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# Keystone BAPTIST

Official Paper of the Pennsylvania Association of Regular Baptist Churches



## Concerns of Miss-Using Pastoral Authority

By Dr. Allen G. Harris

Pastor of Hope Baptist Church, Hanover, PA

In recent years, there has been an increasing number of instances where we are learning of a particular trend in justifying pastoral authority. Examples to my knowledge have come from some experienced men trying to support younger men who are under some difficulties in their churches, and from some younger men who are resorting to this same miss-use of Scripture to defend themselves and force their people to follow them.

In the instances I know of, the pastor, uses a text from the leadership of Moses or Joshua or one of the other prophets of the Old Testament and draws a parallel to their own position as pastor. They speak of the authority that God gave to Moses or another prophet and equate the authority of the pastor to that of Moses. They indicate that the Pastor is to be followed and obeyed without question. The clear implication is that the pastor is God's Man with the same authority from God as these prophets. The people of the churches desire to obey the Word of God, but do not fully comprehend the validity of this analogy. Sometimes the pastor is seeking to change the direction of the church and does not want to take the time to teach or does not have good scriptural basis for his change. Sometimes it is doctrinal change or a revamping of the whole polity or constitutional working of the church but there was no indication that the constitution or the church polity was a problem before the pastor accepted the call from the church.

The church did not begin until the day of Pentecost (Acts 2), and thus any attempt to teach the authority of the role of the pastor should be done from the New

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## What's In A Name?

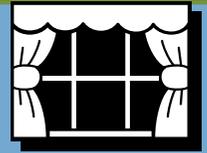
Names can be very interesting. For instance, when Judy gave birth to our second child, a boy, there was no doubt in my mind that I wanted to name him Paul Joseph Connor, Jr. I would be the senior and he would be the junior. Funny thing though, as a grown man he is more the senior in some ways than me. He is taller than me, smarter than me and much better looking than me (not so bald). I was thinking our names would make us different and yet the same. But in reality our very persons made us different. By the way, my two daughters also have special names and special reasons for their names.

**Names do distinguish and differentiate between things. Our God gave Adam the task of naming all the living things. Genesis 2:19 "And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof." It was to identify and distinguish one from another – simple, yes, but very necessary.**

When I was saved and left the Roman Cult I became a Baptist, being baptized, I joined a Baptist church. There was no debate in my heart or mind. The Scriptures were very clear to me that when I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior, just like the new believers in

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## From the Parsonage Window



### A JOYFUL NOISE IN THE LITTLE BROWN CHURCH

by Grace Roofner

Heads twisted around, appearing over the tops of the straight wooden pews. Eyes silently stared at the new pastoral candidate and his wife standing awkwardly in the church doorway. We appeared to be little more than kids, I am sure, compared to the mature members. No one spoke, and then down the aisle strode a tall man with thinning gray hair. "Can you play the piano?" was his greeting, directed at me.

"Well, a little," I stammered. He grabbed my elbow and pulled me to the front of the old church.

"Here, sit down and play for us," he directed, gazing sharply at me over his spectacles.

"But I can only play with one finger," I panicked. Somehow Paul, my husband found his way to the pulpit, and relieved me from a desperate situation. As Paul led the singing, Ernest, our greeter, accompanied the hymns on his violin. Every so often, he would hit a wrong note, and the violin would screech. Paul, not being a strong singer, would then be thrown off-tune, and the whole congregation would stumble along. Somehow, we sang the hymns and made "a joyful noise unto the Lord," and I am sure God was pleased.

*The birds upon the tree tops sing their song,  
The angels chant their chorus all day long,  
The flowers in the garden blend their hue,  
So why shouldn't I, why shouldn't you  
Praise Him too.*

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Testament. There are applications that can be made from the leadership of Moses and others, but there are major differences as well. Some of these differences are:

### **1. Differences between Israel and the Church:**

A. Israel in the time of Moses was a Theocracy. God was their king and they were to heed and obey the voice of their king explicitly. God was present with them in the form of the pillar of cloud and fire, and there were many physical evidences and miracles to see and know the power and presence of God. God had authorized the leadership of Moses (and later other prophets) with miracles and signs so that Israel would know that Moses spoke for Him. There was no written and completed Scriptures. Later a king was given to the people, but prophets were still sent to speak for God. Their authority was authenticated by their miracles and the fulfillment of specific prophecies. Deuteronomy 18:20-22 gave the people the way to test whether a prophet was from God or not.

B. The Church is not Israel. Christ has come, the Holy Spirit has been given to indwell believers, and now the Word of God is complete. The church is a mixture of Jew and Gentile and is based upon a relationship with Christ and the indwelling of the Spirit of God. God speaks through His Word, not through audible voices to specific men. His Word is the authority and the pastor stands or falls on His agreement with rightly dividing the Word of Truth. His own word is not absolute. The church does not have the visible signs of God's presence like the pillar of cloud or the miracles done at the hand of the prophet. The means of determining decisions in the New Testament church is the church family (Matt. 18, Acts 6). The church family is to discern issues under the leadership of the Holy Spirit. This is the multitude of counselors in which there is safety. To confuse Israel and the church is to confuse both a theological and hermeneutical (interpretive) issue.

### **2. Differences between Authorities:**

A. Moses, Joshua, and the Prophets, received direct supernatural communication from God. Some had special visions. Some, like Moses, God spoke to face to face. Moses face shone so brightly that the people knew he had met with God. The authority of Moses or the other prophets was demonstrated by their miracles and prophetic utterances. The Divine authority of these messages was unquestionable.

B. The authority of a pastor is not direct communication from God nor of God's miracles. The call of a pastor is the work of the Spirit of God in his heart in accord with the Word of God. This call is evidenced by his desire to study the Word of God, his obedience to the Word, and his service to God in the church. The authority of the pastor is not his own word but the agreement of his word and life to the Word of God, (1 Timothy 4:13-16). Since a pastor is a sinner like all men, he must be careful to study and be sure that his perceptions are those of the Word and not his own personal

desires. He is not the boss in the church, but the pastor or shepherd who is guiding his flock to study and obey the Word of God. Like false teachers in Paul's day, there are those who seek the pastorate or exercise it in their own strength and wisdom and not in obedience to God. It is vital to note that the requirements of a pastor in 1 Timothy 3 are not suggestions.

The New Testament apostles demonstrated the role of pastoral leadership in Acts 6 as the need for deacons arose. They did not just appoint deacons in their authority, but instructed the church to choose deacons under the leadership of the Spirit of God. This demonstrated, along with other passages, that the pastor is not a dictator, nor the "boss", but that the church is the final authority over these mundane decisions in the church.

### **3. Differences in the Supernatural Gifts:**

A. The Old Testament prophets received specific supernatural gifts to authenticate their message. The apostles of the early church received these gifts to authenticate their ministry and to aid in the communication of the Word of God to men. But like the Old Testament prophet, the gifts given to them died with them. They could not give those gifts to the next generation.

B. The church and its pastors are given gifts or abilities by the Spirit of God, (Romans 12, Eph. 4:11) to do the work of God. They are indwelt by the Spirit of God like all other believers to read and study the Word of God. However, we believe the supernatural sign gifts of 1 Corinthians 12 have ceased. Since these have ceased, the authority of a pastor comes not from supernatural gifts or knowledge, but from conformity to the Word of God. Pastors do not demand but lead. They teach God's Word which those who are followers of God will hear and follow.

### **4. Differences in Leadership responsibilities:**

A. The Old Testament prophet was called of God and sent to Israel. He was recognized by Israel because of the miracles and message. His accountability was to God. But his authority was not exercised in brute force and demanding harshness, he was sent by a God of love to draw the people to God. Only when Israel rebelled did the prophet give stern warnings of judgment to come out of his concern for them.

B. The pastor is called of God. Recognized as a spiritual leader by the people of God, and the church then calls that godly man to pastor their church. This call means that he is accountable to the church family. His leadership is that of his godly example, his consistent teaching of the Word of God that is recognized by the church as agreeing with the Scriptures, and his faithful service and love for God and others. Ephesians 4:12-16 tells us this man of God works to build the saints in the church by speaking the truth in love so that every member of the church works together to build the body of Christ. Thus the pastor carefully teaches and leads his church family to understand and follow the Word of God. This is a different picture than that of Moses that is presented as demanding obedience and receiving judge-

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# Upcoming PARBC Events

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**Fall Conference**  
**Marsh Creek Fellowship Baptist Church, Wellsboro**  
**Pastor Keith Williams**  
**September 17-19, 2018 See Details on Page ?**

**Youth Retreat and Talents for Christ**  
**April 5-6, 2019**  
**Calvary Baptist Church, Bloomsburg**

**Spring Conference - April 29-30, 2019**  
**Crescentville Baptist Church, Philadelphia**  
**Hosts: Pastor Charles Dear and Congregation**

**Fall Conference - September 16-18, 2019**  
**Open Door Baptist Church, Greensburg**  
**Hosts: Pastor Joshua Franklin and Congregation**

**Future Dates for Conferences on our website**  
**[parbc.org](http://parbc.org)**

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## Churches Searching for a Pastor

**Springside Baptist Church – Distant**  
**Bethel Baptist Church -- Erie**  
**Garden Heights Baptist Church – Erie**  
**Tidioute Baptist Church – Tidioute**  
**Calvary Baptist Church – Union City**  
**Worthington Baptist Church – Worthington**



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# PARBC Fall Conference

## September 17-19, 2018

Celebrating the 70th  
Anniversary of Israel



## Marsh Creek Fellowship Baptist Church, Wellsboro

Pastor Keith Williams & Congregation

Our emphasis will be on the celebration of the 70th anniversary of the Nation of Israel. Speakers will be Clarence Johnson from the Friends Of Israel and John Metzger from Ariel Ministries. Also A special presentation by Kingdom Electronics and Logos Software. We will have National Field Rep from Regular Baptist Press, Drew Gysi, Field Director for Life Institute and a large book table from Banner Of Truth publishing plus many workshops conducted by our own Pastors and other guests. We will even have several workshops especially for our ladies! We will be giving away lots of books and gifts and Logos will be providing discounts on their software pkgs. On Tuesday, we will be having some recreational activities for those who are interested and a leisurely fellowship time at a very beautiful Christian camp.

We are praying that God will use this conference to unite us and to fortify us. Please come and invite those you know who could benefit.

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# PARBC Fall Conference Schedule 2018

Theme- "Standing with Israel"

## Monday, September 17<sup>th</sup>

10:00AM	Council of Ten meeting
1:00-2:00PM	Registration / displays set up in gym
2:00-2:30	Conference Welcome and Orientation
2:45-3:30	Breakout Session 1 (up to 5 workshop choices)*
3:30-4:15	Displays / Snack in gym
4:15-5:00	Breakout Session 2 (up to 5 workshop choices)*
5:30	Dinner- Fellowship Hall (in basement)
7:00	General session- Clarence Johnson, Friends of Israel National Ministries Specialist
8:15 approx.	Displays open in gym

## Tuesday, September 18<sup>th</sup>

7:30AM	Breakfast at MCFBC
8:00	Prayer (auditorium)
8:30-9:45	General Session- Pat McDonnel, Kingdom Electronics
10:00-10:30	General Session- Representative from Logos Software
10:30-11:15	Displays / Snack in gym
11:15- 12:00PM	Breakout session 3 (up to 5 workshop choices)*
12:00PM	Lunch at MCFBC
1:00-2:30	Business meeting (auditorium)
2:30-6:00	Free time at His Thousand Hills Camp / afternoon recreational options**
6:00	Dinner at His Thousand Hills Camp
7:00	General Session- Clarence Johnson (at HTH Camp)
8:30	Bonfire / Music / Snack (at HTH Camp)

## Wednesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>

8:00AM	Breakfast at MCFBC
8:30	Prayer at your Breakout choice
8:30-9:30	Breakout Session 4 (up to 5 workshop choices)*
9:30-10:00	Displays / Snack in gym
10:00-10:45	Breakout Session 5 (up to 5 workshop choices)*
11:00-12:00PM	General Session- Clarence Johnson

**\*There will be options for both ladies and men at each Breakout Session**

**\*\* Recreational options include bike ride down canyon trail, horseback riding, covered wagon ride (additional costs; details will be in main letter).**

Christ mentioned in the book of Acts, they were baptized and added unto the church the same day. I have been a Baptist for almost fifty-five years. I like being called a Baptist. I am not ashamed to be called a Baptist.

Earlier in my ministry I began receiving names of some churches for the possibly to pastor. Some of the churches appeared interesting, but my dear wife pointed out that a particular church didn't have Baptist in their name. She said I wouldn't be happy in a church that wasn't Baptist. And she was absolutely right. I am a Baptist.

This brings me to the subject of church names. I have noticed some Baptist churches changing their names to something else, but eliminating the name Baptist. Obviously, that is their prerogative to do. But it does beg the questions: Were they Baptists, but now they are not? Were they ashamed of the name Baptist? Are they appealing to a community that may not be attracted to the name Baptist? Are they giving up their rich Baptist heritage and wanting to identify with the Protestants? Are they surrendering their Baptist Distinctives? Do they no longer hold to Baptist Polity? Do they no longer have Baptist convictions at all?

A name tells a lot about anything. If you do not have a particular name there usually is a reason why you don't. So then when a church purposely changes its name from Baptist to whatever, the very gesture tells everyone else that you do not want to be identified with the Baptist distinctives, Baptist polity and Baptist fellowships.

It saddens me when a church leaves the Baptist identity, but, again, I must respect their desire to do so. However, when a church chooses to leave their Baptist moorings then there should be no desire by them to remain identified with their former Baptist associations and groups. Why? Because they are not Baptists anymore. You see, it really matters **what's in a name.**



ment if not followed. They seem to forget that Israel also consented to follow God (Exodus 19) and they were accountable to God for their disobedience.

The pastor is not without the possibility of error. Paul withstood Peter to his face in Gal. 2:11. For a man to equate himself with a prophet who received a direct message from God that he could not misinterpret is not consistent with the teaching of the role of pastor in the New Testament. There are applications from Moses and others regarding leadership, love, keeping ones-self under control, that are beneficial to any leader or believer.

The church is not Israel and the authority of the pastor is not equal to the authority of Moses. In the New Testament, the completed Scriptures are our authority. We must rightly divide it so that we are presenting the truth to our people. A pastor does not lead by decree but by example and clear teaching. He is accountable to the church and must submit to their authority. God indwelt them with the Holy Spirit so they would respond to Godly teaching and could follow the Spirit's work in their lives. To disregard the spiritual nature of our people is to place ourselves over the Holy Spirit in their lives.

The church family will follow leadership that love them and demonstrates the teaching of God's Word clearly to them. When a church family is coerced and their authority is not respected with proper communication and expression (church votes), the church will vote with their feet or with their money. They stop serving, or leave, and they stop giving. Sometimes a church has a difficult time talking to their pastor to resolve issues. This may be because the pastor does not listen, deacons do not take their role of talking and dealing with the pastor or a combination of the two. However, a failure to deal with this kind of leadership problem will result in dividing the church, and the pastor is hurt by not learning his proper role. The pastor will eventually leave or get removed, but the church will be hurt in the process.

A clear understanding of the role of the church and the pastor from the New Testament is essential if the church is to grow and be healthy in the work of Christ.

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## **“Be Ye Steadfast”**

A Tribute to

**Kenneth A. Brougham**

Written by Pastor Richard C. Sementilli

It is getting harder to find men who stand firm in their convictions and have compassion for people. Pastor Kenneth Brougham was just such a man. His convictions would often offend those he was dealing with and they would not always agree with his stance. But, when it was all said and done, they knew he was genuinely concerned for their spiritual well being. Soul winning and discipleship were his main concerns, and he was actively involved in both. My wife and I would often meet up with Diane at the grocery store. Diane would do the shopping while Ken would sit at the store entrance to wait. Others would come to wait for their wives and ask if they could share the bench with him. He was glad to have their company and soon would share the Gospel with them. Several souls were lead to the Lord through Ken’s “Walmart Evangelism.” He made certain he knew all of the neighbors that lived on the same street he did. Sharing the gospel with them was his ultimate goal and many came to the Savior because of his efforts. The man had a deep burden for the lost.

He preached a message once from 2 Samuel 19 about Barzillai. In the passage Barzillai was called a “very aged man” because he was 80 years old. It so happened that Ken had just turned 80, so all day long he referred to himself as a “very aged man.” The message, by the way, was very good and we were all blessed. One Sunday after the service he said “Dick, you are a gentleman and a scholar.” I was very much pleased to hear that, and then he added “and there are so few of us.”

He so enjoyed our Senior Saints’ fellowships each month as he would make his way to the kitchen to see what was cooking and always had to test everything. I think he would set aside any dietary restrictions he had and heartily enjoy the meals.

How does one praise the organ playing talent this man had? I first heard him play when I was nine or 10 years old at an Oliver B. Green tent meeting near my hometown. I and my parents had just recently been saved and meetings of this kind were totally new to us. The tent was huge and seated nearly 10,000 people. I don’t know how many were there, but I remember seeing people everywhere and when the service started the organ was being played very loudly. Many years later at a PARBC conference I was attending, I heard the same organ sound playing. It was then I found out the organist’s name was Pastor Ken Brougham. It would still be more years before I found out he was the organ player for that very same Oliver B. Green tent meeting we had

attended. His favorites were the old hymns of the faith and did not easily accept contemporary Christian music but there were a few he especially liked. He could almost make the organ sing. When our Hammond broke down Ken helped us find a new organ. He was able to get us a huge discount on a good one which had a lot of extra “bells and whistles” on it most of which he didn’t care for. On Sunday Ken was the organist for our morning service. He had had only a little time to get use to the new organ but he was doing well as usual. When it came time for the opening hymn he apparently hit the wrong voice button and the introduction to the hymn had this very active calypso beat to it. This was one event we all enjoyed so much and we would often remind Ken how much we liked his new “contemporary” style.

When I came to Calvary Baptist Church in New Stanton Ken had been here for several years. He was retiring from the pastorate, so he thought, and he wanted to help the church in finding a new pastor. The church called me in November of 2005. Ken and Diane continued with the church for a little while and, during that time, I took advantage of his presence by asking questions and listening to his gentle rebukes and instructions. We both understood that the Lord had called me, not to replace him, but to succeed him. One time, in one of his gentle rebukes, he wanted to be sure I was there as a pastor and not a professional preacher so he cautioned me about having compassion for the people. “Visit with them often, be there for them, and let them know you care about their well being,” he advised me. This rebuke affected me most at the start of my ministry at Calvary Baptist. I spent much time praying that I would never become a “professional preacher.” When I struggle with my visitation scheduling, I remember his stern but compassionate words and am trying to improve.

His preaching, organ playing and fellowshiping were all based solidly in the Word of God, never ignoring it, and always examining it in light of the Word of God. So much so that change did not come easily for him. He spoke often of his family and his concern for their spiritual well being. He was concerned for the church family at Calvary Baptist and at Open Door Baptist Church where he and Diane attended in his last years.

Following any man’s ministry can be difficult, but I am so thankful for Ken and for his encouragement to me these past 11 years. 1 Corinthians 15:58 says, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for as much as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.” I do not know if this was Ken’s life verse but his life was an example to me and to others always admonishing us to “be ye steadfast.”

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I remember, as a little five-year-old girl, singing that with my mother. Music and singing have always been central to Christians' praises and worship. It's a good thing that God is not impressed by skill, but by the attitude of the heart. As Jesus told the Samaritan woman in John 4:23, "But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him." If only talented musicians and singers could express praise, our little brown church in Maine would have been completely left out.

South Auburn Baptist Church in Auburn, Maine, called Paul to be their pastor. I guess musical ability wasn't one of their requirements. At the evening services, when only a few of the members were there, and Ernest was not, I summoned the courage to play the keys with one finger. During the week, I practiced on the church piano diligently, although I have very little musical talent. God was gracious, and He helped me. Finally, toward the end of that first summer, Paul begged, "Please, Grace, you have got to play in the morning service. I simply cannot lead the singing to that squeaky violin any longer!" I summoned up all the courage I had, prayed mightily, and played the piano with one finger for the morning service. Alas, the squeaky violin also accompanied us. Now the violin threw me off tempo as well, and Paul and the congregation suffered along patiently. Still, the Lord heard, and was pleased.

Winter was fast approaching in Maine, and the church could not afford to heat the building during the winter, except on Sundays. (Wednesday Prayer Meetings were held in the parsonage.) We had no piano at the parsonage, so I continued to practice at the church, which was about three miles away. As the church building grew ever colder, so did my fingers on the piano keys. It was absolutely imperative that we buy a piano for the parsonage! Paul and I prayed that God would help us find a piano that we could afford. Every day we searched the newspaper ads for a used piano. Finally, we spotted one for fifty dollars, and we called the seller. Unfortunately, it was already sold. This happened several times, and each time the piano was spoken for.

One Tuesday afternoon, Paul and I attended our local pastors' and wives' fellowship, and I asked the other wives to please pray that we would be able to find an affordable piano. We enjoyed fellowship and prayer together. When we returned home, I checked the newspaper, and was excited to see a piano advertised, although no price was mentioned. I phoned the number listed and asked how much the piano cost. "It's free for anyone who wants to haul it away," the lady on the other end of the line stated. Then I was really excited! Paul and I left right away to fetch it, but when we arrived at the house where the piano was, the lady told us, "Right after you called and said you wanted the piano, someone else called. When I told them that the piano was already spoken for, the person offered me fifty dollars for it." My heart skipped and dropped. "But I had already promised it to you," she continued, "so I turned the other person down." I was surely praising the Lord for answering prayer, and for preserving "our" piano! Finally, I had a piano of my own, and I could practice more faithfully. I had taken some lessons as a child, but had become discouraged and had abandoned them. How I regretted that decision! But God was so good, and He helped me improve rapidly, in spite of my own lack of talent.

Some members wanted to form a choir, so I became choir director as well as pianist. To be honest, we were pitiful. Our most prominent soprano, Hazel, was hard of hearing. The rest might be on tune, but suddenly she would veer off on her own, carrying the rest with her. Our only alto, Florence, also had a strong voice, but to this day, I am not sure if she was really singing alto, or something else. The rest of the choir, men as well as women, tried to carry the melody. In spite of our poor quality, the choir sang with enthusiasm, and God was pleased.

Ernest wanted to play some violin-piano duets. He played with the local philharmonic orchestra and was improving slowly. These duets were hard for me, as any mistake on my part or his would be painfully obvious as the whole church silently listened. One Sunday, Ernest plunked the hymn book down in front of me and declared that he wanted to play the hymn, “Wonderful Grace of Jesus,” with me. I had purposefully avoided that one, as the left hand plays the melody, while the right hand does its own thing. I swallowed hard, and said I would practice it, which I did. Practice did not help much, but I finally told him I was ready. All was well until I hit the chorus, and then my tense fingers began hitting wrong keys here and there. Ernest, nervous, began to play faster and faster. The faster he played, the more mistakes I made, until my fingers were literally flying over the keys, and we finally came to the end of that most disastrous duet. “Wonderful Grace of Jesus” has probably never been played like that before or since, but I believe God got the glory—we certainly didn’t!

Now I’m not saying that we should just sing any old way. I don’t believe that God is pleased if we do not do our best, or if we copy the world’s style of music and presentation. However, I do not think that God looks at the professional quality, but at the heart. One time we had a godly missionary and his wife, both blind, speak at our church in Maine. They sang a lovely duet together before he brought his message. Afterward, I complemented them on the beautiful song, and they said sadly that their home church would not allow them to sing because they weren’t “good enough!”

The Web says that there are about 7 and a half billion people in the world. Of those, only about 285 million call themselves Evangelical Christians. That means that billions of people are ignoring God, cursing God, hating God. Billions are bringing pain to His heart. Our singing and praising and worshiping Him gives Him great joy. It pleases Him. “...singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” Colossians 3:16. Matthew Henry wrote, “We must empty the measure by our prayers which others are filling by their sins.” I might add, “by our praises,” as well as, “by our prayers.” Imagine the volume of wickedness that rises to God’s ears. Let us offset some of that outpouring of evil by an outpouring of praise. The words of the chorus, “I Love You, Lord,” express the sweet joy that our praise brings to God.

*I love You, Lord, and I lift my voice*

*To worship You.*

*O my soul, rejoice!*

*Take joy, my King, in what You hear;*

*May it be a sweet, sweet sound in Your ear.*

Someday, when we are in the Presence of God, it will be He Who will be rejoicing and singing over us!

“The LORD thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; he will save, he will rejoice over thee with joy; he will rest in his love, he will joy over thee with singing.” Zeph 3:17

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# Resolution on Helping People Biblically with the Complex Challenges of the Day

**WHEREAS** America has drifted far away from its biblical moorings in key disciplines, such as science, economics, history, behavior, law and psychology; and

**WHEREAS** God has generally been removed from the public mindset thanks in part to the influence of such people (respectively) as Charles Darwin, John Maynard Keynes, Robert Ingersoll, Alfred Kinsey, Christopher Langdell and Sigmund Freud, causing God's precepts to be set aside and deemed irrelevant; and

**WHEREAS** the consequences of man's actions still take place (Luke 6:38; Galatians 6:7-8; 2 Corinthians 9:6; Proverbs 11:18); and

**WHEREAS** forsaking the omniscience and wisdom of God, men have turned to all the wrong sources for the answers to the problems of living (Proverbs 19:27; Colossians 2:8), leaving America floundering to find its way;

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED** that we, the messengers of the Pennsylvania Association of Regular Baptist Churches assembled this April 9-10, 2018, at Union Baptist Church in Kittanning, Pennsylvania, do hereby declare our confidence in God's Holy Word as the source of all wisdom and knowledge in solving man's problems; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that when seeking answers to the problems of living, we will look to God's Word, which surpasses the limitations of time, culture, generation and human insight, to confirm our confidence in the sufficiency of Scripture in addressing every issue that effects proper living.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that God's Word should be consulted when seeking that which is right (doctrine), that which is wrong (reproof), making things right (correction), and keeping things right (instruction in righteousness) (2 Timothy 3:16-17), and to promote Jesus Christ as the answer to man's greatest need because faith in Him is the only path to finding true and lasting peace.

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# Resolution in Defense of the Right of Free Speech for Bible-believing Christians

**WHEREAS** our founding fathers acknowledged the right of free speech as given by God and, therefore, not to be abridged by any act of government, within certain safety limitations, nor restrained by any political authority, nor intimidated by belligerent mobsters; and

**WHEREAS** there have been efforts made on behalf of governments to require preview, government approval and exercise censure upon what is being taught in our homes, churches and Christian schools, even though citizens possess freedom of religion, also guaranteed by the Bill of Rights as God-given, to worship according to our consciences and instruct our families and others from the Word of God; and

**WHEREAS** freedom of speech is a divine mandate, according to the Scriptures (Acts 5:39), to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20), to conduct the ministries of the church, to lead our families according to biblical truths and principles and to serve as the salt and light in the world, as commanded in Scripture; and

**WHEREAS** attacks upon the faithful preaching and teaching of the whole counsel of scripture, regardless of the setting, is an attack upon the authority, truthfulness (John 17:17), trustworthiness and inerrancy of God's Word and a grievous offense to all who acknowledge its final authority,

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED** that we, the messengers of the Pennsylvania Association of Regular Baptist Churches assembled this April 9-10, 2018, at Union Baptist Church in Kittanning, Pennsylvania, do hereby resolve that we preach and teach the whole counsel of God's Word as sufficient (2 Timothy 3:16, 17), both in our ministries and in our homes, without fear of, favor toward or deference to any authority contrived by man that presumes to exercise authority over and above what the Bible teaches, no matter what the cost.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that we defend the use of the Scripture where fully applicable and as the final authority on every subject that it addresses, because it is inerrant (Psalm 119:89; Matthew 5:18) and infallible (1 Peter 1:23-25) truth. Therefore, we are obligated to faithfully and freely proclaim its sufficiency in application to any and all social, political, educational, interpersonal and spiritual subjects, applying Biblical principles and employing historical examples recorded therein for appropriate instruction. Furthermore, in the light of biblical principles, we have every right and duty to condemn everything the Bible defines as sinful in the sight of God, as well as all those who promote sinful conduct or condone sin by their silence (Romans 1:32).

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# Resolution on the Use of Social Media

**WHEREAS** the rise in electronics and technology has led to a communication explosion with Facebook, Youtube, Instagram, Twitter, Reddit, Snapchat and Pinterest being among the most popular, boasting over five billion monthly active users combined, with an increase in communication that has presented great opportunity to proclaim the gospel to a much wider audience (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15); and

**WHEREAS** this rise in communication has also fed into man's basic love of self, creating a narcissistic society like never before (Romans 12:3; 2 Timothy 3:1-2); and

**WHEREAS** the ease of posting online and sending out texts has led to impulsive, reactionary communication spreading fire quicker than thought possible (Proverbs 18:6-8, 13, 21; Proverbs 26:17, 20-24) with the ability to speak to a greater audience with a seeming anonymity often creating an atmosphere of hostility and strife (James 3:1-18); and

**WHEREAS** in the "multitude of words there doesn't lack sin," so social media has increased exponentially the potential damage of unrestrained words (Proverbs 10:19); and

**WHEREAS** addressing verbal sin in our lives has now become more complicated as the sphere of our offenses is now online (Proverbs 11:13; Proverbs 12:23; Proverbs 25:9);

**BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED** that we, the messengers of the Pennsylvania Association of Regular Baptist Churches assembled this April 9-10, 2018, at Union Baptist Church in Kittanning, Pennsylvania, do hereby caution God's people to exercise great discretion when it comes to using social media and encourage believers to remember that the great commission is still the great commission when we log onto these web sites.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that we remind Christians to "not think of themselves more highly than they ought," and to "look not every man on his own, but on the things of others" (Romans 12:3; Philippians 2:4) and that God's people must be "swift to read, and slow to post," knowing that we will give an account of every idle word (James 1:19; Matthew 12:36).

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED** that when using social media, we must remember that our words must be true, honest, just, pure, lovely, of good report, virtuous and praiseworthy before we post (Philippians 4:8) and that the greater abilities we have in this generation with technology, the more that will be expected of us in God's eyes (Luke 12:48) and to exercise extreme discretion before we post anything knowing that we represent the Lord Jesus Christ (Psalm 141:3; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:6).

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