

150 Clergy Declare 2019 as Year of the Bible

In a region known for clergy collaborations, faith leaders representing 150 congregations across North Central Ohio held a press conference Jan. 15 at the BibleWalk Museum outside Mansfield, Ohio.

Leading the news conference were: Rev. Randy Raynes of Mansfield Fellowship Baptist, Rev. Jerry Laudermilk of Ontario Abundant Life Tabernacle, Rev. Mark Cobb of Mansfield Providence Baptist and Rev. Steve Brenneman of Mount Gilead Awakening Christian Center.

With other clergy and elected officials standing inside the entrance hall of the museum, Pastor Raynes declared “as leading clergymen of 150 congregations across North Central Ohio, we formally reaffirm the Bible as being living, active and *God*-breathed; and demonstrating through history to be the anvil that has worn many hammers out.”

Raynes explained the purpose of the joint statement by saying that “Bible illiteracy is plaguing our politically correct society; the Bible is being censored by governments and cultural institutions; and ... the authority of both the Old and New Testament Scriptures of the Bible are being subverted by some religious circles.”

Prior to the clergy declaration, Raynes described how the Richland Community Prayer Network (RCPN) in 2018 completed a survey of 58 local Bible-based churches and their respective outreach ministries.

“RCPN found that not only did these churches provide valuable support ministries to their local community between the years of 2014-2017, these goodwill ambassadors (churches) also supported missions to an astounding 93 different nations

around the globe. It is important to note that the generosity in this time period occurred despite being located in the seventh most economically challenged metropolitan region in the nation.”

The study discovered significant local volunteerism, with church members visiting the elderly, the hospitalized and the incarcerated, and with litter pickups and maintenance of parks improving of quality of life. The labor of love by these Bible-based churches also included the donation of their facilities for neighborhood watches, election polls, community health screenings and blood drives. Concerts, dramas and sports leagues also provided cultural enhancement.

Mansfield Mayor Timothy Theaker, Shelby Mayor Steve Schag and Mansfield Councilman Cliff Mears showed their support as the clergy went on to give their proclamation.

According to Rev. Brenneman, “the Bible has played an integral part in American history and that national leaders have historically promoted the study of the Bible.”

Brenneman cited a study by political scientists listing the Bible as the original source and primary influence of the ideas of the U.S. Constitution, accounting for 34 percent of the direct quotations by the Founding Fathers.

He also mentioned when the U.S. Congress authorized then-President Ronald Reagan to declare 1983 as “The Year of the Bible.”

“The resolution begins by saying, ‘Whereas the Bible, the Word of God, has made a unique contribution in shaping the United States” Brenneman quoted.

Pastor Laudermilk described how the accuracy of the Bible has been verified by archaeological evidence and validated thru fulfilled prophecy. Laudermilk evoked the historical discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls and related how eight fulfilled

prophecies by Christ illustrate the supernatural qualities of the Bible.

Rev. Cobb discussed how science is just now confirming truths in nature that the Bible has already disclosed thousands of years prior.

“A recent 2018 study surveying the genetic ‘bar codes’ of 5 million animals confirms the Genesis account of Adam and Eve, of animals being created the same week as humans and the existence of a world-wide flood,” Cobb asserted. “While the two scientists were surprised by the outcome of their findings, it sounds a lot like the first nine chapters of the Book of Genesis.”

Raynes believes the Bible provokes those people who study the Scriptures to “love their neighbor as themselves, to feed the poor, to protect the weak and to clothe the naked.

“This local outreach study really illustrates that good works is the byproduct of following the Bible. This is why we are encouraging Ohioans to study the Bible.”

The clergy proclamation concluded by saying, “Furthermore, we encourage all Ohioans to examine the Bible and to rediscover its priceless and timeless message. In conclusion, we maintain that the following words still resonate in our day: The grass may wither and the flowers may fall, but the Word of our GOD endures forever.”

To view the clergy proclamation, go to: