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THE REVIEW

We All Can Do Something

By Vic Perry, Moderator IBFNA

Years ago, the Lord had us in a church in upstate New York. We quickly learned to love the Marshalls, a missionary family who were part of that church. Probably many of you who read this knew Frank and Eleanor, who served the Lord in Timbuktu, Mali for many years with their family.

It was our privilege to commission one of their sons, Rich, and his wife Anna. Rich and Anna went back to Timbuktu to serve the Lord along with their family. Rich was a "hands on" kind of gentleman. I do not recall how much Bible college training Rich had, but he was not an evangelist as we would think of one today. We helped Rich and Anna pack a container for them to take to Mali, and they left for Timbuktu.

When first in Mali, they attempted to show the Africans how to make their land produce crops, but soon Rich discovered that the Africans needed water, and so they began a different ministry of drilling water wells in villages. They purchased equipment in the States and had it shipped to Mali. The trailer-mounted equipment proved insufficient to drill in some areas, and so during one of their furloughs in the USA, they raised funds for truck-mounted well-drilling equipment. They had it shipped to Mali.

Many would have given up after the trials Rich and Anna had along the way. From village to village, as wells were being drilled, the Marshalls reached out and saw many Africans come to Christ through films shown in the villages. Anna held Bible studies with the women. At one point, the truck equipment was stolen and had to be replaced. In November 2021, Rich had a serious accident and broke his leg. He had several surgeries in Africa, but that leg became badly infected, forcing them to return to the States. A doctor treated him with strong anti-biotics, surgery, and even then, there was a bone which had to be removed.

Rich waited roughly three years for the bone to grow back so he could walk on that leg again. His doctor allowed Rich to go back to Mali for a short spell for a trial, but in January 2025, Rich and Anna were allowed to return to Mali, where they continued to drill more wells and reach more Africans in the well-drilling process.

INSIDE PAGES

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In March 2025, God called Rich home with a heart attack while in Africa. There was a great outpour of the love of the believers in Africa, who surrounded Anna during those days after Rich's promotion. Without doubt, Rich and Anna had made an impact and saw many Africans come to Christ through their ministry. Those African brothers helped Anna in laying Rich to rest at a camp where he had been drilling a well.

Most of Rich's family could not attend the service for Rich in Mali, because they could not get the necessary visas to travel there. Their son Joseph, who is a missionary in Benin, was able to attend. Rich's brother Peter, a missionary in another country, had his visa and was able to fly there to help Anna pack to come back to the USA. I would encourage you to pray for Rich's family and those who were impacted while Rich and Anna Marshall served Christ there in Mali. Rich had a rich ministry there—all for God's honor and glory. Never say you cannot do anything for Christ, because we all can have a ministry regardless of our age, training, location, or trials. We all can do something.

A Multicultural Church

By Bob Thompson

The church's founding on the Day of Pentecost was a multicultural event. Scripture tells us, "And there were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven" (Acts 2:5). On that day every man heard the message in their own language. Of the three thousand added to the church at Pentecost, there were no doubt many from other cultures outside the Jewish culture.

The multicultural church is evident as we continue reading about the early church as recorded by Luke in the book of Acts. The first internal conflict of the church in Acts 6 is not a doctrinal problem. It is a cultural problem. "And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration" (Acts 6:1). There was discrimination which brought strong dissatisfaction with the Greeks against the Hebrews. Men were selected to care for these needs, a majority of whom were Greeks. There was a satisfactory resolution to the problem.

Peter was sent under the leadership of the Holy Spirit to Cornelius. Acts 10:28 states, "And he said unto them, 'Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.'" God opened the door to the Gentiles to be saved and become a part of the church. Multiculturalism was expanded and growing.

In addition to this evidence of a multicultural church, Jesus gave instructions to His disciples that they were to go to Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth (Acts 1:8). All peoples everywhere are to hear the gospel message.

Following the pattern of the early church, today's church should be a reflection of the community where it is located. In the United States, we have many cultures who have come to make this country their home. For example, in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, where I live, there are 85+ different languages spoken representing many cultures. We have a biblical mandate to reach these people with the gospel message. Heritage Hills Baptist Church is reaching out to these different groups. Over the last few years, we have had people come into the church from

Mexico, Guatemala, Colombia, Venezuela, Brazil, Vietnam, Cameroon, the Netherlands, and Bulgaria, among others. Some have moved on, but the ministry to other cultures continues. It is not without its difficulties and misunderstandings. The blessings far outweigh the struggles.

There are things one must consider before initiating a multicultural church. Before you start, you need to make sure that your English-speaking congregation is really behind the ministry. You should make sure that they understand that the early church was multicultural. Preferably, the lead pastor and his wife or one of the pastors needs to be cross-cultural. The cross-cultural pastor and his wife must be continually seeking to bring the cultures together in fellowship. PowerPoints need to be in both English and the other major language. One should consider putting in interpretation booths with earphones for those whose grasp of English is limited.

If you begin a Spanish church, you will only maintain that church for as long as the initial congregation remains faithful. The children will leave the Spanish church and will go to an English-speaking church. We spoke with the Spanish-speaking people and asked whether they preferred a church for the Spanish speakers or being a part of the English church. Their overwhelming response was to be a part of the English church. Their desire was to be a part of the church, not an isolated group. This has brought great benefits to the church.

We must be obedient to reach the world with the gospel. You may not be able to have a multicultural church for varied reasons. You can pray for multicultural churches. You can encourage others to consider a multicultural church. If God leads you to begin a multicultural ministry, you will see the blessings that will come. If you have questions, we are here to help as we are able. We do not have all the answers, but we can walk together through this journey.

What Is the ICCC?

By Brad Gsell

Editor's Note: Brad Gsell serves the Lord as the President of the International Council of Christian Churches and is an Executive Committee member of the American Council of Christian Churches. The IBFNA is a constituent member of the ACCC. Brad pastors at the Bible Presbyterian Church in Charlotte, NC.

The International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) came into being in 1948, in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, as a council of Bible-believing churches which stands without apology for "the Word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 1:9). In that same year, in the same city, the World Council of Churches (WCC) began, but it had a far different agenda. It was comprised of many churches that had long forsaken the faith of their fathers for a new Modernistic gospel, which was in direct conflict with the Scriptures. The stark difference between these two organizations has become abundantly more clear in the intervening years.

The ICCC has proved to be a wonderful expression of Christian unity, cooperation, love and fellowship among many Bible-believing churches and Christians around the world. Particularly at the world congresses, held every three to five years, the sweet fellowship has been described by some as the closest thing to heaven they have experienced on this earth — as Christians gather in one place, from every part of the globe! The love of the brethren, based on the truth of the historic Christian faith, is a wonderful thing, and is described in the Scriptures. The

ICCC also gives faithful churches around the world a platform to stand united for the truth of God's Word, and to declare it to the world. Indeed, seeking to fulfill Christ's Great Commission to preach the gospel to every creature is our common joy and focus.

However, not all that are called "churches" are faithful and true. As stated in the Preamble to its Constitution, the ICCC affirms that "the commands of God to His people to be separate from all unbelief and corruption are clear and positive." Such passages as 2 Corinthians 6:14 – 7:1 present this very clearly:

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. And will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty. Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."

Jude 3 tells us: "Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints." The ICCC and its member churches take the Scriptural commands to warn of error and to defend the faith as part of every Christian's duty.

The ICCC View of the Church

The ICCC is not a church. It has no authority to administer baptism or the Lord's Supper, or to conduct church discipline. Each member denomination handles all of these matters in accordance with Scripture. Of course, the ICCC has a duty to make sure that all member churches and organizations adhere to its Preamble and Doctrinal Statement, and conform to the Scriptures in practice.

There are many, many blood-bought Christians and faithful churches around the world which do not belong to the ICCC or its respective denominations and their congregations. The ICCC stands in opposition to any move to try to build a one world church, and any attempt to dilute doctrine for the sake of physical unity. We reject any grandiose aims of such groups as the World Council of Churches to be "THE voice" of global Christianity. No earthly organization may arrogate that claim to itself.

The ICCC is a multi-denominational organization, which includes Bible-believing Baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists, Lutherans, Anglicans, independent churches, and others. Those in each respective denomination must adhere to the ICCC Doctrinal Statement, but are free to hold and teach their fuller particular systems of doctrine with complete conviction and sincerity.

The church is not the arbiter of truth. That authority is reserved to the Word of God alone. In Christ's high priestly prayer, He says to the Father: "Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth" (John 17:17). 1 Timothy 3:15 tells us that "the church of the living God, [is] the pillar and ground of the truth." The church is not the truth, but is to uphold and obey it. Instead, many churches and their leaders have placed themselves above the Scriptures, making their own decrees and tradition to be preeminent.

What Churches Belong to the ICCC?

The ICCC stands upon the Scriptures, including the great doctrines brought into high relief in the Protestant Reformation. It rejects Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and all such

churches which depart from Biblical Christianity.

The ICCC also has never included Pentecostal or Charismatic churches, because these groups often hold that there is extra-Biblical revelation in prophesying, speaking in tongues, and so forth. The Reformation principle of sola Scriptura is adhered to by the ICCC — that all that is needed for faith and practice is to be found exclusively in the Scriptures.

Evangelical Disobedience and Compromise

Sadly, some evangelicals in the United States and elsewhere have taken a different position. Using human reasoning, they have decided that it is better and will bring more influence if they "infiltrate" the churches and other so-called Christian institutions, instead of separating from unbelief, as the Scriptures command. Men such as Billy Graham, Harold John Ockenga, Carl Henry, among many others, started such organizations as the National Association of Evangelicals, Fuller Theological Seminary, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, and *Christianity Today*.

When men and churches start to compromise, they very rarely move closer to the truth. This can be seen in much evangelical compromise and capitulation. Today such groups as the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) work very closely with the WCC, and even have WCC leaders on their important committees and commissions. Likewise, WEA leaders serve on committees and commissions of the WCC — together with Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox leaders. The ICCC asks these evangelical leaders the simple questions of Scripture: "What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?" and "What part hath he that believeth with an infidel?"

Instead of taking a clear, separated position for the Scriptures, many "evangelical" churches and charitable organizations maintain membership in the WEA, through regional associations, and such organizations as the World Reformed Fellowship. The fact that some of these organizations are said to "do so much good" is not a Scriptural justification. Psalm 127:1 tells us: "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." In 2 Chronicles 19:2, Jehu boldly asks King Jehoshaphat, "Shouldest thou help the ungodly, and love them that hate the LORD?" Sadly, these disobedient brethren, in their violation of the Scriptures, prevent us from being able to join in working with them. We recognize them as brothers in Christ (2 Thessalonians 3:15), yet call on them to reverse course. The ICCC longs to see the day when such should take place and we can fellowship and serve closely together with them in obedience to Christ.

The words of the great missionary Hudson Taylor are never more true than they are today: "Depend on it. God's work done in God's way will never lack God's supply." Someone else has said, "God's work must be done in God's way in order to receive His blessing." Human reasoning and pragmatism, with their resultant compromise, are a tragic substitute for obedience to God's Word.

Whitefield in New England

By Kevin Hobi

Dr. Kenneth Lawson has authored a thoroughly researched book titled, *George Whitefield's Ministry in New England, 1740 – 1770* (Greenville, SC: Ambassador International Press, 2024). A native New Englander, Dr. Lawson has retraced the steps of Whitefield's multiple tours of this region, which so greatly influenced our nation's infancy. Whitefield is remembered as the great

orator of the First Great Awakening.

Dr. Lawson's research work included time spent in New England towns, where Whitefield was known to have preached, investigating the records of historical societies and church congregations, who can trace their history to America's colonial days. Covering in detail thirty years of ministry, the book follows Whitefield's steps in chronological order. The presentation gives the reader a sense of the faithfulness of the work of this uniquely used servant of the Lord.

It is not my purpose here to provide a detailed review of the book. Instead, I would like to share some lessons from the life and ministry of Whitefield, which I found instructive as the pastor of a New England church in our time. Four lessons encouraged me in my ministry: (1) persevere in preaching; (2) controversy cannot be avoided; (3) value faithful longevity; and (4) practice Christlike statesmanship.

Persevering Preaching

The unmatched oratorical skill of George Whitefield's preaching is legendary. In his *Autobiography*, Benjamin Franklin wrote about this preacher's gift: "The multitudes of all sects and denominations that attended his sermons were enormous, and it was a matter of speculation to me, who was one of their number, to observe the extraordinary influence of his oratory on his hearers, and how much they admired and respected him, notwithstanding his common abuse of them, by assuring them they were naturally half beast and half devils." Certainly, there was something about Whitefield's ability to engage a massive auditory that was difficult to duplicate. Those who tried in Whitefield's time did more to discredit the revival than advance it.

Surely, few of us preachers have been given this gift. But beyond the skill with which Whitefield could speak, his example for us includes the perseverance of his preaching. Many times throughout most weeks of his thirty year ministry, George Whitefield preached the gospel. The book indicates that his texts were often short, but the messages were still thoroughly biblical. Paul spoke of the need for elders to work hard at communicating the word and at teaching (1 Tim. 5:17). Whitefield worked hard at it. This I can do.

Unavoidable Controversy

One might hope that true revival would bring true unity among God's people, that a preacher like Whitefield would be universally appreciated for the blessing of God on his ministry. And yet, controversy was continuously concomitant with the advance of the gospel.

Harsh disagreeableness from his Methodist counterparts in England, John and Charles Wesley, was especially difficult. A less pronounced division on the same theological issues caused New Lights and Old Lights in New England to bifurcate over Whitefield's preaching. The conservative Old Lights opposed the preacher and his revival, while the New Lights welcomed him while trying to avoid excess. Politics divided God's people, especially later in Whitefield's ministry as revolution against the preacher's homeland began to bubble to the surface.

So even in the best times of gospel advance, controversy remains a challenge God's people must navigate. Over time, Whitefield learned to do so with a charitable spirit that the Lord blessed. With the Lord's help, I can do this too.

Faithful Longevity

There was a phrase often repeated in Dr. Lawson's book, which I found very striking. Over and over I read *until his death*. As the author traced the steps of Whitefield, he identified the pastors of the churches in the towns Whitefield visited. They often differed in their response to Whitefield, but what these pastors had in common was that most faithfully served their congregations until their deaths.

One exception was the Baptist, Gardner Thurston of Newport, RI, of whom the author writes: "Thurston then served as minister of the church until his retirement in 1801 [at the age of 80], after which he died a year later" (435). I

think this may be the only reference to the retirement of a preacher in the book. Simply put, pastors did not retire back then. They died. Each of us must do God's will for our lives, including for our retirement, but my heart was greatly challenged by this historical record of faithful longevity. Whitefield, of course, also preached faithfully until the day of his death.

Christlike Statesmanship

Remember with me what Franklin wrote: "The multitudes of all sects and denominations that attended his sermons were enormous." The audiences of Whitefield were remarkable for both their size and their denominational variety.

George Whitefield was an Anglican, whom the Anglicans of New England opposed. Lawson writes: "As a Church of England priest, Whitefield was an enigma. He always supported his ordination vows as an Anglican priest, yet he also encouraged revivals in Congregational, Baptist, and Presbyterian churches in the American Colonies. He preached for various separatist clergymen, and celebrated communion in diverse independent churches" (469).

Whitefield's independent approach to membership in the king's church informed the colonists about the possibility of political independence from the same king. "The independence from the mother country in religious affairs quickly transferred to political control, as tensions between the colonies and Britain soon intensified into the American Revolution" (469).

In his persevering preaching, his courage in the face of unavoidable controversy, his faithful longevity, and his Christlike statesmanship, George Whitefield's example instructs us to endeavor to serve the Lord in a similar way

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