



IBFNA

February 2005  
Volume 13, Number 6

# THE REVIEW

## We Need A Voice To Lead Us Again

by Dr. Richard Harris

Our nation is at a crucial crossroads. We are at war with bloodthirsty terrorists. We are hearing the voices of ungodly judges who tell us that the term “under God” is no longer appropriate for this nation that was founded in reverence for and adoration of Almighty God. Abortion is the law of the land. Pornography fills the airwaves. God, for many, is an afterthought, if thought of at all; and few of our leaders seem willing to engage the culture from a Fundamentalist-Christian platform.

Yes, we are a nation at a crossroads, and churches are at a crossroads also. That is why we need to be praying that a man - or group of men - like Patrick Henry will arrive on the scene to intrepidly call America back to God and to the patriotic spirit of our forefathers.

Patrick Henry (1736-1799) was Virginia’s first governor after the commonwealth declared independence from Great Britain. He was, in fact, “the Voice of the Revolution.” He was a man of unquestioned character and leadership and a man who could mesmerize audiences with his oration.

Thomas Jefferson said of him: “He appeared to me to speak as Homer wrote.”

Following the passage of the unjust Stamp Act in 1765, Patrick Henry, only nine days into his service in the Virginia House of Burgesses, boldly pressed a succession of resolutions defining the rights of the colonies, and pronouncing the Stamp Act unconstitutional and subversive of liberty. To that point, no man had had the audacity to lead such an insurrection against powerful Britain. However, four of Henry’s resolutions passed, while all seven were widely discussed throughout the Colonies.

At the Second Virginia Convention (1775) Henry led the effort to form a standing army, concluding the call to arms with his moving words: “Is life so dear, or

peace so sweet, as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!” In that moving speech, he noted “the holy cause of liberty” which cause remains holy today!

Patrick Henry was God’s prophet. Whenever God has a great task to be performed, He raises up a man of equal greatness for that task. When this nation was being founded, there were strong voices calling for America to remain as colonies joined to Great Britain. However, there were voices on the other side calling for independence, and the leading voice was that of Patrick Henry.

Ezekiel 22:30 tells us: “And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it: but I found none.”

Henry was God’s man to stand in the gap, rallying this nation to become a separate republic. He understood the need for God to remain the focal point. The modern concept that “religion and politics don’t mix” was completely foreign to Patrick Henry and our Founding Fathers. Henry said,

**continued on page 4**

### Inside pages :

- 2 Perspectives
- 3 Hermeneutics
- 5 Editorial
- 7 Tsunami Theology

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## 2005 Perspectives

by Dr. Ralph Colas



**JEFFREY L. SHELER IN AN ARTICLE IN *U. S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT* DECLARED, "EVANGELICALS ARE ACTING MORE AND MORE LIKE THE REST OF US. THEY ARE BOTH INFLUENCING AND BEING INFLUENCED BY THE SOCIETY AROUND THEM. EVANGELICALS ARE JUST NOT THAT MUCH DIFFERENT FROM THE REST OF AMERICA."**

Dr. James Singleton, who was a member of IBFNA until God called him home, shortly before his death wrote some very powerful words. Dr. Singleton said there are several challenges facing us as fundamentalists if we do not want to succumb to those pressures which have ravaged evangelicals. He declared:

1. The rise of a new generation of fundamentalists who have grown up without knowing the scars of battle in liberal and apostate denominations and the necessity of separating from them. It was a group such as this in the 1940's who produced New Evangelicalism.
2. The desire for academic recognition in the religious world, which leads to minimizing the irreconcilable differences between Christianity and Liberalism. This comes along with a failure to understand that those who teach Biblical infallibility and inerrancy will never receive recognition in the religious field. With a desire to be recognized, the New Evangelicals sacrificed the Gospel to the pride of intellect.
3. The quest for numerical success, putting bodies, buildings and budgets to be of greater value than truth.

An interesting study is to examine resolutions passed by some religious bodies. Looking at several resolutions adopted by the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches (GARBC) a number of years ago demonstrates that the threat of New Evangelicalism was brought before the messengers at annual meetings.

Let me give a few examples:

1. This was adopted unanimously on June 20, 1966, 39 years ago. "Whereas there are increasing attempts on the part of some new-evangelicals and others to ascribe degrees of authority to the Bible by differentiating between revelational and non-revelational matters...Be it resolved that the GARBC go on record as re-affirming its belief in the Bible and its own testimony of total inerrancy and therefore absolute authority in all matters upon which it pronounces."
2. In June 1968, two years later a resolution on Ecumenical Evangelism was passed by unanimous vote. It included these sentences, "Be it resolved that we the messengers of the GARBC go on record as repudiating both the philoso-

phy and practice of 'ecumenical evangelism' since it is contrary to the scriptural teaching of complete separation from heresy and those who hold it. The basic philosophy of 'ecumenical evangelism,' that of broad cooperation with the unorthodox for the sake of winning souls, is, in essence, the same unscriptural error as the 'inclusivism' of the old Northern Baptist (now American Baptist) Convention, which error the founders of the GARBC repudiated when they left that Convention."

3. In June 1970, twenty-five years ago, a resolution on New Evangelicalism was passed, but not unanimously, rather by majority vote. It was, "Whereas new evangelicalism is a very present threat to the Biblical position on separation so gloriously held by the GARBC throughout its 39-year history, and whereas, this present threat of new evangelicalism, detailed to us in the keynote address of this conference by Dr. Joseph M. Stowell, our National Representative, was characterized by such positions and practices as (1) the tendency to interpret Scriptures in the light of science rather than interpret science in the light of Scriptures; (2) questioning or denying of the verbal, plenary inspiration of the holy Scriptures; (3) ecumenicity in evangelism; (4) dialoguing with the objective of being non-offensive and to win by infiltration, and whereas the harmful effects of new evangelicalism are the most dangerous when it has infiltrated into Christian schools and has spoiled the lives and doctrine of students attending, and whereas some Christian colleges, Bible institutes and theological seminaries have been infiltrated by the theory and practice of new evangelical philosophy; therefore be it resolved that we commend our GARBC-approved schools and urge them to continue to expose the subtle dangers of the new evangelical movement and to continue to teach our Biblical position of personal and ecclesiastical separation."

While I realize that resolutions can be like lumps in mashed potatoes (the less there are the better), it is still worth noting that in 1970 the above resolution was not adopted unanimously. Some years later action was taken to discontinue all resolutions at GARBC Conferences. (A protest followed and

**continued on page 4**

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# Bible Hermeneutics

by Dr. Clay L. Nuttall

For the better part of eighteen years, I hosted a radio program called “Pastor’s Perspective,” aired live at noon each Wednesday. It was a 30-minute question-and-answer format and was the highlight of my week. The last call of the program on one particular day was in a woman’s voice, asking a question about sign gifts. From my perspective, this was one of those softballs we had fielded many times.

Her response to the Bible references I gave was one of flat-out dismissal. She said, “I guess we just have two different interpretations.” “No,” I replied, “we don’t have two different interpretations; we have two different systems of interpretation.” That was, and still is, the real issue when it comes to hermeneutics, the science and system of interpreting Scripture.

It is easy to baptize any error with the word “Biblical,” but there is only one Biblical hermeneutic—the system that rises from the Scripture rather than one superimposed upon it. A rejection of this one authoritative system has led to the current maze of theological error popularized today in evangelicalism and fundamentalism.

This discussion is moot if the reader has already rejected the Biblical doctrines of inspiration and inerrancy. From the Biblicist point of view, we need no argument about how God’s truth was placed in Scripture; for our constituency, the great issue should be how to get that very same truth back out of the book. The subject is not as difficult as it sounds. God is the Great Communicator, and He has revealed a process by which His great complexity is expressed in marvelous simplicity.

There is a maxim I like to share with my students on this subject: “Liberals complicate to confuse; conservatives simplify to clarify.” Simplicity is the key God has used in revealing a system of interpretation. Arrogant intellectualism in the evangelicalism that is now invading fundamentalism prides itself on shading errors with the pretense of ivory tower explanations.

How can we know what are God’s theological concepts? How can we know what is the interpretation of a text? The answer is simple: we need only to ask the Word of God itself. How can we know what are the hermeneutical rules? How can we be sure that we are taking from the Scripture what God has placed in it? The answer is simple: we would ask the Bible itself what those rules are.



**Rule Number One:** The Bible was written in human languages, and any interpretation of a text must begin with the proper use of language. That is why the original languages are so important. The rule of grammatical interpretation rises from the text.

**Rule Number Two:** Every text is set in a context both micro and macro. No text stands alone but must, rather, be compared to the whole of Scripture, with particular attention to the immediate context. The same is true of all literature. The rule of contextual interpretation rises from the Bible.

**Rule Number Three:** Every text was written in a specific historical setting. No interpretation can be exact if it ignores the wealth of information found in the setting that God chose. This applies to all writings. The rule of historical interpretation rises from the Word itself.

**Rule Number Four:** All literature should be viewed as being literal unless the product itself tells you it is something else. If the content clearly tells us it is allegory, we accept that. The rule of literal interpretation rises from the Bible text. None of these rules is imposed upon the text; each is revealed by Scripture and rises from the text. Theological error results from the rejection or misuse of these God-given guidelines. A theological conclusion is never the issue; the method used to draw that conclusion is. An errant hermeneutic will always have the capacity to produce heresy.

Not one of these rules can be used independently from any of the others, and not one of them is more important than the others. Perhaps we should test this.

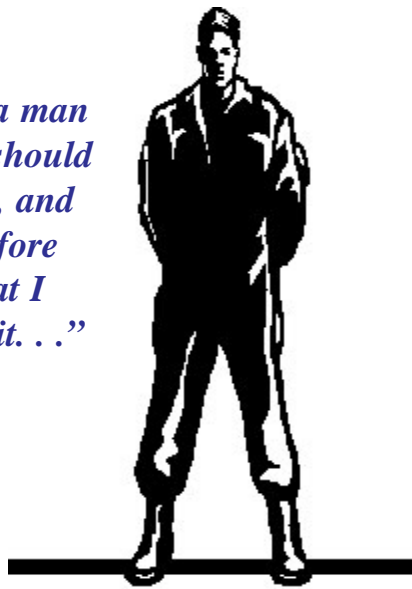
A friend wrote, “Any interpretation that is not based on the original languages cannot be trusted.” I replied to him, “You are right, and you are wrong; any interpretation based on the language alone cannot be trusted either.” As important as the original languages are, it is a serious fault, when interpreting a text, to ignore the other rules that rise from Scripture. Some time spent in reading the material of commentators and theologians who disagree on language interpretation should be proof enough.

There is a reason why many theologians speak only of grammatical historical interpretation. Many faulty conclusions are reached by ignoring the issue of context. When one practices the isolation of a text, he is walking on very thin ice. The Bible

continued on page 4

“It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For this very reason peoples of other faith have been afforded asylum, prosperity, and freedom of worship here.”

*“And I sought for a man among them, that should make up the hedge, and stand in the gap before me for the land, that I should not destroy it. . .”  
Ezekiel 22:30*



Henry believed in absolute morality. He taught “the eternal difference between right and wrong does not fluctuate.” He believed in the authority of the Bible. He held that “eternal law was reflected in nature and written in the Bible” as the surest foundation of social and political life. He also believed, as does President Bush that authority comes from God.

We do not have any Patrick Henrys leading us today, because Christians have been careless. Even though we say “God Bless America” with our lips, we often reject God by our actions. It’s time to get serious. We must pray that God will again send us leaders like Patrick Henry, and may God use us in the Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America to be the voice He will allow us to be for His glory and for the good of our nation and people. May God raise up young men among us who will be that “voice in the wilderness,” and may we be willing to wholeheartedly support them.

R

*Whenever God has a great task to be performed, He raises up a man of equal greatness for that task.*

the practice was then reinstated.) An individual can search long and hard in the past 25 years to find many other such strong and clear resolutions calling for Biblical separation.

One can only imagine if such forthright resolutions were presented today at the GARBC Conferences would they even be adopted, when for years some of the “approved” or “partnering” institutions engaged in new evangelical practices and major protest was nowhere to be found.

However, for those of us who now identify with the Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America (IBFNA) there must be continual preaching and teaching against the insidious positions of New Evangelicalism. All of us must also be alert lest we produce from our ranks a new generation of new evangelicals. This involves great care as to the speakers we use at our meetings, the resolutions we adopt and, of course, articles in the *IBFNA Review*.

It was separation that brought the IBFNA into existence, and may God help us never to forget it.

Before God took him to Glory, Rev. Robert (Bob) Gardner out in Iowa used to tell us:

*“Every Christian should PRACTICE separation; every church and school should STAND for separation; every pastor, administrator and faculty member should TEACH separation.”*

R

speaks to us through theological streams. To ignore that concept dooms one to reach harmful conclusions.

The rule of historical interpretation refers to the setting of a text at the time of its writing. That, however, is not what many people mean when they use this term. The liberals who have attacked our country’s constitution reject the importance of its historical setting, as does theological liberalism. This tool has been borrowed by evangelicals also. One can gain understanding from the progress of doctrine through history, and even the long-term testing of theological positions, but that is not the same thing as the historical interpretation that rises from the Bible itself. The longevity of error does not prove that it is not error.

Liberalism argues that the images of the Bible cannot be viewed as literal. That, of course, is a straw man. No valid Bible student would claim that all those various pictures are literal. What we do believe is that when the text tells us something is allegorical, we are to accept that. That is what literal interpretation means - we accept literally what the text tells us, no matter what form God may have chosen to use in its presentation.

continued on page 7

## Review Editorial

by Pastor Charles L. Dear



### **“Pastor, you could go to jail for what you just preached!”**

That’s not exactly what you’d like to hear after preaching your Sunday morning message; but depending on the content of your message, the risk may be greater than you think. As I have begun a Sunday morning series on Romans, it was not a critique of my message so much as a measure of the anti-Christian times in which we live. Lest you think this is an aberration of political correctness only found in big cities like Philadelphia, you need to read further:

Dateline - October 10, 2004, Philadelphia

#### ***Pennsylvania Christians Face 47 years in Prison for Reading the Bible in Public***

- American Family Association (AFA) website report

“Four Christians are facing up to 47 years in prison and \$90,000 in fines for preaching the Gospel on a public sidewalk, a right fully protected by the first amendment.

On October 10, 2004, the four Christians were arrested in Philadelphia. They are part of Repent America. Along with founder Michael Marcavage, members of Repent America - with police approval - were preaching near Outfest, a homosexual event, handing out Gospel literature and carrying banners with Biblical messages.

When they tried to speak, they were surrounded by a group of radical homosexual activists dubbed the Pink Angels. A videotape of the incident shows the Pink Angels interfering with the Christians’ movement on the street, holding up large pink symbols of angels to cover up the Christians’ messages and blowing high-pitched whistles to drown out their preaching.

Rather than arrest the homosexual activists and allow the Christians to exercise their First Amendment rights, the Philadelphia Police arrested and jailed the Christians!

They were charged with eight crimes, including three felonies: possession of instruments of crime (a bullhorn), ethnic intimidation (saying that homosexuality is a sin), and inciting a riot (reading from the Bible some passages relating to homosexuality) despite the fact that no riot occurred.”

Some other details not included in AFA’s report might be of further interest. For example, this group was asked to move three times by the Philadelphia Police, and they complied with their requests until a fourth time when they refused and were arrested. Furthermore, it is reported that federal attorneys

who were attending the Outfest played a part in causing their arrest by the police. Since they are charged with federal crimes, the prospect of serving their sentences is a serious reality. The Philadelphia District Attorney, Lynn Abraham, is onboard with their prosecution; and she and presiding judge, William Austin Meehan, are no strangers to political correctness by running roughshod over constitutional rights. However, another judge who reviewed the video taken of the event declared that she saw no cause for their arrest. There were others arrested, including a minor, but the brunt of the case is being weighed against the “Philadelphia Four.”

If you still have any doubts that this is a spiritual tsunami coming to a shore near you, read on:

Dateline - January, 2005

#### ***Churches Barred From “Gay” Discrimination***

- Worldnetdaily report online

Illinois churches are protesting a new state law that bars them from “discriminating” against homosexuals, contending it robs Christians of their First Amendment freedoms.

Gov. Rod Blagojevitch signed the bill into law yesterday amid a demonstration led by the Illinois Family Institute, or IFI, a non-profit group affiliated with Focus on the Family, Family Research Council and Alliance Defense Fund.

The measure adds “sexual orientation” to the state law that bars discrimination based on race, religion and similar traits in such areas as jobs and housing.

The bill was signed to loud cheers and a standing ovation from about 150 homosexual-rights supporters who see it as a human-rights issue.

“This legislation sends a clear message that we will not allow our citizens to be discriminated against,” Blagojevitch said in a statement. “What we’re doing is older than scripture: ‘Love thy neighbor,’ the governor told the audience yesterday, according to the Associated Press. “It’s what Jesus said when he gave his Sermon on the Mount: ‘Do unto others what you would have others do unto you.’”

The report further notes that a sponsor of the bill, State Senator Carol Ronen (D-Chicago), is on record calling for its application to churches: “If that is their goal, to discriminate

**continued on page 6**

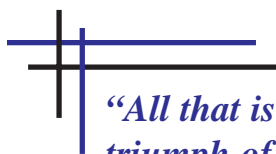
against gay people, this law wouldn't allow them to do that. But I don't think that's what the Catholic Church wants, or stands for.”

An opinion from an Illinois law firm, Ungaretti & Harris, gave this analysis: “While many such municipal prohibitions on sexual orientation discrimination expressly exempt religious organizations from their coverage, the new amendment to Illinois' Human Rights Act does not.”

The issue here is not about our agreement with, or even recognition of, the organizations and people mentioned in these reports. What we need to see clearly is that the abridgment of their rights foreshadows a loss of our own rights, whether it be in the pulpits of our churches or in the public square. When political correctness and appeasement of special interest groups encroaches on my right to preach the whole counsel of God's Word, I have a serious problem that comes as a direct result of politicizing both law and law enforcement.

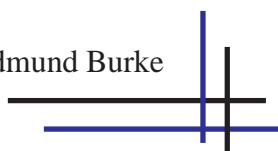
When the anti-discrimination laws were first proposed and Christians objected, we were pacified by a promise that they would never be applied to churches or ministries. Such “Palestinian promises” have proven themselves utterly worthless when expediency is the order of the day. If you thought we were safe inside our church walls, you have underestimated the enemies of Jesus Christ. As a result, 21<sup>st</sup> century believers sit idly by, presuming there is nothing they can do or that nothing can be done to stem the tide of legally sanctioned immorality and perversion. We didn't see the wave coming and so, we would not believe that it could be so overwhelming or so destructive until now it is upon us.

Militant Christianity is not a cliché, neither is it a distant milepost of bygone days in the battle for Truth. The calls to be both salt and light in a corrupt and darkened world cannot be ignored or summarily dismissed. Neither should believers accept a silence imposed by the forces of evil, no matter what the cost.



*“All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.”*

Edmund Burke

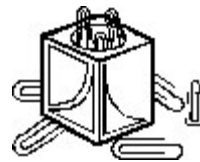


*Postscript to Dateline - October 10, 2004:*

On February 17, 2005, Pennsylvania Common Pleas Judge Pamela dembe dismissed charges against Repent America founder Michael Marcavage and three others accused of “ethic intimidation,” riot, and criminal conspiracy. Civil suits are being considered for the infringement of their civil rights.

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## Notes from the Editor



### Some Important Corrections

In our last issue, December 2004 (Volume 13, Number 5), there were some errors that need correction in this issue:

1. *Christmas Yesterday and Today*, page 7, was written by Pastor Charles Edwards of First Baptist Church in Castaic CA. We appreciate his contribution to The REVIEW.
2. On page one, in *Missions 101*, several mission boards were named as examples of delegation of sending church authority and “superceding the authority of the sending church.” Representatives of Baptist Mid-Missions and Baptist World Mission sent letters of protest, and properly so, in light of their written policies respecting sending church authority. The author regrets the error and offers an apology to those offended or misled by that portion of the article. We are glad to see mission boards defend the authority of the sending church rather than endorse delegation of that authority to the board and encourage them to be as diligent in their practices as in their policies.

### Keeping in Touch

Make note of these changes in your membership directory.

1. James Payne - pg. 17  
new phone number: 734-599-9422  
new email address: jampay1@netzero.com
2. Bill Jackson - pg. 15  
new phone number: 812-294-4974
3. Chip & Pam Edwards - pg. 9  
new address: 148 Easy Street  
Mooresville, NC 28117
4. Les Wallace - pg. 37  
new address: 108 West Ontario Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19140  
home phone: 215-425-4745  
office phone: 908-757-4248  
email address: elw4@netscape.com

# Tsunami Theology

by Pastor Tom Hamilton



The airwaves and newsprint have been filled with cataclysmic disaster of near biblical proportions. The death toll of the tsunami in the Indian Ocean exceeded 210,000 at the time of this writing. Coupled with the avalanches and landslides of this past month and the multiple hurricanes hitting Florida this past summer, the world is once again forced to acknowledge what insurance companies refer to as “acts of God.”

What is the response of the fundamental community? I wonder if their existence filtered into many pulpits of our fellowship. For the fatalistic sovereignists who adopt Doris Day’s world view of “Que sera sera, whatever will be will be, the future’s not ours to see, que sera sera,” all events are passively perceived with a ho-hum complacency. On the other hand, there is compassion. Complacency. Compassion. Let’s see, which should be the Christian response? When Hurricanes Charley and Ivan smashed into the western coast of Florida, my mother in law was in the path of both. Charley totaled her mobile home; Ivan stirred up the pot and made big piles of aluminum debris little piles again. My brother-in-law and I went down with a generator and a truck to salvage what we could of her possessions. Three churches found out about the situation; and, along with family members and friends, almost \$3,500 cash was donated, excluding the truck donated by Penske.

Where is God in all of this? Was He punishing the godless Moslems of the Tsunami range? Was He punishing the Floridians in the hurricanes’ range? Was He punishing the Californians living precipitously on the mountains’ sides? Then what do you do with the missionaries, ministries and generic Christians caught in the wake? Where does the reality of the “prince of the power of the air” enter into the discussion? We’ve heard the arguments on the street, “If God caused or even allowed these disasters then He is not good and not worthy of our praise. If God could have prevented these but didn’t, He is equally not good and not worthy of our praise.” Our dilemma is that on this side of eternity, we don’t know which option happened. We don’t know what was going on in the mind of God. Neither do we have enough information to “pass sentence” on God. Did Satan do it, but God didn’t prevent it? Did God do it? We view life from “underneath the tapestry of eternity” to use Edith Schaeffer’s analogy. We see the dangling threads and convolutions of confusion and wonder at God’s design. It is not until we are catapulted up, through death, to see the intricate weaving of the tapestry from God’s topside perspective that we will begin to fathom His perfect design.

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“Hermeneutics” continued from page 4

Page 7

The great danger here is that, if it is up to man to spiritualize or allegorize any text he chooses, this ends up being nothing but a front for rewriting the Bible. Of course, there are those who want to blame their editing of the text on God. The idea is that, since the Holy Spirit is leading them in their interpretation, they cannot possibly be wrong; in fact, if the Holy Spirit leads them to an understanding that is contrary to

*“Liberals complicate to confuse;  
conservatives simplify to clarify.”*

Scripture, it is God who is doing the rewriting! That reminds me of the old radio program, “The Shadow,” in which the opening line was, “Who knows what evil lurks in the hearts of men?”

The rules that rise from Scripture are grammatical, contextual, historical, and literal. The error that man has imposed on the Bible is a system of imbalance, isolation, history, and allegory. We approach the text expecting it to be literal unless the text says otherwise, while some expect it to be allegorical unless they determine that it might be literal.

One other matter stands as a backdrop to interpretation, and it has to do with the foundational purpose of all that we know and do. The greatest good, and the purpose of life, is “The Glory of God.” Remembering that fact will have an effect on our every principle and conclusion. Others have chosen to highlight “Redemptive Theology” as their backdrop. As wonderful as that truth may be, it places God in a different role. It is no surprise that those who have chosen the darling of allegory have chosen redemptive theology, history and purposes as their pinnacle of interpretation. Allegory and spiritualizing, however, are the only tools which can mold such a concept.

Biblical hermeneutics must be the issue. It is not that we have different interpretations but, rather, that we have a different system of interpretation. The reason modern pop theology has given birth to so much palatable error is that it has baptized that error with the term “Biblical.”

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**Upcoming Events**



**What: IBFNA 2005 Family Conference**

**Where: Shippshewanna, Indiana**

**Farmington Inn 260-768-4595**

**When: June 21 - 23, 2005**

**Who: Your whole family - activities for every age**

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