

American Council of Christian Churches
76th Annual Convention, October 24-26, 2017
Faith Free Presbyterian Church, Greenville, South Carolina
Resolution on the Conference Theme, “True Protestantism”

On July 20, 1969, Neil Armstrong became the first man to step on the moon. As he descended the ladder from the *Eagle* to the moon’s surface, he spoke these words, “That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind.”

At noon on October 31, 1517, a solitary figure stood at the door of the Castle Church of Wittenberg and posted a challenge to debate the abuses of the Roman Catholic practice of indulgences. His challenge was never accepted, but history has shown that this “one small step” for Martin Luther was truly “a giant leap” for mankind. His 95 theses were the birth of the Protestant Reformation.

In the words of Philip Schaff, “The Reformation was a republication of primitive Christianity, and the inauguration of modern Christianity. This makes it, next to the Apostolic age, the most important and interesting portion of church history.”¹ Schaff lists three key doctrines recovered from the first century church, which became both the driving force behind the Reformation and its legacy, “the supremacy of the *Scripture* over tradition, the supremacy of *faith* over works, and the supremacy of the Christian *people* over an exclusive priesthood.”²

Faith in the supreme authority of Scripture not only led to the rejection of the traditions that Roman Catholicism had accepted for centuries, but also it ushered in a commitment to put the Scriptures in the language of the common man. Schaff explains: “The Bible, heretofore a book of priests only, was now translated anew and better than ever into the vernacular tongue of Europe, and made a book of the people.”³

Combating Catholicism’s false teaching—that righteousness was achieved by a combination of faith and good works—the Reformers recovered the truth that righteousness is imputed freely in Christ to those who believe in Him. “For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works lest any man should boast” (Eph. 2:8-9).

The third pillar of Protestantism is adherence to the doctrine of the priesthood of every believer. “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light” (1 Pet. 2:9). This truth became the basis for greater involvement of all believers in the worship of God and in the advancement of the cause of Christ. Schaff describes a new spiritual fervor in the Christian congregation: “The good effect of this principle showed itself in the spread of Bible knowledge among the laity, in popular hymnody and congregational singing, [and] in the institution of lay-eldership.”⁴

Therefore, the American Council of Christian Churches, at its 76th annual convention, October 24-26, 2017, at Faith Free Presbyterian Church in Greenville, SC, resolves to give thanks to God for the Reformers—Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, William Tyndale, John Knox, and many others—for their courage to be “Davids” battling the “Goliath” of Roman Catholicism, for their commitment to honoring God and obeying His Word above all human authority, and for their labors to return God’s people to important fundamentals of the faith once delivered to the saints: the supremacy of biblical authority, salvation in Christ alone by grace alone through faith alone, and the priesthood of every believer. It further resolves to warn against the efforts of those who seek to move Protestantism back toward Romanism, seeking commonality that would unite, while overlooking the powerful truths that 500 years ago called God’s people out of darkness, and into His marvelous light.



American Council of Christian Churches
P.O. Box 628 – Orwell, OH 44076
info@acc4truth.org
www.acc4truth.org

¹ Philip Schaff, *The History of the Christian Church* (1892; reprint, Hendrickson Publishing, 1996), vol. 8, *The German Reformation*, vii.

² *Ibid.*, 16.

³ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 25.