

American Council of Christian Churches
77th Annual Convention, October 23-25, 2018
Bible Presbyterian Church of Collingswood, NJ
Resolution on the 70th Anniversary of the World Council of Churches

Last year the 500th anniversary of the Reformation provided a moment for reflection on the birth of Protestantism and the rescue of biblical truth from the error of the Roman Catholic Church. Ironically, as the World Council of Churches (WCC) celebrated its 70th anniversary on June 21 of this year, the highlight of the festivities was a warm welcome for Pope Francis.

Dr. Agnes Abuam, moderator of the central committee of the WCC, opened the ecumenical prayer service while exalting the pope: “What a joy it is to welcome you to this service of celebration of the 70th anniversary of the World Council of Churches in the company of His Holiness Pope Francis. This gathering of church leaders and lay people to sing and to pray together and to hear the Holy Father’s homily is a highpoint of WCC’s anniversary year.”¹ Rev. Olav Fykse Tveit, the Council’s General Secretary, referred to the papal visit as a landmark day for ecumenical cooperation: “This day will live on in shared memories for years to come—memories that will guide and encourage joint action among Christians of all traditions. Above all, this day is a symbol of the divine love that is embedded at the heart of our faith. It is a day of blessing to take with us on our pilgrimage of faith.”²

Pope Francis reciprocated their enthusiasm: “I wanted to take part personally in the celebrations marking this anniversary of the World Council, not least to reaffirm the commitment of the Catholic Church to the cause of ecumenism and to encourage cooperation with the member churches and with our ecumenical partners.”³

The WCC is the broadest and most inclusive force of the ecumenical movement. Its initial gathering in Amsterdam in 1948 was attended by representatives from 147 churches. Today, the WCC represents over 500 million “Christians” in more than 110 countries around the world. It identifies itself as “a community of churches on the way to the visible unity in one faith and one Eucharistic fellowship, expressed in worship and in common life in Christ.”⁴ While the WCC claims the heritage of the Christian faith, its apostasy denies its orthodoxy. The Council’s singular focus on global unity comes at great cost to the voice of scriptural truth.

The message of the WCC has remained the social gospel. On September 14, 2018 in Rome, the WCC joined the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity. The purpose of the conference was to explain “how churches can give moral leadership in working together with state and civil social actors and inter-religious partners to pro-actively address xenophobia, racism and populist nationalism in the context of global migration.”⁵ No call was made for personal repentance from sin and saving faith apart from works in the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ.

Our Savior has warned, “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matt. 7:20-23). The ecumenism and unbelief of the WCC is the fruit of apostasy from the faith.

Therefore, the American Council of Churches at its 77th annual convention, October 23-25, 2018, at the Bible Presbyterian Church of Collingswood, NJ, resolves to continue to strongly denounce the apostasy of the World Council of Churches, its commitment to cooperate with the Roman Catholic Church, and its proclamation of a false gospel that dooms messenger and audience. We further resolve to warn brethren against the slippery slope of compromise with false teachers, which is the tragedy of new evangelicalism, and to exhort them to heed Scripture’s call, “Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord” (2 Cor. 6:17).



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¹ <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/resources/documents/other-meetings/papal-visit/ecumenical-prayer-with-pope-francis-in-the-chapel-of-the-ecumenical-centre-geneva>.

² Ibid.

³ <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/news/pope-francis-affirms-catholic-churchs-commitment-to-the-ecumenical-journey>.

⁴ <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/about-us>.

⁵ <https://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-center/press-info/xenophobia-racism-and-nationalism-urgent-concerns-at-wcc-catholic-conference>.