



# IBFNA

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## THE REVIEW

### Faithful in the Midst of Wickedness

By Pastor Al Harris, Moderator IBFNA

Every day the news tells of growing wickedness in our society, corruption in government, and increasing oppression of righteousness. The wickedness in our society is exposed as videos of Planned Parenthood reveal grotesque murders of babies and profiting in the sale of their body parts. While Hitler murdered some six thousand Jews, the abortion industry has murdered more than fifty-five million babies. We have grown so accustomed to the practice that our government wants to suppress the information and protect Planned Parenthood.

We cannot overlook the discussions of Benghazi, the private email server with classified emails, or the violations of the constitution by government officials. The attempt of the IRS to target conservative organizations and deny them tax-exempt status is being swept under the rug by many.

Many watched the debate of the Republican candidates for the presidency with interest. There were many bold statements of repealing the Affordable Care Act, of undoing many of the executive orders that President Obama has put in place, and even of doing away with or drastically cutting some of the agencies of our government that are responsible for over-regulating our society without the approval of elected officials.

But many believers are clinging to the hope that the next election will bring great relief and turn things around in our country. I, for one, would relish this outcome, but I do not put my trust in it. Isa. 31:1 says, "Woe to them that go down to Egypt for help; and stay on horses, and trust in chariots, because they are many; and in horsemen, because they are very strong; but they look not unto the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the LORD!"

David said in Ps. 20:7, "Some trust in chariots, and some in horses: but we will remember the name of the LORD our God."

There are many ways that Satan can divert our eyes from the Lord, and trusting in government is one of those ways. Nevertheless, we do not operate without concern or responsibility to the government and the society in which we live. We cannot ignore the governmental authority that God has allowed over us, nor can we act as if we have no responsibility to be salt and light to this government. So how do we respond? What is our responsibility before God to governmental efforts, to the moral decline we see, to the homosexual agenda, and to attempts to force people to abandon their faith and trust in God in favor of regulations and society's political correctness?



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Here are several things that we must do if we are to keep our eyes on the Lord and warn our people of the dangers that lay ahead.

1. Stay engaged. There is a tendency by some to isolate themselves from any discussion or investigation into the efforts of government or other movements in our society. Hiding from them does not make them go away. This end of the pendulum swing is just as wrong as the opposite end, where we put our hope in governmental change and in new leadership. Paul admonished the believers in Romans 13 of the respect and obedience that was due governmental leaders. Peter warned believers about suffering that would come upon them for the cause of Christ.

2. Be Involved. The Scriptures give us clear instruction regarding our responsibilities to our government. Our ability to preach the gospel is affected by the kind of government we have.

a. Pray for our leaders. "I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty. For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth" (1 Tim. 2:1-4).

b. Obey our laws. "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever, therefore, resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation" (Rom. 13:1-2). The only time for disobedience to our authorities is when their directives directly conflict with our obedience to God. Acts 5:28-29 indicates that, when told they could not preach the name of Jesus anymore, the apostles responded, "We ought to obey God rather than men." This does not give license to civil disobedience. This truth must be taught with great discretion and discernment, but if we preachers do not know how to apply this truth, then how will our people know?

c. Give proper respect. Even when Peter spoke about obeying the authorities that were bringing persecution, he did not demean their position. Since all authority comes from God, we need to re-

spect the position that our leaders have under God. They will be accountable to God for their actions, and we can trust God to do what is right.

3. Be educating your people. Our society is trying to educate people of faith to knuckle under and conform to their worldly philosophy.

a. Teach your people to discern what is right. The legalization of homosexual relationships does not make them right. The legalization of abortion does not make it right. Our people need to know how to discern what is morally and biblically right. This means we need to teach them clearly so that they can know what is right and understand how to stand faithfully with a godly spirit.

b. Teach them to express themselves appropriately. When confronted with paying the temple tax, Jesus did not argue or get belligerent. He quietly asked whose inscription was on the coin. Our people are being told every election cycle that they should not take their religion or faith into the voting booth. Paul appealed to Caesar and used his Roman citizenship to benefit his work in the ministry. Everywhere our walk takes us, our faith must be both evident and guiding our thinking and choices.

c. Teach them to trust the Lord. The Christian life is about trusting God to do what He wills and knowing that He does all things right and well. 1 Cor. 11:1 says, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." The idea is that Paul followed Christ in such a way that, if Paul were to leave, those who followed him would still be following Christ. God has given us an understanding of the final victorious end, and He wins.

We may have to suffer for the Lord as did our forefathers. American Christianity has been enamored with success and hope for Christ's coming without real tribulation. While Christ may come at any moment, He may also wait to cause us to have the privilege of standing with and for our Savior. Paul said in Phil. 3:10, "That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death." Paul knew what faithfulness could bring, but he also knew that faithfulness in the fiery furnace is the place of greatest blessing.

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# Occupy Till I Come—Conference Report

By Greg Ward and Pastor Kevin Hobi

This year our conference's great preaching and teaching, like-minded fellowship, joyous singing, and co-laborers for the gospel were graced with a large dose of down-home southern hospitality that made 2015 truly memorable.



We were the guests of Pastor John Holmes and the church family of Marshall Baptist Church and Pastor Steve Pittman and the church family of Maranatha Baptist Church, both in Winston-Salem, NC. Marshall Baptist Church is the home of Grace Baptist Bible College.



Twice before has our conference met in a local church venue. We began that way in 1991 at Crescentville Baptist Church in Philadelphia, and we celebrated our tenth anniversary in 2000 at Bethel Baptist Church of Sellersville, PA. Last June our host churches made our return to a church setting a great blessing. Their cooks cooked for us, their choirs sang

for us, their college students ministered to us, their nursery workers cared for our young, their congregations joined our meetings in the evenings, and their pastors preached for us.



All agreed that taking our noon meals together and opening the afternoon schedule for times of fellowship were positive improvements to the conference week this year. The Murrys were back and a blessing to our hearts with their ministry of music. Dr. Marty Marriot of Maranatha Baptist University was our keynote speaker on the eschatological theme, "Occupy Till I Come." The Fellowship approved an open letter to Christian colleges and seminaries encouraging them toward obedience to the Bible doctrine of separation, and we passed a resolution together on our nation's need to restore religious freedom in these days of evil.



Dr. Marriot's four messages were a thorough and biblical defense of premillennialism and the futurist interpretation of New Testament prophecy. In addition, they were a call to holiness and devotion to Christ in the light of the Lord's soon return. Pastor John Holmes opened our week with a message on our conference theme. He emphasized that the Lord's command to occupy until He comes is actually a command to do business. Obedience calls for more than taking up space; we must invest the gifts and opportunities the Savior has entrusted us with



for the advance of His kingdom.

Our Fellowship enjoyed hearing Dr. Billy Martin three times during the week, another newcomer to



the IBFNA, but a man of God who has served the Savior as a preacher for more than sixty years. His message on the imprecatory Psalm 109 emphasized the willingness of the Lord to suffer for our sins with the phrase, "I give myself to prayer" (v. 4). Christ prayed for the sinner, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." That prayer was an imprecatory prayer against Himself. Following His example we need that spirit, a willingness to give ourselves to prayer, when we face the opposition of sinners against us.

Dr. Clay Nuttall braved chemotherapy treatments the week of the conference to minister to the Fellowship. God gave him grace as he instructed us on the practical implications of the imminence of Christ's return for a holy life. After the conference Dr. Nuttall felt compelled to write the following letter to the Editor of the *Review* about the blessing he received from the conference:

"To the Editor,

"I wanted to go on record with a response about the Annual IBFNA conference in Winston-Salem, North Carolina last week. The preaching was some of the best we have ever had. It was filled with content and worth every minute. Most of the meetings were well attended, and the Wednesday night service was a classic. The combined choirs and congregational singing were enthusiastic, a service to remember. The music from start to finish was well done and a great blessing to those in attendance. The

lunch served by the host churches, Marshall Baptist and Maranatha Baptist was delicious and varied. It is hard to think of a negative and I am sure they were some but the fellowship was sweet and heartwarming. The only thing that might have made it even better would have been the attendance of those who were unable to be there. I finished the third round of chemo on Sunday before the conference opened. It was not easy but I wanted to be there so badly that I was able to attend every session, even the last one. God is good all the time.

Clay Nuttall."

Pastor Joshua Franklin preached an expository message on the key passage 2 Thess. 2:1-12, and Pastor Steve Pittman spoke on the mission of the church in the light of the rapture. The Fellowship was introduced to the new acting Executive Secretary of the American Council of Christian Churches, Pastor Dan Greenfield, who made it a point encourage us in our



separatist stand. We are not alone in our work for the Lord. Complete conference audio is available on our website at [www.ibfna.org](http://www.ibfna.org).

Were one thing to change about our encouraging conference week, it should be to include those of you reading this report who had to miss our annual time together. Mark your calendar now for June 21-23, and plan to join us with your family at Hope Baptist Church in Hanover, PA. May we stand together, occupying till our Lord comes. Upon his return the king's faithful servants heard from him, "Well, thou good servant" (v. 17). Thanks for your part in our Fellowship.

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# Open Letter to Fundamental Christian Universities and Colleges

June 18, 2015

Dear Brothers in Christ,

We greatly appreciate your labor of love for the Savior in behalf of our young people. We are their pastors and parents, and they are our precious possessions. God has given us an important stewardship we must care for, and we take very seriously the trust we have put into your hands as we send them to school.

We are thankful for the education we received from you. It taught us how to live, not just how to make a living. Having been well-taught ourselves, we earnestly desire to pass the faith once delivered to the saints along to our sons and daughters, and we are truly grateful that God has sustained sacred institutions like yours for this sacred purpose. We pray for your success in the grace of the Lord, and we want to do all we can to support your ministries.

It is in keeping with those prayers and that desire to support that we write you this letter. While we rejoice in the real blessing of the Lord we see in many schools with a faithful stand, our hearts have been burdened with a growing number of heart-breaking exceptions to that rule. Some good schools have closed. We understand that there are demographic trends and marketplace realities that partially explain these closures. Still, we fear that there is more to this story. We sense a spiritual trend, one we hope can be halted.

The IBFNA is a Fellowship of separatist Baptists. We believe the greatest danger to the purity of the faith comes not from the apostates themselves, but from men who, although they profess themselves to be Bible-believers, are tolerant of others in positions of trust and authority who do not so believe.

This is why one aspect of the IBFNA purpose statement reads, “to emphasize the biblical teaching on separation from unbelievers in religious work (primary separation) and separation from believers who ignore or disobey the Bible’s teaching of primary separation (secondary separation).”

The IBFNA Article of Faith, para. F, states that we

believe in “ecclesiastical separation, whereby we preach against apostasy and withdraw from brethren who enter into memberships, affiliations and fellowships (including evangelistic crusades, youth movements, mission agencies, and schools) which seek to unite separatist fundamentalists with those who deny biblical doctrines, including those who do not obey the biblical teaching on separation.”

Recognizing the importance of your ministries to the well-being of our young people and the future of fundamentalism, we humbly ask for your consideration of three safeguards that we believe are essential to the spiritual health of our schools, both today and in the generations to come.

1. Vigorously and thoroughly teach your students the Bible doctrine of separation. Separation is a major theme of biblical theology in both the Old and New Testaments. It is at the center of the nature of our God, the reality of our salvation, and the mission of the church’s pilgrimage through the world. We would not tolerate another Jesus, another gospel, or another spirit, but neither should we tolerate any other response to these dangers than that expressed by the apostle Paul, who vigorously warned against false apostles and of the need to separate from them (2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 2 Cor. 11:1-15). Every student should learn this doctrine, for it is essential to his spiritual well-being. It is the wall that protects essential doctrine from the influence of error and the heart from the influence of unbelief and apostasy. Both ecclesiastical separation and personal separation from worldliness are indispensable teachings in this regard. Produce graduates in every major who are convinced from the Scripture of the doctrine’s content and importance.

2. Guard your institution from the influence of men, many of whom are godly and gifted in other respects, who do not understand or seek to practice the Bible doctrine of separation. We understand that good men can disagree about doctrines that are less essential or clear, but the doctrine of separation is a first-order concern for the Christian. Refuse to work with men, institutions, and movements with whom you cannot agree on this essential matter. You separate from Charismatics, for instance, so only work

with men who will faithfully separate from Charismatics. Agree with co-laborers on separation.

3. Recognize the danger of the many mechanisms of ecumenism. Satan is building a one-world church, and he is using many things to blur the lines between truth and error, right and wrong, and good and evil to do so. Charismaticism is one of these mechanisms. Christian Contemporary Music is one of these mechanisms. Greater political influence and good social causes can function in this way. Keep a difference between the clean and the unclean. Draw bold discernable lines between darkness and light, though we live in a world that seems to offer us many shades of gray.

It is our sincere desire that these practical suggestions will foster the spiritual health and well-being of your school for the Lord's sake. It is in the abundance of counselors that safety is to be found. While our counsel is unsolicited, it is offered in the sincere hope that it can be of some help. Be assured of our continued prayers and support as you seek to honor Christ in the discipling and education of our young people, and in contending for and passing along the faith once delivered to the saints.

In Christ,

The IBFNA

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## The Restoration of Religious Freedom

Religious freedom is under attack in America today.

Our nation's founders understood the danger of this form of tyranny. The persecuted Separatists we remember today as the Pilgrims, who came to America in search of religious freedom, first endeavored to escape the persecution of their homeland by setting sail for Holland. The Pilgrims, after secretly having sold and given away all that they could not take with them, made their way to Boston, England in 1607, paid the captain of their ship his expensive fee, boarded the boat in the dark of night, and then were immediately arrested by the king's officials who were lying in wait for them.

The ship's captain had taken their money but had betrayed them. The officers ruined their belongings with a search and roughly frisked their persons, both men and women. The goal was to rob the Pilgrims of any valuables they may have been carrying and any dignity they may have possessed. They were paraded into town before a gazing crowd, delivered to the magistrates, and imprisoned for a month in cold and cramped quarters. The following spring these brave men and women tried again with success.

Remembering what these first Americans had endured over many years of similar experiences to

obtain their home in the New World, William Bradford spoke of their desire for religious freedom in his Plymouth Plantation: "But these things did not dismay them, though they did sometimes trouble them; for their desires were set on the ways of God and to enjoy His ordinances; but they rested on His providence, and knew Whom they had believed."

Today, men and women who endeavor in a similar way "to set their desires on the ways of God and to enjoy His ordinances" are threatened once again with dismay and trouble. In order to avoid funding the murder of innocent children in the wombs of their mothers, Christian business owners must win expensive legal battles that take them to the Supreme Court. Should an Air Force general publically voice the faith of Bradford and the Pilgrims in uniform in today's America, calls for his court-martial hit the press. The Navy chaplain who counsels sailors against the sin of homosexuality faces discipline from his superiors.

The sermon notes and congregational correspondence of preachers in Houston are subpoenaed by the city's mayor and leaders. Citizens who compiled over 50,000 signatures there to place repealing the city's transgender "Bathroom Bill" on the ballot have been denied their opportunity to vote. Shop

keepers who happen to read their Bibles and find that people are created male and female, not homosexual, and that men are not female and women are not male, are badgered out of business by crowds like those that once pressed against the house of Lot and his family.

Legislation in states like Indiana, Arkansas, and Louisiana, designed to stem this tsunami of religious persecution, have been met with a tyrannical opposition that has caused even some bold conservatives to flinch. State marriage laws that define the solemn ordinance as a covenant between one man and one woman are threatened before a closely divided Supreme Court. Other state legislatures are considering constitutional amendments that would equate the biblical teaching on marriage with discrimination and that would threaten the tax-exempt status of ministries committed to teaching this ordinance of God. Our founders understood well that taxation is a tool of tyranny.

Therefore, the Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America, meeting at its annual conference in Winston-Salem, NC, June 16-18, 2015, resolves to work for the restoration of religious freedom in America. We commit ourselves to pray for “all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty” (1 Tim. 2:2). We determine to speak to those in authority concerning why their desires should be set on the ways of God and His ordinances in a day that calls evil good and good evil. And if in the will of the Lord, our work and prayer and voice go unheeded by those in authority, we shall stand with courage for truth in the face of persecution from them, troubled but not dismayed, resting on our Lord’s providence, knowing Whom we have believed, whom we confess together to be all creation’s “blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of Lords” (1 Tim. 6:15).

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## Appreciation for Host Churches

The Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America hereby expresses our deep appreciation to our host churches for their generous welcome and hospitable care for us under the leadership of our dear brothers, Pastor John Holmes and Pastor Steve Pittman. The churches’ enthusiastic preparations in the love of Christ for our coming have encouraged and refreshed us as we have exhorted one another to occupy until our Savior comes. Thank you for your faithful example and kind generosity.

We have enjoyed the use of your beautiful building, and your bountiful provisions for our meals were delicious. The distinctively southern food and hospitality ministered to our hearts as an encouraging fruit of the Spirit from your lives. The music ministry of your choirs and the young people of Grace Baptist Bible College lifted our hearts and thrilled us with the joy of the Lord. The commendation of Gaius applies here: “Beloved, thou doest

faithfully whatsoever thou doest to the brethren, and to strangers; which have borne witness of thy charity before the church” (3 John 4-5).

We rejoice in these separated witnesses for the truth of the gospel, and we pray that the blessing of the Lord of the harvest will continue to give you grace to occupy until He comes. Your investment in our lives this week has yielded a good return. Thank you for your flourishing care for us, and may the Savior richly multiply your faithful labors for His glory. We know that someday soon you shall hear Him say, “Well, thou good servant.”

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