding ourselves from entanglement with those who cause doubt and confusion regarding the command of the apostles to take a stand against false apostles. We resolve to embrace the legacy of faithful separatists like Charles Spurgeon, who declared in 1888, “That I might not stultify my testimony, I have cut myself clear of those who err from the faith, and even from those who associate with them” [sermon Spurgeon preached in the Metropolitan Tabernacle on October 7, 1888 from Genesis 24; <http://www.spurgeon.org/sermons/2047.htm>].



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