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21ST WORLD CONGRESS INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

Collingswood, NJ, USA · June 21-28, 2023

POSITION STATEMENT:

The World Evangelical Alliance and apostasy

The World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) traces its roots to 1846, when the Evangelical Alliance was inaugurated in Great Britain. At present, the organization includes in its membership an extensive list of regional bodies, such as the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) in the United States. It also includes many wellknown mission, medical, legal, educational, and relief agencies as affiliates.

Since its inception in 1948, the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC) has stood in opposition to what was then called the New Evangelicalism. The NAE, a mouthpiece of this New Evangelicalism, championed a philosophy of "infiltrating" the apostate churches — particularly those in the Modernistic National Council of Churches (NCC) and the World Council of Churches (WCC). In contrast, the American Council of Christian Churches (ACCC), and the ICCC took the Biblical position that Christians and churches should "separate" from apostasy, compromise, and unbelief (2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1).

As the years have passed, the warnings issued by the ICCC have proven to be correct. When a person or church begins to use human reasoning to countenance compromise on things concerning which the Bible is clear, there rarely is a return to Scriptural conformity and obedience. Compromise breeds compromise, and things usually continue to progressively diverge from what God has commanded in His Word. The WEA is a case in point. It has passed the point where its goal was just to "infiltrate," to the place where it now fully cooperates with the apostasy.

WEA considers itself to be one of the "Four Pillars" to bring about global "Christian Unity."

On June 17, 2022, the WEA website carried the headline: "WCC, Global Christian Forum (GCF) sign memorandum of understanding affirming mutual quest for Christian Unity." The WEA writer reports: "Both Sauca [World Council of Churches Acting General Secretary at the time], and Essasmuah [secretary of the GCF] expressed joy at the pivotal role of the four pillars — 'namely the WCC, World Evangelical Alliance, Pentecostal World Fellowship and the Roman Catholic Church.'"

The reporter continued that Archbishop Thomas Schirmmacher, secretary general / CEO of the WEA, stated at the meeting that he considered it to be "gracious of the WCC to agree to be just one pillar of several," leaving room for the other three groups. This was not just the description of a WEA staff writer. Dr. Schirmmacher used this language himself, publicly declaring that the WEA is "one of the [four] pillars."

The report continues that this memorandum of understanding was signed by Fr. Andrzej Choromanski, of the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity, the WCC's Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca, Rev. Dr. Casely Essasmuah of the Global Christian Forum, Archbishop Thomas Schirmmacher of the World Evangelical Alliance, and William Wilson of the Pentecostal World Fellowship.

Ties between the WEA and WCC have never been closer.

At one time, many evangelicals agreed that the WCC was an apostate organization. Some top WCC leaders denied such cardinal doctrines as the Virgin Birth of Christ, the Deity of Christ, the necessity of Christ's atonement on the cross, His bodily resurrection, His working of many mighty miracles, and so forth.

However, in recent years, the WEA has had extensive cooperation and has begun working closely with the WCC, The Roman Catholic Church, East Orthodox churches, and so forth.

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At the WCC 11th World Assembly, August 31 through September 8, 2023, WEA Secretary General Archbishop Schirrmacher was in attendance. Together with greetings of ecumenical cooperation from Pope Francis, and representatives of Eastern Orthodoxy and Judaism, Schirrmacher spoke on behalf of the WEA.

He began by praising outgoing WCC Acting General Secretary Ioan Sauca, a priest in the Romanian Orthodox Church. Speaking of their close “friendship and cooperation,” he stated: “Professor Sauca has been a gift of God to the body of Christ for such a time as this.” Pointing out that the WEA and WCC were of approximately equal size, Schirrmacher stated: “We are aware that we have a considerable overlap in membership....”

He continued: “Nowadays, WCC and WEA work together in most areas of ministry. We exchange members on all important commissions. My own involvement in [the WCC] Faith and Order [Commission] has given me enormous insight into the different theological topics that still divide churches and the urgent need for more intense listening to each other.”

This close union between the two groups has been apparent for many years. On August 25, 2021, the WEA official website carried a headline titled: “World Council of Churches (WCC) and World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) Strengthen Their Collaboration [August 2021].”

In his concluding remarks to the WCC Assembly, Bishop Schirrmacher stated: “We pray for God’s blessing on all the ongoing work of the WCC and this Assembly. May God the Father give us all strength to work on behalf of his creation. May Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who saved us from sin and death, be our example in his willingness to give his life for the good of others. And may the Holy Spirit keep us all from evil ways and unjust thoughts and lead us into the growing truth promised to his church on earth.”

The entire message was based almost exclusively on “peace and justice” themes, decrying the war in Ukraine, and fearing that “racism” against Russians would arise from this. He also spoke strongly against anti-semitism. We will not judge Schirrmacher’s intentions, but almost any such speech he and others from the WEA make to ecumenical gatherings fails to explicitly promote the real gospel of salvation by faith in Christ alone.

The WCC also speaks about Jesus Christ saving us from sin and death, but it is virtually always in vague terms, which could be interpreted in different ways. When it is explicit, it invariably is focused on social justice and making “all things new” on this earth.

Instead of an encouragement to fulfill Christ’s Great Commission, as presented in the Bible, Schirrmacher speaks of “work on behalf of God’s creation.” Instead of the Good News, we are to make Christ “our example in his willingness to give his life for the good of others.” Instead of the Holy Spirit illuminating the Scriptures, the sure and complete Word of God, we are to look to Him to “lead us into the growing truth promised to his church on earth.” In the context of social justice, we are to look to the Holy Ghost to “keep us all from evil ways and unjust thoughts.”

The WEA and WCC both promote a questionable version of "social justice" at the United Nations.

The WEA and WCC both hold offices at the United Nations, where they speak out about all kinds of “social issues.” The WEA holds Special Consultative Status with the UN’s Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), “which serves as the central forum for discussing international economic and social issues, and for formulating policy recommendations addressed to Member States and the United Nations system.”

The WEA uses this platform to advocate for “climate care,” and “global sustainability,” together with other issues of “social justice.” In its August 21, 2021, meeting with the WCC, the two organizations agreed to expand their cooperative work for “climate justice.” In 2019, the WEA established the “WEA Sustainability Center (WEASC) in the strategic ‘UN City’ of Bonn, Germany.” The whole goal of the Center is to teach and encourage the churches to take part in “climate care.”

The ICCC certainly desires to see clean water, clean air, and to discourage practices which harm our planet, but this is not the gospel of Christ. Further, since the WCC program for “justice” is decidedly Marxist, one must be very concerned that the WEA has such ease in collaborating with the WCC in these matters.

Evangelical churches and organizations need to be obedient to Scripture in order to warrant our support.

Many have criticized the ICCC, and other Bible-believing groups, for being too strong in their stand against such compromise. People often justify such compromise with the human rationalization that many WEA member groups “do so much good.” Some just choose to ignore the facts, or simply wink at the situation.

As Bible believers, we must not have a censorious spirit, and we should be patient and kind, but nowhere in the Bible are we commanded to support a church or organization because “they do so much good.” It is not there! The Bible is clear from beginning to end that true Christian love, cooperation, and support are based on obedience to Christ and His Word — nothing else.

Many so-called conservative denominations, including the Presbyterian Church in America, the Presbyterian Church of Brazil, to name just a couple, maintain their membership in the WEA through the World Reformed Fellowship (WRF). Even within that group there are many unfaithful churches.

In addition to regional evangelical organizations, and a few denominations with international reach, there are also many non-profit organizations familiar to many Christians. Even though many do seemingly “good work,” yet their disobedience must be a real concern for Bible believing Christians. These organizations include:

A Advocates International, AM International, Asia Theological Association, Asian Access, **B** Barnabas Aid, Bakke Graduate University, Barnabas Relief Fund, Bible Discovery, Bible League of Canada, Biblica, **C** Campus Missions International, CEDAR Fund, Center for Mission Mobilization, ChinaSource, Christian Endeavor World Union, Christopher Sun Evangelistic Association, COMIBAM - Cooperation of Mission from Latin America, Creatio International, Crossroads Christian Communications Inc., Cru, **D** David Chung Ministries International, **E** EFCA Reach Global, Elim Center International, Engineer Ministries International, Evangelical Presbyterian Church, Every Home for Christ International, Every Nation Churches & Ministries, **F** Faith & Family Foundation, Finnish Lutheran Overseas Mission, Frontier Ventures, Frontiers USA, **G** Global Outreach Day, Global Scholars, Gospel & Information Technology, **H** Healthcare Christian Fellowship International, Holy Bible Society, **I** Integral Alliance, International Association for Refugees, International Association of Evangelical Chaplains, International Christian Medical and Dental Association (ICMDA), International Council for Evangelical Theological Education - ICETE, International Evangelism Association, International Justice Mission, International Needs Network, **J** Jews for Jesus, **K** Kenosis Media Group, **L** Luis Palau Association, **M** Micah Global, Middle East Concern, **N** The Navigators, No More Violence International, NORMISJON, Norsk Luthersk Misjonssamband (Norwegian Lutheran Mission), **O** Olivet Center for World Mission, Olivet University, One Challenge International, One Collective, One Mission Society, OneHope, Open Doors International, Operation Mobilisation, **P** The Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada, Pioneers International, Power to Change, **R** Refugee Highway Partnership, Reliant Mission, RREACH, RUN Ministries, **S** Saint Luke Society, The Salvation Army, Scripture Union International Council, SIM International, Sojourners, **T** Take Heart, TEAM - The Evangelical Alliance Mission, Tearfund UK, Teleo University, Timothy Two Project International, Trainers of Pastors International Coalition, **U** United World Mission, **V** Veritas College International, Veritas Legal Society, Voice of the Martyrs Canada, **W** Water is Basic, World Evangelical Theological Institute Association, World Mission Prayer League, World Olivet Assembly, The World Reformed Fellowship, World Team, World Thrust International, World Vision International, World Without Orphans, WorldVenture, Wycliffe Associates, Wycliffe Global Alliance, **Y** Young Disciples of Jesus, Youth Evangelical Fellowship, Youth for Christ International.

Conclusion

The International Council of Christian Churches, meeting in its 21st World Congress, June 21-28, 2023, in Collingswood, NJ, USA, condemns the compromise with apostasy that continues to characterize the World Evangelical Alliance. Bible-believing Christians are urged to channel their support exclusively to churches and Christian organizations which are not involved in such compromising relationships. Further, the ICCC calls on all churches and organizations affiliated with the WEA to:

1. Withdraw your membership from the WEA, its regional councils, and any other organizations which fail to remain separate from all unbelief and apostasy. The Scriptures make quite clear that Christian love and fellowship are based solely on obedience to Christ and the Scriptures. You simply cannot “work together in most areas of ministry” and “exchange members on all important commissions” with the apostate WCC and be faithful to Christ. “If ye love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15).
2. Make fidelity and obedience to Christ and His Word the foundation of your church or organization. Utilitarian and pragmatic decisions are never of God if they violate His Word. God’s work must always be done in God’s way. ““Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not ... in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you...” (Matthew 7:22).

3. Firmly recognize that it is God who must build our ministries. No associations which may bring funding and influence — even for worthy purposes — will ever justify being unfaithful to Christ. “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” (Psalm 127:1).
4. Actively carry out Christ’s Great Commission: “... Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations....” Although Christians are to oppose injustice and corruption in our fallen world, this is not the Gospel of Christ. Anything presented as the “gospel” apart from the glorious redemption purchased by Christ, is indeed a counterfeit gospel which cannot save.
5. Make common cause with those who seek to be faithful to the Scriptures. “But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.” (1 John 1:7). ■