

# church of Christ at Greenwood

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## ***In the Midst of a Crooked and Perverse Generation*** **Bill Hall**

*“Do all things without murmurings and questions; that ye may become blameless and harmless, children of God without rebuke in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom ye are seen as lights in the world” (Phil. 2:14-15).*

The Philippian Christians had to serve God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. They were neither the first nor the last to find themselves under such circumstances. In fact, every person who ever served God did so “in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation,” and so must we.

Surely no-one would question the perverseness of the generation in which we live. We are surrounded by indecency. Moral filth lines the shelves of the neighborhood store and video shop. Drug scandals rock the sports and entertainment worlds. Christians working in factories are exposed to bad language, filthy stories, and rumors of immorality among their fellow employees. Our children attend schools that are filled with wickedness. We are not overstating the case — this is the world as it really is, a crooked and perverse generation indeed.

We face two possible choices as Christians: (1) try to clean up the society in which we live, so that we and our children can serve God without the pressures and evil influences that presently exist. We would not discourage reasonable effort on the part of individual Christians along these lines, but success in any such efforts will be on a small scale. It matters not how hard we work at it, by and large, the world will still be a corrupt world when we die: evil will still exist on TV and in the movies; pornography will still be a problem; corruption will still exist in

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government; and schools will still have their ungodly influences. Our purpose as Christians is to call people out of darkness through the gospel and into light. We can do that, but efforts to eradicate darkness will for the most part be futile. Fortunately, we have another choice: (2) make up our minds to serve God faithfully in whatever environment we find ourselves. This is the only viable choice for the Christian.

It can be done. Consider Noah's generation when "every imagination of the thoughts of [man's] heart was only evil continually" (Gen. 6:5); or Lot's generation when ten righteous souls could not be found in all of Sodom; or Elijah's generation when wicked Ahab served as king in the wicked nation of Israel; or Daniel's generation when as a young man he found himself in a foreign land facing pressures to eat the king's meats and drink his wines (Dan. 1:8); or the apostles' generation when Rome ruled the world and the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees dominated the religious scene. What were these men doing in such crooked and perverse circumstances? They were serving God! That's what they were doing! The point is this: if these could serve God in the midst of the crooked and perverse circumstances in which they found themselves, and if the Philippians could shine "as lights in the world" in the midst of their crooked and perverse generation, so can we. Our eternal destiny is not determined by the environment in which we live, but by our own determination to be what we ought to be in whatever environment we find ourselves. We must lay aside our excuses, both for ourselves and our children, and make up our minds to say with Joshua, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord" (Josh. 24:15). This we shall do, and with God's help we shall overcome.