



IBFNA

November 2019

Volume 28, Number 2

THE REVIEW

Lessons from the Middle East

By Dr. Bob Payne, Moderator IBFNA

In 2006 I received a phone call from my dear friend and mentor, Dr. Clay Nuttall, asking me to teach a class in the Middle East. Since I do not like being away from my family, and I hate flying, I was glad to discover that the date of the module conflicted with a special meeting that I had scheduled many months before. I told Dr. Nuttall that I could not go and thought to myself "that's the end of that."

Some months went by, and Dr. Nuttall called me once again to ask me about teaching in the Middle East. He wanted me to teach in the Spring of 2008. This time, having no excuse, I agreed to teach the requested class. I thought to myself, "I'll only go this one time, and I won't have to go again. It will be a good experience for me." Little did I know how the Lord would work in my heart.

On the flight to the Middle East, I met up with the man who was the undergraduate dean at that time, and he expressed to me how I would fall in love with the students and would want to go back again. I thought to myself, "Maybe; we'll see."

After arriving in the Middle East, I began to teach and interact with the students, and the Holy Spirit began to change my heart and my attitude. The students were so appreciative and desirous to learn and obey the Word of God that it challenged my own life. One of my students was gone for a couple of classes early in the week because his home had a fire. He came back to class with tears in his eyes and said that his wife and child were fine, but the house was not. In spite of this trial, he decided to continue his classes! I was incredibly moved by his dedication to the study of the Word of God.

Another time in the week, a large group of the male students got together for fellowship after class and invited me to spend some time with them. They gave me various words and phrases to say in Arabic, and when I repeated them, they would laugh hilariously! We had so much fun that evening. They loved me and were reaching out to me. My heart was drawn to theirs.

At the end of the module there was a young lady who came up to me after the last class and told me that for 20+ years all she had ever heard was charismatic doctrine. She said that she really had to go home and think about what I had taught. The burning desire of these students to learn the Word of God and put it into practice was both humbling and captivating.

How could I NOT go again? Both the need and the fervency of the students to learn and obey the Bible made my pitiful objections to going seem very selfish and silly. In the



INSIDE PAGES

3

COMPLETED
PORTRAIT—
PART TWO

6

NOTES ON
LETTERS ON
REVIVAL

Membership &
Subscription:
IBFNA

6450 Hope Way
Hanover, PA
17331

(475) 329-0585
www.ibfna.org

end, the undergraduate dean was right. I did “fall in love” with those dear Christians, and I have been returning to the Middle East almost every year since 2008! “I’ll only go this one time” has turned into many times and a longing for the next time when I can be with them.

Over a decade of ministry teaching in the Middle East has taught me many lessons. I would like to share several of these lessons with you. May they encourage and instruct you.

Do Not Trust the Media

Several years ago, during the so-called “Arab Spring” in Egypt, many things were being reported and shown by the media that I knew were clearly a fabrication or an exaggeration. Additionally, many details were left out of the reports, giving false impressions and leading to wrong conclusions. People we knew on the ground in Egypt confirmed the falsity of the reports. Although some networks may have been better than others, all of them got things wrong to one degree or another. Edgar Allen Poe wrote, “Believe nothing you hear, and only one half that you see.” When it comes to the media, perhaps it is better not to believe any of it until it is confirmed by outside sources.

Apathy Is Not Universal

The pathetic apathy that we see in many U. S. churches is not a world-wide phenomenon among all believers.

Each time I return to the Middle East, my eyes well up with tears, and my heart is warmed as the dear believers there sing and worship the Lord. The lifeless repetition of words and the sensual display of entertainment that we see in the West seem far removed from them. The crucible of trial and persecution has caused them to fix their eyes on the Lord Jesus in both their lives and their worship.

When Egypt was going through its upheaval several years ago, it appeared that severe persecution was about to break out against believers. A dear Egyptian friend of mine told me that God had worked in his heart and that he was ready to suffer persecution for Christ. This attitude is a far cry from the lukewarm Christianity that is so prevalent in our country. These dear believers love Christ with all

their hearts, and it shows in both their worship and dedication to Him.

Believers Need Good Theology

Believers in the Middle East are not without their theological problems. Islam has caused many believers who are not well-grounded in sound theology to either question their own beliefs from the Word of God, or somehow integrate the false doctrine with biblical truth.

Doctrines such as the Deity of Christ, the Trinity, and others are commonly criticized by Muslims. Popular questions that challenge believers are “How can God die?” and “What about Matt. 19:17, where Jesus seems to claim that He is not good, and therefore is not God.” This criticism either leaves the Christians theologically confused or verbally silent and unable to defend their faith. They desperately need the instruction of sound doctrine and apologetics.

Satellite television has also brought into these countries another theological problem: the influence of charismatic doctrine. False teachers such as Benny Hinn have become very popular in the Middle East. Many Middle Eastern Christians believe that the sign gifts are for today, and that healing is part of the atonement. Even more dangerous is the teaching of continuing revelation, which says that God is still revealing His Word to us.

A third insidious and dangerous theological enemy is that of twisted hermeneutics. Dr. Clay Nuttall spent the last years of his life helping his students in the Middle East to understand a normal hermeneutic. An allegorical or inconsistently literal hermeneutic has created many doctrinal problems for Middle Easterners. Viewing the passages concerning Israel allegorically has given them a reason both to reject and to justify hatred for God’s chosen people. Not understanding the context and dispensational setting of passages has led these sincere yet misguided believers both to accept “Lordship Salvation” and to reject eternal security. These are only a couple of examples. Bad hermeneutics has done more to disrupt sound doctrine in the Middle East than any other thing. Middle Eastern believers who have embraced a normal (literal) hermeneutic admit that this is true.

You might ask, “Why don’t Christians just pick up a good book, and learn from that?” Although the

number of books is growing, there are very few doctrinally solid books printed in Arabic. This is a real need in the Middle East, and progress is slow. Keep in mind too that there is the need for quality translations of books. A poor translation of a good book produces a poor book. Having worked with translators for over a decade, I have come to realize just how important the combined linguistic and theological knowledge of the translator is in order to convey the accurate meaning of the English into Arabic.

In the end, the cure for all of this doctrinal confusion is not only to provide sound theological teaching and materials for those in the Middle East, but also to instruct believers in biblical hermeneutics (interpretation). Without a proper approach to God's Word (using a normal hermeneutic), the proper conclusions can never be drawn. Pray for our dear brothers and sisters in Christ in the Middle East. They desperately need the time that you can give them on your knees!

Islam Is Not a Religion of Peace

Islam is not a peaceful religion, nor is Sharia law compatible with a democratic society. Although it is politically correct to say that Islam is at its heart a peaceful religion, it is a lie. It is a religion of hatred and violence.

Some politicians believe that simply setting up a democratic society in some of these countries will

bring peace, freedom, and prosperity. What many do not realize is that the very reason that we have a representative republic (a "democratic" government) in the U. S. today is not just because we had brilliant framers of the Constitution (although they were); it is because the foundation of our society and governmental ideas was God and His Word.

Today, we are losing our free society in the U. S., and many are crying out for socialism and communism because we have lost our foundation. With God as the foundation, society tends toward freedom. Placing man, false religion, greed, and carnal desires as the foundation tends toward the bondage of socialism and communism.

Just as socialism and communism do not have their foundations on the Word of God, neither does Islam. Simply patching a bit of democracy over that kind of society will never work. The foundation of God and His Word is not there. It will only lead to bondage, corruption, and violence. The remedy is a spiritual one. The foundation needs to change first.

Please Pray and Support

May the lessons that God has shown me through the years be an encouragement to you. I ask as well that you might pray for our brothers and sisters in the Middle East and support fundamental Baptist ministries, that these dear ones might remain strong and become more doctrinally sound.

Robert Ketcham: Completing a Portrait of Obedience – Part Two

By Pastor Dan Greenfield*

**Editor's Note: Dan Greenfield is the founding pastor of Orwell Bible Church (OH) and serves the Lord as the Executive Secretary of the American Council of Christian Churches, the post once held by our brother and IBFNA leader, Ralph Colas. The IBFNA is a constituent member of the ACCC. For more information on the ACCC, visit their website at www.accc4truth.org.*

According to biographer Murray Murdoch, Baptist fundamentalist Robert T. Ketcham (1889–1978) advised young preachers to "(1) Preach Christ. (2) Give the whole counsel of God. (3) Expose error—neo-evangelicalism especially. (4) Obey God. (5) Be available to your people."¹ Murdoch's biography of Ketcham is very good, but it provides an incomplete portrait of Ketcham's obedience. Murdoch mentions

Ketcham's opposition to new evangelicalism only this once. Ketcham's portrait of obedience must therefore be completed.

New evangelicalism is primarily characterized by opposition to fundamentalist separatism and militancy (the aggressive exposure of error and compromise). New evangelicals speak of a "positive" rather than a "negative" approach toward theological "differences of opinion." This positivity is evident in an important 1956 *Christian Life* article detailing several characteristics of new evangelicalism. The fundamentalism of Ketcham's variety was caricatured as "a joke. . . an ignorant, head-in-the-sand, contentious approach to the Christian faith. . . The fundamental-

ist watchword is 'Ye should earnestly contend for the faith.' The evangelical emphasis is 'Ye must be born again.'"²

In Ketcham's keynote address at the 25th anniversary of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches (GARBC), he said,

There are so many who desire to walk close to the corridor wall where they can strike hands with and have occasional fellowship with these modernistic-contaminated movements. They are unwilling to pay the price of the stigma of walking down the center of the corridor with its restrictions. As the corridor constantly narrows, we see so many who, rather than to pay the price of walking the narrow way, fall out and identify themselves with these modernistic movements. Mark you, I do not say that they have changed the gospel they preach, but so far as being of any more value to Christ in this battle of the end time, in the matter of the purity of the church they have become corridor casualties.³

In 1963 Ketcham called for believers to not only "watch for the unborn-again infidel as he comes in from without and sits down at our feasts," but they must also be aware "for some who are born again who would lead us astray. Consider the new evangelicals. They would have you give a little here and a little there. It is only a little, but it takes only a little to do the damage."⁴

Near the end of his ministry, Ketcham contributed to a 1969 *Baptist Bulletin* article titled, "The Greatest Dangers Facing the GARBC." There he said, "The danger is that fundamental pastors and churches may be tempted to give in just a little on some of the 'minor' points. This will be fatal if followed. Every inch given will make the next inch look as harmless to the tempted one as the first one did."⁵

In his sermon, "Caleb—The Man of God," Ketcham said,

In my opinion, the most dangerous of all the enemies that have joined in creating the crisis hour for the Church of Jesus Christ is neo-evangelicalism. That is the most dangerous of all. I can enter the pulpit anywhere; I can take my editorial pen and write as I

please in the most blistering fashion in the denunciation of a Fosdick, a Nels Ferré, or a Duncan Littlefair. And everybody in fundamentalist schools and churches will applaud me. But when I have to expose schools that have announced themselves as thoroughly evangelical and fundamental; when I have to combat men whose names have for years been household bywords of fundamentalists; when I have to cross bats and engage in arguments with men like Charlie Fuller, Harold Ockenga, Carl Henry, and John Carnell; when I have to warn God's people against the compromise of such as these—instead of applause, I am condemned.

You may as well get ready for the same treatment if you are going to be a modern Caleb. The hour is an hour of crisis, and it is heightened and brought to its point of danger—not by modernists, not by the neo-orthodox, not by neo-liberals. The crisis hour that confronts the Church of Jesus Christ in this particular day is the crisis that has been brought into existence by neo-evangelicalism. This is where you will have to take your stand if you are going to be true to the Word of God.⁶

Ketcham's article on "The Holiness of God" demonstrated how liberals shifted the scriptural emphasis of God's most basic and fundamental attribute from holiness to love. He then showed how new evangelicals were guilty of the same thing:

In the fundamentalist world, this shifted emphasis from the holiness of God to the love of God takes the form of a plea for silence in connection with the apostasy. When any of us draw our swords and say to these modernists, "Thou shalt not pass," we are immediately charged with creating schism in the body of Christ. . . [men like John Bradbury, editor of *The Watchman-Examiner*] say I should be loving . . . Somehow they seem to have an utter inability to recognize that loyalty to the truth of God's Word must come first . . . they wanted the emphasis on love in the body . . . it is up to you and to me as long as God leaves us here to get the emphasis back on the beat where it belongs. Get out the old doctrine of the holiness of God, and go to preaching it again!⁷

Ketcham pointed out that the *Christian Life* article previously mentioned left holiness out of its list of God's attributes, the very error that the modernists made.⁸ He said that shifting the emphasis to a solely positive message of "ye must be born again" is dangerous as "the emphasis from now on is not to be on what one believes, but rather upon what one has experienced."⁹ If, for the sake of "Christian love," Christians must only require a born-again experience as the basis of fellowship, the result will be that the church will "degenerate into a spineless mass of jellyfish called 'love.'"¹⁰

Evangelicals charged that fundamentalists were only concerned with preserving the faith and not evangelism. Ketcham responded: "As one of the 'older fundamentalists' I register an emphatic denial of this charge! True it was that we did have a concern for the 'preservation of the Christian essentials.' Had we not had such a concern the 'Christian essentials' would be far dimmer and more difficult to discern than they are even now!"¹¹

Ketcham exposed the compromises of new evangelical schools such as Fuller Theological Seminary and the new evangelical flagship periodical *Christianity Today*, but he especially exposed the compromises of new evangelical evangelist Billy Graham. This was perhaps the greatest test of Ketcham's exposing the error of new evangelicalism because of Graham's great successes.

Before Ketcham publicly exposed Graham's compromise, through lengthy correspondence he tried to get Graham to explain why he united with modernistic leaders and sent new converts back to liberal churches.¹² Hundreds of fundamental pastors wanted to support Graham but were wary of his questionable actions. Graham refused to answer Ketcham's questions. Ketcham thus publicly addressed Graham's actions, pointing out his cooperation with liberals and sending converts back to liberal and Roman Catholic churches.

When Graham said that he would preach anywhere for anyone as long as there were no strings attached, Ketcham replied:

Very well, then let him prove it by giving over just one entire message in his New York campaign to a discussion of what constitutes infidelity, apostasy, and modernism as expressed in the professing church of Jesus

Christ today. Let him tell all and sundry what constitutes a really sound church. But you see, Dr. Graham can't do this, because at his own insistence, many pastors and churches, who are involved in this very modernism, are part and parcel of his sponsoring committee. No, no one in New York has to put strings on Billy. He has put them on himself.¹³

Robert T. Ketcham militantly exposed the error of new evangelicalism in his public preaching, the pages of *The Baptist Bulletin*, and even in his devotional literature. Such militancy—the aggressive attack on error and especially the error of new evangelicalism—is essential to every pastor's ministry, because the pastor as the shepherd of the flock must protect them from the wolves of unbelief (Acts 20:28-31). Pastors who fail to aggressively attack error hold the church doors open to Satanic predators. A lack of militancy is indicative of a lack of love for God and His church. Ketcham's militancy was the outgrowth of his love for the Lord Jesus Christ and the saints of God.

Ketcham required that specific attention be given to exposing the error of new evangelicalism not only because of the peril it presently created for the church, but also because of the severe damage it would create in the future. Once a lack of militancy and separation infiltrate colleges and seminaries, the future leaders of churches that are training there will learn and embrace such an attitude and position. The result will be that churches and schools led by such men will themselves become non-militant and non-separatist. The walls of protection set up by God to protect the church from apostasy are thus torn down, not from the foe without, but from the friend within. Ketcham foresaw this, and thus admonished preachers to "expose error—neo-evangelicalism especially." His life was indeed a "portrait of obedience" in his warning God's people of this newest peril which they faced.

Endnotes

1 *Portrait of Obedience*, Schaumburg, IL: Regular Baptist Press, 1979, p. 252.

2 "Is Evangelical Theology Changing?" *Christian Life*, March 1956, pp. 16, 17.

3 R. T. Ketcham, "Hitherto—Henceforth!" *Baptist Bulletin*, August 1957, p. 31.

4 R. T. Ketcham, "Watch!" *Baptist Bulletin*, January 1963, p. 9.

5 "The Greatest Dangers Facing the GARBC," *Baptist Bulletin*, May 1969, p. 8.

6 Robert T. Ketcham, "Caleb—The Man of God," *Baptist Bulletin*, October 1978, p. 12.

7 R. T. Ketcham, "The Holiness of God," *Baptist Bulletin*, August 1954, pp. 10-12, 16-18.

8 Robert T. Ketcham, "A New Peril in Our Last Days," *The Central Conservative Baptist Quarterly* (Winter 1960): 13.

9 *Ibid.*, 14.

10 *Ibid.*, 15.

11 *Ibid.*, 12.

12 "Graham-Ketcham Correspondence," (distributed by R. T. Ketcham 431 South Dearborn, Suite 1205, Chicago, IL). The correspondence Ketcham initiated began on October 31, 1950 and continued through May 1, 1951.

13 R. T. Ketcham, "Billy Graham Finally Admits His Position," *Baptist Bulletin*, June 1957, p. 12. Additional exposés by Ketcham on Graham are, "The Apostasy Rolls On," *Baptist Bulletin*, January 1958, p. 22; "Billy Graham and Baptismal Regeneration," *Baptist Bulletin*, December 1961, p. 25; "Billy and the Bishop," *Baptist Bulletin*, August 1963, p. 13.

Notes on *Letters on Revival* (1858) by Ebenezer Porter

By Pastor Kevin Hobi

Editor's note: Page numbers listed in this article follow the 2004 edition published by Banner of Truth.

Ebenezer Porter gave a series of lectures about revival in 1832 while serving as President of Andover Theological Seminary in Massachusetts. Andover was a Congregational spinoff from a Harvard that was sinking quickly into the mire of Unitarian unbelief (vii). Against the current of this downgrade, Andover was known at this time as "The West Point of Orthodoxy." Sadly, of course, much has changed since those days.

President Porter's lectures contain lessons he had drawn from the early days of the Second Great Awakening (1773-1788; 6). His observations and interpretations of that monumental time in our nation's history are those of an historic Calvinist (not to be confused with today's New Calvinism). He was speaking to a new generation that desired to learn more about what their fathers had experienced.

The What of Revival

The first of these six letters explains what revival is. Porter begins with dependence on God's Spirit in gospel ministry (2). When the Spirit of God is in control rather than grieved or quenched, change begins with leaders (3), children of Christian families are saved and sanctified (7), and dying local churches are renovated and revived (11). In summary, revival is the conversion of lost sinners, whether many or few, by the power of God's Spirit, accompanied by a renewed awe in believers

in response to the presence of the Lord in the work of the ministry (6).

Understanding the nature of revival means avoiding popular substitutes for this genuine work of God's Spirit. Porter cites two that were especially deadening in his day: "first, the great disorders which became mingled in various forms of fanatical excitement with the genuine and glorious work of the Holy Spirit, and which produced a deadly reaction upon the churches; and secondly, the political asperities betwixt the colonies and the mother country, which kept all the bad passions in feverish agitation, till they exploded in the war of the Revolution." Porter criticizes the political aspirations that led to the Revolutionary War as destructive toward the Lord's Day, as neglectful toward the spiritual instruction of children, and as producing a decline of piety in the churches (6-7).

Revival need not be something large in size. "Often they resembled the still, small voice, rather than the wind which rent the mountains, and broke the rocks in pieces. Often they were gradual as well as gentle. A single youth, perhaps, smitten with an arrow from the quiver of the Almighty, writhed in secret under a wounded spirit, till a brother or sister was smitten also; then religion became a solemn concern to a family, then to a neighborhood, and finally, perhaps, to a large congregation" (10).

Still, the force of change was truly remarkable: "hundreds of churches, some of them with an ample list of communicants slumbering together,

and others sunk to the verge of extinction, were renovated in that blessed season, and went onward, shouting the triumphs of their Redeemer" (11).

The Preaching of Revival

As a Calvinist, the author spends much energy in his second lecture reconciling the need for preaching with the sovereignty of God in revival. Nevertheless, his description of the preaching of this part of the Second Great Awakening is invaluable for us who are called to preach in our darkened day of slumber and itching ear.

It was "evangelical" preaching centered on Christ crucified; it was "methodical" preaching, "biblical" preaching, "fervent and pungent" preaching, and "instructive" preaching (18). Its force lay not in its entertainment value, for much of its delivery was by wrote manuscript (17). Rather, this preaching found power in simplicity: "in point of style, the preachers of that day were plain; with little pretension to elegance of diction, and scarcely any regard to the requisitions of taste, beyond simplicity and perspicuity. They commonly spoke a language easy to be understood" (18).

Hindrances to Revival

Interestingly, Porter wisely observes that often there were no hindrances to revival, even in the absence of this blessing from the Lord (27). But too often hindrances were plainly seen. Pastors who depend too little on God were a significant hindrance to revival (27-31). This shortcoming can produce ministry transience (32), ecclesiastical provincialism and rivalry (33), and expectations that are out-of-sync with the work of God's Spirit, the trap the disciples fell into in Mark 9:17-40 (34). The neglect of discipline and a spirit of controversy also can hinder revival (33).

What is needed to correct every hindrance is not showy disorder, but true conviction of sin and repentance. Critical of the disorderly excesses of the Western revivals that came decades later, Porter describes this "period in New England, in which hundreds of different places were visited by copious showers of divine influence":

Hundreds of thousands listened to these [sermons] with a deep, fixed, silent attention, while among these multitudes were many

hearts bursting with agony, and many eyes streaming with tears; and yet, throughout these scenes of overwhelming and awful interest, not one instance is stated in which the order of the sanctuary or of the conference room was interrupted by any irregularity (49).

Results, Concerns, and Conclusion

The fourth lecture focuses on an issue especially relevant to the Calvinist like Porter who practices pedobaptism, what he describes as the imperceptibility of conversion. But the author does emphasize two valuable truths about the salvation of a soul in this lecture. First, no sinner is ever saved without an acknowledgement of the sin-plague of his own heart (56), and second, the salvation of a sinner is a work of God—His grace alone deserves all the glory (57).

The fifth lecture highlights some results of revival, and the sixth speaks to some other concerns Porter had related to revival. True revival results in changed lives. The author could think of few examples of apostatizing professors in those days (74-75). A spirit of unity (76) in support of humbled pastors (78) and seasoned with a spirit of gratitude (81) made faithfulness to church assembly times a priority and a joy (76). In point of fact, the results of revival are normative Christianity. The multiplication of disciples (Acts 6:1, 7) and the multiplication of local churches (Acts 9:31) flourish into the multiplication of God's Word in a land (Acts 12:24).

The concerns of true revival are the concerns of biblical Christianity: God's glory (85), balance (86), faithfulness (87), preaching that holds sinners accountable while declaring their helplessness apart from God's grace (89), the primacy of the local church in the work of God (91, 95), the importance of a beloved pastor (92), pastoral assistance (93), and passion (102). "Above all, and more than all, acknowledge God and the power of his Spirit as the only agent able to overcome the deep aversion of sinners to all good, and make them submissive to his will" (99).

Porter concludes with a seventh lecture. The true work of God's Spirit produces a love of holiness, not happiness (131). Therefore, "all speculations which tend to exalt human instrumentality and diminish a humble reliance on God [are] fundamentally erroneous, and fatal to the spirit of genuine revivals" (126).

Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America
6450 Hope Way
Hanover, PA 17331

COME CHECK OUT THE NEWLY UPDATED IBFNA WEBSITE!

WWW.IBFNA.ORG

Here you can find important information:

Conference information

Review archive

Regular Baptists for Revival archive

Mission statement

Audio of past conferences

Resolutions

Our history

Articles of faith

Constitution

Contact information