



IBFNA

THE REVIEW

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God Gave Us A Good Conference

by Dr. Richard Harris

Bringing the Fifteenth Annual Conference of the Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America to a close was rather difficult. The atmosphere was so good that many of us could have stayed there longer. The preaching was so informative that we hated to end it; but, of course, we did. It made us look forward already to next year when we will be able to meet again. The music, led by Phil Gingery from Bible Baptist Church of West Chester, PA was inspiring; and the messages from every speaker gave us food to think upon. As more than one person said during the conference, "This conference made you put on your thinking caps. Your brain got some exercise."

Our subject was Dispensationalism and the attacks that are being leveled at it from those on the "left" in Christianity and even from those who claim to be our friends. We were reminded often of Paul's admonition to Timothy, "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth." I cannot cover the content of these messages in this report, but you can listen to them by going to our website at www.ibfna.org or ordering them by writing to IBFNA, 754 E. Rockhill, Sellersville, Pa. 18960.

Many of our Independent Baptist friends can only get together once a year at this conference, and they had a great time talking over what had happened in their ministries and how God was working. It was agreed by everyone that we need more communication as we serve our Savior across the continent. There were also many members from our churches there who had the opportunity to meet new friends and hear new speakers. One man said, "This IBFNA Conference may well have been one of the finest we have ever had." One speaker remarked, after he received a thank you note from me for speaking without an honorarium, "It was my pleasure to be at the conference this year which was reward enough. The whole atmosphere at the conference was great."



The location of the conference was superb. It was plain, as you can imagine in an Amish area; but it was clean and expansive. There was ample room for fellowship and exercise. You can be sure we will be planning to return there so that all of you who could not come this year will have the opportunity to experience the atmosphere. Think of it – not a single bar in the town! Well, we won't be returning there next year; but certainly in the future, plans will include Shipshewana, Indiana.

We look forward to next year, and we have a good site in mind which has not yet been finalized. **The dates for the 16th Annual Conference of the IBFNA will be Tuesday through Thursday, June 20th to June 22nd. Mark it on your calendar for 2006.**

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IBFNA 2005 Conference

Resolutions



Resolution on the Continuing Perils of Promise Keepers

Whereas for fifteen years Promise Keepers has made one of its purposes to break down denominational walls and dispose of the precious distinctive doctrines of our faith, aiming to involve multitudes of churches of diverse denominations and beliefs; and

Whereas by its leaders and teachers there is a direct link to the charismatic movement and humanistic teachings connecting all to a worldly ecumenicism that tolerates diverse and erroneous beliefs (Galatians 1:6-9); and

Whereas Promise Keepers and their counterpart Women of Faith are continuing to deceive men and women from the true teachings on biblical separation as they profess to foster godly manhood and womanhood with biblical unity, yet leading thousands into doctrinal error and unbiblical fellowship (II Corinthians 6:14, 17-18);

Therefore be it resolved that we, the members of the Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America, meeting in Shipshewana, Indiana, on June 21st through 23rd of 2005, do reaffirm our concern and opposition to the errors and dangers of Promise Keepers and Women of Faith. We further resolve to hold high and promote God's Holy Scripture in fostering true godliness and unity for men and women in growing in Christ-likeness in service and worship within our churches.

Resolution on Sanctity of Life & Ethics

Whereas we live in strange times where evil is called good and the unrighteous are regarded as heroes (Judges 21:25, Isaiah 5:20, Psalms 73) and,

Whereas our technologically advanced society has presented ethical dilemmas not encountered only several decades ago such as now having the ability to keep bodies animated perpetually for the sake of harvesting vital organs and,

Whereas we are faced with real and complex medical ethics, unconstitutional runaway judicial activism, financial perplexities based upon political expedience, privacy issues and spiritual conundrums such as the custody/feeding/starvation ordeal of Terri Shiavo, the powerful homosexual community, irresponsible behavior of some tarnishing the just war against Islamic terrorism, the leftist media agenda and the abortion on demand feminists;

Therefore, we, the members of the Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America, meeting in Shipshewana, Indiana, on June 21st through 23rd of 2005, do hereby call our brethren back to a mindset based upon a literal interpretation; we further call upon America to vote their consciences not their pocket books; additionally, we urge all elected officials to reflect upon the basis of their authority as coming from a righteous and holy God before Whom we will all someday stand and legislate accordingly.

Resolution on Dispensationalism

We, the members of the Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America, meeting in Shipshewana, Indiana, on June 21st through 23rd of 2005, reaffirm our commitment to a literal, historical-grammatical interpretation of the Word of God and recognize a clear distinction between Israel and the Church in God's plan (I Cor. 10:23). We recognize the reality that God has purposed to glorify Himself with men in every age and dispensation.

We further recognize that though from age to age the means of salvation has always been by faith in the Person and sufficient redemptive work of Jesus Christ (either looking forward to Him or looking back at Him). Additionally, God's means of revelation and His requirements of stewardship have been progressively unveiled to men from dispensation to dispensation. (Eph. 3:2-5; Col. 1:25-28).

We further reject the compromise of so-called progressive dispensationalism and its blurring of Reformed Covenant theology with historical dispensationalism.

Resolution on Church Growth Methods

We, the members of the Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America, meeting in Shipshewana, Indiana, on June 21st through 23rd of 2005, reject both the modern day church growth and the "Purpose Driven" Church movements. Such movements rely upon unwholesome blends of worldly music and ungodly entertainment mechanisms in mall-like environments using secular gimmicks, high-pressure programs, and ecumenical speakers to "grow" "seeker sensitive" churches contrary to the holiness of God.

Edification of the saints and evangelism of the lost are the Scriptural means by which the church will grow (Eph. 2:19-22).

We reaffirm and commit ourselves to the Church's purpose to glorify God. We intentionally limit ourselves to follow biblical principles for church growth in which: Christ is acknowledged as the One who builds His Church (Matthew 16:18); pastors faithfully "do the work of an evangelist" (II Tim. 4:5), "preach the Word" (II Tim. 4:2), "feed the flock" (I Peter 5:2), "admonish the saints" (Rom. 15:14), and "teach" the Church (Matthew 28:19, 20; I Tim. 4:11; 6:2) so that the believers will be effectively equipped to do the work of the ministry (Eph. 4:12).

We recognize that as Christians are faithful "sowing" and "watering," God will give increase to our ranks, if He so chooses as He alone can do, and has promised to do!
(I Cor. 3:6) *



An Important Question for Our Times - Is Music Amoral?

Part 2 by Kurt Woetzel Reprinted with permission

Music Is a Language

Ever so crucial to this discussion is the need for the realization and understanding that *music*

is a language. It is often called the language of languages. It is also referred to as the universal language. Although it is incapable of expressing concepts, it is immeasurably more effective in communicating feeling and emotion than the verbal medium.

There is a striking similarity between language and music. In language, we work with letters which become words. Words grow into sentences. Sentences develop into paragraphs. Paragraphs mature to chapters and chapters make a book. In music, notes become chords. Chords grow into phrases. Phrases are melded into sections. Sections emerge as movements, and movements become a composition.

We do language with head, eyes, mouth, hands, and feet. Music is done with head, eyes, mouth, hands, and feet. In language we write, compose, create, think, require inspiration, formulate ideas, and much more. In music the exact same process occurs.

Language is governed by rules of grammar and syntax. Music is created with rules of composition and harmony. Language relies heavily on sounds with different pitches. Obviously music does the same. Language and music both employ sounds with varied durations, dynamics, and timbre. With language we think, ponder, consider. *Muse*, the root word of music, means to think, ponder and consider. Is it any wonder that music is called a language?

Deryk Cooke was a “distinguished broadcaster, music critic, and musicologist” of the 1950’s. In his classic book, *The Language of Music* (p. 272) he writes, “We may say then that, whatever else the mysterious art known as music may eventually be found to express, it is primarily and basically a language of the emotions, through which we directly experience the fundamental urges that move mankind, without the need of falsifying ideas and images—words or pictures.” Robert Shaw expressed it in another way when he wrote to his Collegiate Chorale, “Neither weight lifting nor watchmaking is the concern of our singing—but mood and meaning” (*Dear People...Robert Shaw*, Joseph A. Mussulman, p. 26). Edward Rothstein, chief music critic for the *New York Times*, is a man with a

fair amount of experience, credibility and knowledge about this subject. In his book *Emblems of Mind* (p. 171) he writes, “...music has the power to change the way we see things, to transform our senses and our understanding....”

Can we support music’s linguistic character and attributes Scripturally? 1 Corinthians 14:7-11 includes an unmistakable example where music is used as an analogy for language. “For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound...how shall it be known what is spoken?” Deuteronomy 31:19-22 was the last face-to-face meeting between the Lord and Moses. This was obviously a momentous occasion during which we could expect the Lord to give Moses some very important instruction. What does the Lord tell Moses? What would replace God’s presence and direction which the Israelites had known and enjoyed? How would His comfort and care, experienced for forty years, continue? God instructs Moses to “...write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel.”

God did not say on this occasion, “Speak these words to them. Make certain that they understand what I’m about to tell you.” No. The Lord told him to teach them this *song*. Why is that critically important? Because the words alone did not reflect the power, gravity and importance of the message. “Write them a song, so they’ll remember me that way,” God told Moses. “The song, in their mouths and hearts, as they observe each other singing it, will keep them close to me and it will prick their conscience when they stray,” the Lord assured Moses.

Would God use music for this kind of purpose if it were neutral? But, you say, “There were words with this music.” Yes. But the Lord could have instructed Moses to teach them only the words—perhaps in a poetic form. Obviously the *music*, along with the words, had a greater power to influence their lives and their walk with the Lord than did mere words alone.

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Kurt Woetzel is the minister of music at Trinity Baptist Church of Concord, NH. He is the co-author (along with Dr. Frank Garlock) of the book, *Music in the Balance*. He has been an instructor at the Majesty Music College seminars for several years and is a frequent contributing author to *InChoir*.

Music Is a Moral Language

Steve Mason, a member of the CCM group, Jars of Clay, made a comment in a *Christianity Today* article (November 15, 1999, p. 39) which is representative of Christians who are on the other side of this debate. In my discussions and correspondence with those who take the music-is-neutral side, this same sentiment has been expressed repeatedly in one form or another. Mr. Mason seeks to justify the group’s crossover (sacred into secular) ambitions and comments, “It’s like ‘either you’re in or you’re out.’ There’s got to be a third rail where music can just be music.” Can music just be music? No. Music is a language. Can language just be language and thereby be neutral? The answer is obvious. Just as language cannot be neutral, neither can music. The sociologist takes strong issue with Mr. Mason’s contention when he writes, “There can be no music without ideology” (*The Sounds of Social Change*, R. Serge Denisoff, p. 107). Whenever music is played or performed, something is being taught. The chief music critic of the *New York Times* would also not agree with the suggestion of a “third rail.” Once again, Mr. Rothstein (*Emblems of Mind*, p. 89) clearly indicates which side of the morality issue he is on: “So when you play music, you also embrace a style. A style suggests ways to sit, ways to sing, ways to feel rhythm. It also suggests ways to think.”

His comments should really not come as a great surprise. It was mentioned earlier that the term music itself is derived from *muse* or *musa* which means to think, to meditate or to contemplate. Could something which causes us to think a certain way be amoral? If so, then we would need to conclude that thinking—is just thinking. Fortunately, our common sense tells us otherwise. Furthermore, the Word of God provides candid instruction for the believer on this matter. Philippians 4:8, “Finally, brethren, whatsoever things



are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good

report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.” Why is the Lord concerned about how we think? Why should believers give attention to the thoughts which flow through our minds? The answer is found in Proverbs 23:7, “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he.” Dr. Charles R. Phelps, pastor of Trinity Baptist Church, Concord, New Hampshire, has well said, “If music impacts

thought and our thoughts are to be righteously regulated, then we must righteously regulate the music to which we listen.”

Let there be any question about what is meant by music (organized sound itself) being



moral, let us continue in our quest for further understanding and evidence. Deryk Cooke, after much technical music analysis in his book *The Language of Music*, makes a closing definitive statement as he ends his study (p. 271), “Of course, rhythm and form play a large part in moral expression.” Of course, as if to say, “Everyone knows that—it goes without saying!” Perhaps some have forgotten it and need to hear it anew. William Kilpatrick is a distinguished Professor of Education at Boston College. He is also the author of the popular book, *Why Johnny Can’t Tell Right from Wrong and What We Can Do About It*. What is his opinion regarding the role contemporary music plays in the lives of today’s adolescents? Why does Johnny have difficulty distinguishing good from evil? Mr. Kilpatrick makes it clear that one of the reasons Johnny can’t tell right from wrong is because of the music in Johnny’s life. “Music and Morality” is the title of an entire chapter in his book. His comments leave no doubt as to his opinion on the morality of music. “No matter how many reforms are attempted, rock and rap will always gravitate in the direction of violence and uncommitted sex. The beat says, ‘Do what you want to do’” (p. 182).

Martha Bayles, graduate of Harvard University, a six-year television and arts critic for the *Wall Street Journal*, and author of articles in *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper’s*, the *Brookings Review*, the *New Creation*, and many other publications, has also written *Hole in Our Soul, The Loss of Beauty and Meaning in American Popular Music*. Early in the book (p. 4), she establishes her with contemporary music concerns with “...few critics have addressed the subject of *sound*—which is, after all, what the music is made of.” Unlike most of the Christian authors who address this subject, her evaluation is sound-based rather than lyric-based. She continues, “...just as assaultive as the lyrics and images of contemporary popular music are many of the sounds.”

The book is divided into four parts. The final section of the book is captioned, “The Triumph of Perversity.” After

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Meeting old friends...



...making new friends



Conference Scrapbook

Heavenly music



"Very informative, encouraging and a great blessing to us! A lovely place for a family meeting! Thank you so much for the invitation."
- Fred and Louise Holdsworth (II Pet. 1:2)

Challenging preaching



Beneficial workshops



Delicious Food



Informative displays





Philadelphia Perspective

Editorial by Dr. Charles L. Dear

The IBFNA proved how rare a fellowship we are by going on record in defense of Dispensationalism at our June 2005 annual family Bible conference. The conference boasted a strong and broad list of speakers and subjects that drew together pastors and families from across the country to enjoy great music and powerful preaching from the Word. Perhaps the most salient comment heard at the conference was, “I didn’t know that anything like this still existed...this has been great!” Our fellowship made a major step forward this year, and we look forward to more joining with us who have had enough of the compromise and worldly directions others have taken. Our annual conference placed us clearly on the map as both fundamental and separated for everyone to see. We raise a standard that challenges the weakness and deception found growing across the professing fundamentalist landscape.

Dr. Duane Brown opened the conference by tracing



the history of apostasy over the last century and a half that brought us from more fundamental principles to a post-Modern era. Dr. Robert Delnay followed by tracing the Reformed attacks

on Dispensationalism and the movements away from the anticipation of an imminent return of Jesus Christ. Pastor Mike Ascher dealt with the weaknesses of the Reformed position, such as double standards for hermeneutics, extensive use of allegorical interpretation and human logic. Dr. Tom Wolfe addressed dispensational missions and the promises of God as the foundation of the Great Commission. Dr. Clay Nuttall focused in on the subjects of Biblical interpretation and the impact of integrationism over the two messages he preached. Your editor presented “Not of This World,” contrasting the earthly perspective of anti-millenarians with the heavenly view of dispensationalists. Dr. Ralph Colas brought the separation message, entitled “Is Separation Passe?” in which he touched on the recent



practice of “sermons by committee.” On the last day, we began with Evangelist George Zinn, who spoke on the preaching of Christ and His Gospel. Dr. Mark Foster gave an update on the right to life issues raised in the

news by the Terry Schiavo case. Dr. Nuttall closed the conference with the impact of anti-dispensationalism upon the anticipation of future events. There were also workshops that ranged from the Sunday School, by Dr. Allen Harris, and Preaching, by Dr. Delnay, to workshops for the ladies by Mrs. Mary Singleton and Mrs. Donna Dear.

Dateline: June 2005

George Barna launches a new venture in the religious multimedia world

While we should not be surprised that George Barna has taken his own research seriously enough to launch a new business to profit from the changes, you should make careful note of his rationale and perspective on the worth of local churches:

“Our research has shown that most of the influence on what people think and do comes from just seven sources: movies, television, music, family books, law, and the internet. That same body of research shows that *the local church has virtually no discernible influence on people’s lives* (emphasis Ed.). Consequently, we are striving to understand, influence and operate within the spheres of greatest influence to help facilitate genuine spiritual transformation in people’s lives....”

The pressures to be “culturally relevant” and to move on to speak the “language of the culture” have caused more preaching and teaching of the Word of God to become more entertaining and cute or clever, to appeal to the eyes and ears of a media-addicted congregation. Perhaps we will reach a point where we wonder if the

video projector in church was as much a Trojan horse as the video recorder in our homes. Surely, innocent at first, but growing into a corrupter that draws us away from the simplicity of the Gospel message and the proclamation of the Truth through the foolishness of preaching.

No doubt we have marvelous tools to use in the electronic age, and we cringe at such comments as “death by lecture.” Nevertheless, the changes we observe doctrinally have been built upon premises, such as the medium being substituted for the message, as media events complement the works of men and their ability to manipulate thought and emotion towards a determined goal. Not only can Christ and the Gospel message become lost in the dazzling array of sight and sound, but also the local church becomes a theater which Barna would say makes it much more relevant. *

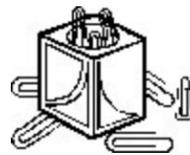
“Music” continued from page 4

presenting her argument, she makes several pointed value statements. One of them is found on page 388 as she writes, “it is ironic that, in this age of multiculturalism, so many people seem intent upon ignoring the fact that the West is the only civilization to have created a form of art whose sole purpose is to attack morality.” It is almost bizarre to think that the great majority of the Christian community is included in the “so many people” who have ignored this “fact.” She defines morality as “simply the difference between good and evil as understood by most human beings.”

Just a fleeting glance at MTV would cause any discerning believer to agree with Martha Bayles. The pictures accompanying the sound on MTV now graphically display the sensuality which has been pervasive in the music for over two generations. Even some of the entertainment industry’s own are expressing concern. Speaking on the “Bloomberg Forum” (WGBH, Channel 2, Boston, 2-2-98) Steve Allen commented, “Much of show business now involves vulgarities entertaining barbarians.” Indeed, there is a brutal attack on morality, and music plays a major role in the attack.

It is at this point that the average Christian, adhering to the neutrality view, must ask some searching questions. Can an entity which is *neutral* attack morality? Can an amoral medium have moral impact? The obvious answer to this question exposes the error of music-neutrality thinking and postures statements from men like Harold Best and Steve Miller in sharp contrast. Mr. Best is the former dean of the conservatory of music at Wheaton College and calls music “moral nothingness” and claims that “There is nothing un- or anti-Christian about any kind of music” (*Music Through the Eyes of Faith*, pp. 59, 388). Steve Miller is the author of *The Contemporary Christian Music Debate* and makes his position clear with, “Using what is neutral in a society as a vehicle for the gospel is not only acceptable; it is sound missionary strategy” (p. 49).

Notes from the Editor



Keeping in Touch

Make note of the following address change in your membership directory.

Effective September 1, 2005, Rev. Jerry and Mrs. Marlys Johnson can be reached at 7955 Wistful Vista # 44, West Des Moines, Iowa 50266

These Christian spokesmen use candid and direct words which make their viewpoint unmistakably clear. The world is equally blunt. In a PBS historical documentary (*Jazz*, Part 3, aired January 10, 2001) produced by Ken Burns, music critic Gary Giddins described the music as, “hot, exotic and sexy.” Narrating the scene at a Duke Ellington show, Mr Giddins comments, “He’s playing behind some pretty racy shows. And he is providing a music that supports them and so the music itself becomes erotic. And so the bad becomes a kind of participant with the dancers. They’re just as erotic. They’re just as seamy...”

Martha Bayles uses similar terms in *Hole in Our Soul* (p. 132) in describing a music which appeared almost thirty years later. “It would be absurd to argue that 1950’s rock ‘n’ roll is ‘religious’ in the sense of being ethereal, reflective, and contemplative, as opposed to physical, emotional, and erotic.”

A Biblical Perspective on the Question—Is Music Amoral?

I recognize that it is relatively easy for believers to dismiss the historian’s critique, the sociologist’s comments, the music critic’s judgments, the educator’s opinions, the composer’s evaluation, the choral conductor’s insight and that of anyone else who does not overtly espouse Biblical values. Let us remember, though, that in these circles, and particularly in this discipline, there is a level of expertise, awareness, academic stature and professional accomplishment which is seldom matched in Christian circles. Furthermore, when folks without the witness of the Holy Spirit in their lives forcefully and passionately condemn that which they consider damaging to the arts in particular and to society in general, we as

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believers need to heed their words. It should make Christians sit up and take serious notice when the world categorizes something as having moral impact and the Christian community responds by saying, “We don’t think so. Matter of fact, we think it’s fine.” Are we not typically on the other side of this kind of discussion? Who is being the “salt and the light” here? In Luke 16:8, the Lord alluded to instances in which the world would have better judgment than the believer, “...the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light.” Perhaps the area of music is a classic example.

The evidence for the music-is-moral side from these sources is overwhelming. The world condemns itself and its music. Why do believers come to its defense? In this discussion I have sought to blend Biblical principle with secular findings in an effort to develop an effective, convincing argument.

Why is music moral? Why is it critically important for the believer to grasp this concept? Because Scripture declares music moral—*without* the help of secular wisdom. The evidence from the “world” only reinforces, clarifies, embellishes and perhaps contemporizes what the Bible already declares. For those who are still uncertain, let us consider a final passage in the Old Testament. In I Chronicles

25: 1-3, we find a particularly valuable and interesting phrase which unmistakably indicates that music, without words, is moral. In verse one we read, “of the sons of Asaph, and of Heman, and of Jeduthun, who should prophesy with harps, with psalteries, and with cymbals...” In verse three the same thought is repeated, “under the hands of their father Jeduthun, who prophesied with a harp, to give thanks and to praise the Lord.” The words “prophesy” and “prophesied” literally suggest that preaching took place. A prophet addresses social, political and spiritual issues. In this instance the “preaching” was done with instruments—with sound—music! Could such prophesying be considered amoral or neutral! No. Thus, for the Christian to take a music-is-neutral position is not only to dismiss the enormous amount of data which exists from secular experts, but more seriously, to deny and deliberately oppose the clear teaching of the Word of God.

Music has a powerful influence in individual lives, families, and churches. My prayer, aim and purpose for this discussion are that the music in the life of the reader would cause him to experience the reality of the words in 2 Kings 3:15. “But bring me now a minstrel. And it came to pass, when the minstrel played, that the hand of the Lord came upon him.” *

Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America

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