August 2006



Lancaster Conference Encouraging

by Dr. Richard Harris

The 16th Annual Conference of the Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America turned out to be one of great encouragement. If the comments and letters I have received are any indication, it was a blessing to a great many people. The attendance was good. The spirit was unified, and the messages were on target. We are thankful for His blessings. I am sure there were many things we could have done better, but I have received no complaints. That's encouraging!

We need to build on this good conference, and we want this year to be one of expansion and of reaching out to others. I'm not talking about growth in numbers, though that would be a blessing to see. I'm talking about reaching out to help those men and churches that are struggling in the crooked and perverse generation in which we live. The dates of the 17th Annual Conference are June 19, 20 and 21 in 2007. The location will be announced soon. Our goal, however, will be to reach young people and pastors who need the example of older men and women. We must reach lay people and pastors who need help in the difficult battles they are facing. We all believe the Lord is coming soon!

All of us were shaken recently by the eruption of war between Israel and Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon. Hezbollah is supported and funded by Iran, with that support and funding being channeled into the Hezbollah stronghold in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley through Syria. That arrangement has been in place and operational for more than a decade. Damascus plays host to Hamas and Hezbollah, both of whom openly maintain offices and are listed in the Damascus

The city of Damascus remains the oldest, continuously inhabited city on the face of the earth. In all its long history, it has never been totally destroyed. However, the Bible says God has future plans for Damascus, sometime between now and the conclusion of the Tribulation Period. Isaiah writes; "The burden of Damascus. Behold, Damascus is taken away from being a city, and it shall be a ruinous heap. . . And in that day it shall come to pass, that the glory of Jacob shall be made thin, and the fatness of his flesh shall wax lean" (Isaiah 17:1, 4). Isaiah's depiction of Damascus' troubling Israel in the last days comes at a time when the "glory of Jacob (Israel) is made thin" — if "Israel's glory" were any thinner today, it would be transparent. It is hard to imagine how Israel's standing among the nations of the earth could be lower.

Isaiah accurately forecasts the global reaction already evident in the world's relationship with Israel. "Woe to the multitude of many people, which make a noise like the noise of the seas; and to the rushing of nations, that make a rushing like the rushing of mighty waters! The nations shall rush like the rushing of many waters: but God shall rebuke them, and they shall flee far off, and shall be chased as the chaff of the mountains before the wind, and like a rolling thing before the whirlwind" (Isaiah 17:12-13). Isaiah further establishes that this is a future event and not history. Of Israel's enemy, Isaiah says, "And behold at eveningtide trouble; and before the morning he is not. This is the portion of them that spoil us, and the lot of them that rob us" (Isaiah 17:14). Isaiah speaks of overnight destruction—"at eveningtide trouble; and before the morning he is not" says the prophet. Ancient armies didn't make war at night and the overnight destruction of a city of Damascus' size was a physical impossibility until our modern day.

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REPORT ON 2006 FAMILY BIBLE CONFERENCE

JUNE 20-22, 2006, LANCASTER, PA

BY REV. PAUL W. GUSTINE

My wife and I were delighted to be back at the Annual Family Bible Conference this year. We had missed a couple of years because of family and ministry emergencies. We are always excited to go to Lancaster. We never tire of visiting familiar attractions there, and it seems there are an unlimited number of new places of interest to investigate.

Did you ever identify license plates as you made a trip? My wife and I reflected on all the states and countries of our brethren who gathered in Pennsylvania. In addition to the host state, we counted Alabama, California, Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Virginia and Washington. Also, brethren came from France and Lebanon. What a blessing it is when we gather to renew friendships and to meet new servants of the Lord. Our conference also provides great opportunities to make plans for future ministries in our churches.

Our Executive Committee continues the practice of scheduling three messages in every conference essential to our name and purpose, a doctrinal message, a separation message and a Baptist heritage message. These messages anchored the theme of the conference, "Building the Body— Defending the Flock." On Monday night, Tom Nieman proclaimed that the Church that Jesus started has never changed, and it has the same gospel. Beginning with Matthew 16:13-18 he scanned the whole panorama of the Church as the Vigilant Church, the Visible Church and the Victorious Church. The examples from the Acts witness to us that the Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ must be upheld at all costs. In the Visible Church today many are departing from the faith. Pastor Nieman stressed that truth is of paramount importance, and it separates. "... The church of the living God [is] the pillar and ground of the truth" (I Timothy 3:15). Churches should measure success by the accurate proclamation of the truth. The victory is in bringing home to glory people being saved out of Satan's clutches



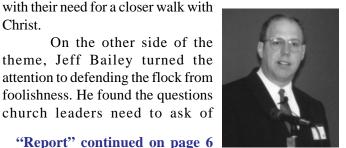
and delusions by the gospel of the Son of God. We were exhorted to share in this victory by lifting up God's name no matter what the cost.

Dan Brown delivered the doctrinal message on Wednesday night. His exposition of Colossians 1:3-8 resulted in esteeming the hope of heaven. He led us to discover this hope as the believer's possession, passion and promise. This refreshing study of heaven took us back to the text again and again for many doctrinal details and distinctions.

I endeavored to illustrate on Thursday afternoon that **Baptists** are a people of the Book. The greatest contribution we can make as patriots to America is to keep the Bible before our communities, our states and our nation. I distributed The Bible: Lamp of Liberty, a booklet of citations from American history noting the influence of the Bible and the Baptists. These citations remind us that American liberties are indebted to the spiritual liberty found in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Our founding documents are grounded in principles from the Bible. Like Baptists of old, we should contend for our freedoms on the authority of the Word of God.

Other messages on Tuesday continued the building aspect of the theme. The keynote message by Bob Payne implored us to maintain a fervent, unquenchable love for Christ. He explained this love through the analysis of Revelation 2:1-7. From his new experience of gardening Charles Edwards taught the principles of church planting and of progress to fruit-bearing. He looked to the foundational teaching in Deuteronomy 6:1-9 and to the Master Teacher in John 3 and John 21. Additional builders were Phil Gingery and Karla Armstrong in their workshops. Brother Gingery gave guidance for development of the church music ministry and distributed a list of resources. He offered himself and materials he brought for further consultation through the conference. Mrs. Armstrong spoke to the ladies on "Time for a 'Faith Lift'," challenging them

Christ. On the other side of the theme, Jeff Bailey turned the attention to defending the flock from foolishness. He found the questions church leaders need to ask of



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Rev. Paul Gustine is the pastor of Bible Baptist Church of Northampton, in Florence, Massachusetts. In the past, he has served as editor of The Review and as held the office of IBFNA Secretary.

2006 PERSPECTIVES

BY DR. RALPH COLAS

Sometimes very important decisions receive very little attention. One was when the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) elected the Rev. Frank Page as the group's president. Little was written about this, but the fact is obvious he defeated the convention's "conservative establishment" for the first time since the 1980's.

Rev. Page went out of his way to tell reporters that he was not elected, "to somehow undo the conservative resurgence" in the convention. However, he also hoped to show that he was different from that angry, right wing, politicized preacher in the SBC. He put it this way, "I believe in the word of God but I am not just mad about it!"

One SBC leading spokesperson said, "Some people are just tired of fighting liberals. You need a reason to be a Southern Baptist other than just fighting liberals in the culture or in the church."

A close examination of the Southern Baptist Convention clearly reveals it is NOT a fundamentalist organization. Rev. Page in addressing the issue of Charismatic doctrine said, "Churches must deal with the charismatic issues and theology as a part of their own autonomous structure. I think that many charismatics function well within traditional Southern Baptist churches. In fact, we have several in our church. Some are more vocal and sometimes disruptive."

In commenting on his election as SBC president, he declared, "I do not believe this election was about personality or even about theology. I believe it was about methodology. Was my election a statement that God's people in our Convention want a choice and the ability to dialogue about important issues? I believe the answer is yes."

While the Southern Baptist Convention held their meeting in Greensboro, N. C., another meeting took place in Lansing, Michigan. This was the annual conference of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches (GARBC). Two major items were on the agenda. One was the adoption of a statement on separation. According to a report issued, this was adopted by a vote of 535 who voted "yes" and 67 who voted "no." The fact that 67 messengers voted against the statement shows the "mixed multitude" within that Association.

However, the second matter revealed the unrest, and unhappiness with the leadership of the GARBC. The Council of 18 last year refused to permit Cedarville to have an exhibit at that Association Meeting because Cedarville

was now an "Approved School" of the Southern Baptist Convention in Ohio.

As this matter was being debated, the majority of those who spoke were "pro Cedarville." Even a member of the Council of 18 and the Ohio State Representative spoke against the action of the Council of 18. One reporter said Dr. David Warren asserted, "that the Bible does not teach secondary separation and secondary separation promotes an environment of fear, disunity and it also was unreasonable."

One defender of Cedarville even went so far as to say that a vote against Cedarville was like saying that every Cedarville graduate was unwelcome in the GARBC. That was indeed a false statement and surely was an attempt to manipulate the messengers.

In contrast one speaker with eloquent words stated that if separation is a biblical command, "to not practice secondary separation is both inconsistent and unbiblical." Please notice how the vote was decided on this issue. To officially separate from Cedarville as an association there were 311 who voted "yes "and 283 voted "no."

This shows that while the messengers did vote to officially separate from Cedarville it would have only been 29 more "no" votes and the statement from the Council of 18 on Cedarville (which had on a 10 "yes" and 6 "no" vote itself recommended this action to the Association messengers) would have been defeated. (How many of us would have ever believed 30 years ago all of this would come to pass in the Association that once stood strong against any form of religious compromise?)

This writer recalls hearing the late Dr. Paul R. Jackson, who at that time was the National Representative of the GARBC, preach a great message on *The Position, Attitudes and Objectives of Biblical Separation*. That excellent sermon was once put in print as a Literature Item sent out by the GARBC. In one place, Dr Jackson said, "Separation is an eternal principle. It is God's

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Philadelphia Perspective

Babelog: An Open Letter to Younger Men in the Ministry



by Dr. Charles L. Dear, Editor

Surely we pride ourselves in being up to date with the computer age by our obsession with Blogs across the internet, especially those that debate and pontificate on subjects dear to Fundamentalist Christianity—ministries, schools, etcetera. Even the most obscure student or pastor can be read worldwide; but what we have seen seems like so much Blog blather, where misinformation, uninformed commentary and gossip are freely exchanged between younger people who listen more to each other than to some of the greyer heads they seem to ignore.

I am reminded of a text in II Corinthians 10, verse 12: "For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise."

When we hear the complaint in the IBFNA that there should be more younger men in the ministry participating, I heartily agree. However, it would be a rush to judgement to say that we should be offering what younger men in the ministry want to hear, rather than offer what they really need to hear and understand. Like a Ziggy cartoon from years ago, "If you don't see what you want, maybe you want the wrong things." Too many know what they want but not what they need, which is much like thinking we have all the answers when we don't even know all the questions.

Even a cursory reading of a typical Blog would demonstrate that there is a vacuum of history, experience and vital instruction that breeds inaccurate analyses and conclusions. The flaw is an inter-generational gap (a "disconnect") created by those who are content to "measure themselves by themselves" and compare "themselves among themselves," and the Apostle Paul calls them "not wise." It is a mark of conceit to presume we cannot learn from anyone else or that our elders cannot teach us anything we do not already know. The accumulated experience and wisdom of ministry veterans in the IBFNA is a wealth of resources and knowledge that would benefit younger men in ministry far more than

just brain storming with their peers, which leads me to a bumper sticker: It is good to learn from your mistakes, It is better to learn from the mistakes of others.

Perhaps our younger ministers could learn from the mistakes of Rehoboam, as we read back in I Kings 12. When Rehoboam became king, Jeroboam and the children of Israel appealed to him for some "tax relief." Rehoboam wisely called for the old men who counseled Solomon, to hear their advice, which was to offer some relief and earn the love of the people. But their wisdom, experience and learning was not good enough for Rehoboam who squandered their advice, and so we read in verse 8:

"But he forsook the counsel of the old men, which they had given him, and consulted with the young men that were grown up with him, and which stood before him."

By preferring the counsel of his peers and contemporaries, Rehoboam, who thought to make a name for himself greater than his predecessors in fact, alienated the love and loyalty of the people he was supposed to serve before God. His preference for clever words above sagely wisdom marks well the sharp contrast between his leadership and the Apostle Paul whose preaching was ".. not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (I Corinthians 2:4, 5).

Nowhere in Scripture do I find any compelling instruction to the Timothy's of the ministry to seek instruction on how to "push the envelope" in Biblical ministry. Neither do I hear any Apostle chiding us for not keeping up with the times in which we live or with the methodologies of the world. Nevertheless, too many of our younger men gravitate towards a brinkmanship that asks "How close can we come to the unbelieving world and still consider ourselves Fundamentalists?" "What appeals to the fleshly natures of men are justifiable by the pious goals we hope to attain?" "If it works, why can't it be good?" Somehow we have cultivated a generation of Rehoboams who have swallowed the sizzle and thought it was steak.

Part of an old Arab proverb puts it this way: "The continued on next page

man who does not know, and knows that he does not know is ignorant - teach him. The man who does not know, but does not know that he does not know is a fool - shun him!"

My appeal to younger men in the Gospel ministry is not only to be teachable, but also to learn from the veterans of the ministry, whose experience and learning your peers cannot begin to match. Far more can be gleaned from them than from all the books recently written and all the seminary classroom instruction you can acquire. Beware, lest your ignorance of history condemn you to repeat its mistakes. Blog discussions such as those debating Fundamentalism, Conventionism, Separation and New Evangelicalism reveal a barely superficial understanding of the battles valiantly fought for the Truth. Many of those points in our history have been either glossed over or revised for the sake of compromise or less controversy. Lastly, the "old paths" (Jeremiah 6:16) are still the tried and true answer to doing the Lord's work in the Lord's way. What has stood the tests of time cannot be replaced by ministry fads whose lifespan can almost be measured by an egg timer.

Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the LORD. (Leviticus 19:32)

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commandment that we must separate from unbelievers. Further it is God's commandment that we separate from our brothers when they walk in disobedience. Now I know that many men who will go along forthrightly and shout Amen as far as I have gone but will object at this point and say, 'I believe in full fellowship with all evangelicals.' WELL GOD DOES NOT!"

Another great stalwart of the Faith, who influenced my life and ministry, was Dr. Robert T. Ketcham. Dr. Ketcham back in 1957 at the 25th Anniversary of the GARBC warned against "FUZZINESS ON THE MATTER OF SEPARATION."

To defend any relationship with the Southern Baptist Convention reveals either a lack of information or a willingness to repudiate secondary separation as it is clearly taught in the Word of God. Without suggesting such individuals no longer preach the gospel, we can say that in the matter of the purity of the church they have become a casualty.

Let us in the IBFNA ask our Lord to consecrate us anew to a strong determination to walk the pathway of obedience with Him, no matter what the cost. All of us must remember, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams" (I Sam 7:15).

Feedback to the Editor An early response to this editorial:

"..First, we must make much of the Scripture's admonition to put the name of Christ and the testimony of a brother above adding our own speculation to any situation happening in fundamentalism.... They would do well to note Paul's tone in 1 Corinthians 6:1-8, as well as the specifics of passages like Matthew 18:15, Luke 17:3-4, and James 5:19. Second, every Christian with a "blog" should have this passage across the top of his/her computer screen: "He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him" (Proverbs 18:13). Everyone's "two cents" isn't worth even that if they don't know the issue, or IT DOESN'T CONCERN THEM.

Finally, those who speak their minds in gossip and criticism, will reap the very same treatment back on their own heads! I'll be forgiven, judged, and condemned by God in the same way I dish it out here, "For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again" (Luke 6:37-38).

May God help us to treat others as we would want to be treated, and to forgive "even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven us!"

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It is obvious that the Lord's return is on the horizon. We must be awakened to the urgent need of the hour to reach our communities for Christ. There is strength in cooperative efforts. Proverbs 24:6 says "in the multitude of counselors, there is safety." Churches and Christians are succumbing to the compromising sirens of the world and the Devil's minions. For those who want help, we must be there for them. May our God give us an encouraging year if He tarries that long.

"Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh . . . Blessed is that servant, whom his lord when he cometh shall find so doing." Matthew 24: 44, 46

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themselves in Ecclesiastes 10:1-7. How are we using our time? How are we using our resources? How are we developing new pastors? Brother Al Van Osten concluded Tuesday afternoon confident that God's Word defends our churches against the false belief-system of evolution. He grounded his affirmations in Biblical texts. His explanations of scientific arguments paired down the complex to common sense.

If there ever was a fresh voice from the mission

field, we had it on Wednesday morning. Arriving with his family only a few hours before, Mark Nelsen continued in the vein of defending the flock and expounding on our separation purpose. From Acts 20:17, he demonstrated the need for



separation and revealed the heart of the Biblical separatist.

At our business session, we elected Richard Harris, Moderator; Bob Payne, Secretary/Clerk; Jerry Johnson, Treasurer; and Charles Dear, Managing Editor of The Review. We received the minutes of the last meeting at Shipshewana, Indiana, and the financial report by outgoing treasurer, Tom Hamilton. Vic Perry, from the local committee, introduced and moved for adoption "A Resolution Reaffirming our Position of Biblical Separation." After one grammatical correction, the resolution was embraced unanimously. Charles Dear proposed bulk mailings of The Review to churches. Those interested should contact him by E-mail. Richard Harris informed us about options and considerations for future conferences. We can all pray for the wisdom to develop our conferences as great rallies for fundamental Baptists providing interaction with missions, schools and other ministries that want to be identified with us.

As soon as the business meeting adjourned, most of the brethren of the Fellowship set out immediately for the dramatic and musical presentation of *Ruth* at the Sight & Sound Millennium Theatre near Strasburg. Richard Harris termed the production amazing and enjoyable but confessed that it took a few liberties with the Biblical story. Meanwhile Marilyn and I were living out the real romance traveling the lanes we found on our honeymoon. I had scrumptious French fries made from fresh potatoes at the Bird-in-Hand Farm Market, and my wife found some treasures to make our home "country."

On Thursday we were back to a packed schedule. Ted Clater was another defender of the flock. He exposed dangers in modern educational philosophy and methodology. He also distributed a paper with strategies to counter these dangers and to succeed in transmitting the Faith. In these

strategies he was also a builder. He counseled that discipling is not easy. We should be committed to work hard with consistency and diligence. Mark Strangman was a builder speaking on "Reaching the Next Generation." He preached from Psalm 78:6-8 on the Bible as a textbook for life for the Biblical youth ministry. Mike McCubbins filled in for another missions



message by Pastor Pao Hsing Kuo from Argentina, who was unable to attend because of visa problems. Mike developed I Thessalonians 5:14 as follows: Warn the Unruly (those who are out of step), Comfort the Feeble-minded (the small-souled), Support the weak (who oppose), Be patient (longsuffering) with all men.

The discussion group, Ralph Colas, Charles Dear and Clay Nuttall, identified problems related to building the body and defending the flock. Pastor Dear lamented the illiteracy in American cities, lack of discernment among professed believers, redefining of biblical terminology and ignorance of history and heritage. Clay Nuttall continues to survey writings and teaching and has found overwhelming evidence that the greatest problem in churches is a lack of biblical theology. He concluded that ministry arises from biblical theology and right hermeneutics echoing Tom Nieman's call for the Church to proclaim God's truth. Ralph Colas gave examples of challenges to Biblical separation by the World Council of Churches and the National Association of Evangelicals and others. He plugged the important book by Rolland McCune, Promise Unfulfilled, The Failed Strategy of Modern Evangelicalism (Greenville, NC: Ambassador International, 2004). In this thoroughly researched book, one may learn from history and be prepared to implement separation amidst all the compromising positions.



In "Getting Passed the Past" Tom Hamilton concluded our conference expounding Philippians 3:7-21. In his assessment the influence of the IBFNA has been slight in our culture. But he proposed that we stay focused on the Savior and His holiness and seek to build upon our successes trusting in God's power to accomplish His purpose. He closed the service singing an original song based on

Peter's denials. "I looked into His eyes and He looked into

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my eyes." For those who saw the whole conference through, it was a special moment.

Great music pervaded the conference sessions. A rotation of song leaders, Mike Ascher, Josh Franklin, Mark

Strangman and Phil Gingery, encouraged enthusiastic congregational singing. The Ladies Ensemble from Pillsbury Baptist Bible College was a great credit to the Lord and to the college in their ministry and in

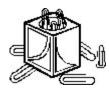


their persons. They had a great blend of voices and an excellent repertoire of spiritual songs. Karla Armstrong uniquely led us in worship with her unusual instruments, the hammered dulcimer, the autoharp played in the Appalachian style, and the bowed psaltery. Other instrumentalists, Mike Ascher, Phil Gingery and Mike McCubbins, sounded out praise to the Lord. With the help of Carol Middleton, Tom Hamilton inaugurated another of his original songs on Wednesday night, "The Lord Is Good to Me." Finally George Zinn brought heaven down to us with "We Shall Shine as the Stars of the Morning" and "Til We See Christ."

The fellowship was blessed by the informational displays from colleges, seminaries, missions, missionaries and other ministries or services to churches. A special thanks goes out to Bible Baptist Church of West Chester and Pastor Bob Payne and Jim Payne for the book tables. Dave Reinhardt and I teamed up again to supply a daily News Sheet at the conference. Lancaster County provided a wonderful opportunity for families to combine the conference with a family vacation for those who had the time. If you were not able to attend this year, we pray God will provide for you to be with us next year, Let's all pray for God's leading and preparation for next year's rally of fundamental Baptists—unless Jesus' appearance in the air interrupts our plans. Make it the place to be!



News and Notes



Tapes and MP3 CD's of the 2006 Annual Family Conference can be purchased using the enclosed order form. Please mail to the IBFNA address listed on the front page.

The 2006 – 2007 IBFNA Membership Directory is being prepared for publication. If you would like your name included, you must be a current member. If your membership has lapsed, you need to renew your membership immediately using the form on the back page.

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"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

Titus 1:9

Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America

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