



East Coast CONFERENCE

Advent, December 2020

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

Grace to you, and peace – from God our Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

The prophet Isaiah foresaw and foretold of the coming One who would bring light to those walking in the darkness of exile under the oppression of a merciless empire. He wrote:

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, And the government will be on his shoulders.
And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end.* Isaiah 9:6-7a

A good and godly government is part of God’s promise and plan for His people. In the Kingdom of God, good governance is a gift of God, and those who govern well are to be honored and respected. During this last year, while we’ve seen and struggled with so much division and heartache in the governance of our nation, and as we anticipate a change in administration in January (which always awakens new hopes and fears among the governed), we are first reminded in the Church that our governance is not incidental. It should be a witness to the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, the incarnate King and Messiah of David’s lineage. Isaiah offers four epithets that describe this boy child prodigy. The first, translated “wonderful counselor” is a governmental title. It means “wise advisor”. Those who govern, should govern with wisdom. Their “counsel” must lead to excellence in administration, adaptiveness in programming, and thoughtfulness in policy. In the fullness of time Jesus would be observed this way (Luke 2:40 and 13:17).

As your congregation finds ways to gather during this perilous time, socially distanced and in virtual settings to carry out your own sacred governance, I encourage you to imaginatively draw dotted lines of inspiration and wisdom between your godly governance and that of our Governor, who is a Wonderful Counselor, upholding us together with wisdom and strength. Perhaps more than ever in our lifetimes, we need to experience God’s guidance in our organizational life. We need to experience Jesus in the reshaping of our ways of worship, of discipleship, of outreach, and of works of mercy and justice. The virtual highways of YouTube, and Zoom, and Facebook Live are blossoming with proclamation of Good News – bringing light in the darkness. Do not despair, but pray without ceasing. The wise pivots Christ initiates in shepherding God’s flock can protect and strengthen us – if we, his sheep, listen to his voice.

The Conference Board and Conference staff send you greetings and the continuing promise of prayerful support and assistance in networking our ministry leaders and ministries together to resource and uphold one another. Our many prayers regularly include you. I look forward to seeing your church leaders gathered virtually for our 2021 Annual Meeting on April 24, as we celebrate the faithful work of our Wonderful Counselor. May the Lord deliver us from peril with his justice and righteousness forever!

We pray for you a Holy Advent, A Merry Christmas, and a Healthy New Year.

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