

American Council of Christian Churches
70th Annual Convention, October 18–20, 2011
Bible Evangelical Methodist Church, Lancaster, PA
“Resolution on Cherishing the Heritage of Biblical Fundamentalism”

When exhorting his readers to patient endurance of the race set before them, the author of Hebrews affirms the importance both of looking ahead and of looking back. Looking ahead the believer must depend upon the person and work of Jesus Christ, the Author and the Finisher of our faith, and looking back he must draw encouragement and inspiration from a cloud of witnesses that once preceded and now encompasses him (Heb. 12:1-2).

The faithful men and women of Hebrews 11 comprise this cloud of witnesses: Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham and the patriarchs, Moses, Rahab, and others. Time would not allow the author to go on listing all the names (v. 32), so he summarizes their character by referring to their accomplishments (vv. 33-39). They were fallible servants of the Lord, but that is not the focus of this passage. Instead, an abundance of past-tense verbs expresses the affluence of the author’s appreciation for these true heroes of the faith.

This appreciation for the past enjoins us in the present to a similar faithfulness, for the author explains that, apart from us, the work of predecessors cannot be perfected (v. 40). We follow in their train. In addition, the appreciation for the past expressed in Hebrews extends not only to distant Biblical history, but also to more immediate examples, the pattern of those who spoke the Word to us (13:7-8). We are to remember with thankfulness their leadership, value the results of their ministry, and imitate their faith. Cherishing the heritage they provided for us reflects the immutable character of the Lord we serve, Jesus Christ, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and it safeguards against the temptations of varied and strange teachings (vv. 8-9).

Entrusted with the legacy of faithful examples over 70 years, the American Council of Christian Churches occupies an especially privileged position as the beneficiary of patterns to remember and convictions to emulate. Our predecessors were unashamed Biblical fundamentalists from multiple denominational expressions of Protestantism, whose unification around separatist convictions has contended well for the faith entrusted to them, “avoiding profane and

vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so-called, which some professing have erred concerning the faith” (1 Tim. 6:20-21).

Therefore, the delegates to the 70th annual convention of the American Council of Christian Churches, meeting October 18-20, 2011 at the Bible Evangelical Methodist Church of Lancaster, PA, express together profound thankfulness and deep appreciation for faithful men who have gone before us, giving us a pattern of separatist convictions to follow. We further resolve never to be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of the godly convictions of our predecessors, but rather to join with them in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God (2 Tim. 1:8-12), to affirm with them that the One whom we have believed will keep us against that day (v. 12), to hold fast, as they did, the standard of sound words which we have heard (v. 13), and following their example, to guard through the Holy Spirit in our evil day this trust for the generations that follow us in the will of the Lord (v. 14).



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