



IBFNA

# THE REVIEW

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## We Need Your Help!

IBFNA is an independent Baptist fellowship of believers. There are literally thousands of Independent Baptist churches across our country. Since we are an individual fellowship, rather than a church fellowship, there are multiple more Independent Baptists. Because we are independent, however, we do not know where these churches and individuals are located. We must expand to reach out to Independents everywhere. We cannot be too parochial, that is, limit ourselves to a select few who started the Fellowship. We are concerned about the many thousands of Independent Baptists who have little fellowship with others, except in their own churches. The pressures from all sides are on every pastor and church member to surrender their testimony and weaken their stand for Christ in this decaying culture in which we live. Churches and individuals who once stood tall are giving in to pressures, and testimonies are being watered down and weakened.

Our goal for the IBFNA is to help men and women stand strong for the "Faith" once delivered. We dearly want to help encourage churches and individuals not to give up but to fight



for truth and righteousness in this age of compromise and to do so in their own community. Our hope is to pull men and women together under the banner of "Standing Strong for the Faith Once Delivered." Almost every day, I hear of another church that is giving in to the allure of mega-churches such as Willow Creek. These new-evangelicals are determined to build "seeker sensitive" churches where their efforts are centered on pleasing the

people rather than pleasing God. The Apostle Paul, quoting from the Psalmist and under the direction of the Holy Spirit, said, "There is none that seeketh after God." The Scripture is clear. It may sound good but is it Scriptural? To a pastor or church worker who is without fellowship and struggling to reach his community, it is sometimes easy to follow the "pied pipers" of the church growth movement.

But, getting back to why we need your help, our difficulty is that we do not know these men and women throughout these great United States and Canada who would benefit from the fellowship of strong men and women in the IBFNA. We are planning some regional meetings early in the new year, and we would love for many of you to help us reach churches and individuals whom you think would be blessed by their associating with the IBFNA. Do you have mailing lists of Independent Baptists in your state that you would not mind sharing with us? We will make them aware of our existence and encourage them to seek us out. Not everyone will respond, obviously, but some will be happy to make new friends and helpers in the Faith. We must not stay isolated from one another. We can strengthen each other in our stand for Christ in a very dangerous and degenerating culture. \*

by Dr. Richard Harris

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# COME OUT, COME OUT, WHOEVER YOU ARE

by Dr. Robert Payne

I recently heard an interview with a radio talk show host who asserted that political liberals love to hide behind conservative principles. His viewpoint was that if the liberals were to come out and demonstrate to this country who they really were, they would be rejected by the majority of voters in a heartbeat. The parallels between modern political liberals and some institutions that claim to be fundamental, dispensational, separatist and Baptist are uncanny.

There are times when I read what some of these institutions are writing, what they are doing and what their representatives are saying, and I say to myself, "Stop playing games and just come out and tell people who you really are." The problem is that if they were to come out and admit who they really were, they, in a similar way to the political liberals, would lose support.

## **HIDING BEHIND THE TERM "DISPENSATIONALIST"**

I have observed some fundamentalist institutions hiding behind the word "dispensationalist," when, at the same time, they hold to Reformed positions on doctrines such as soteriology and pneumatology, thereby, blurring the distinction between Israel and the church. Behind these Reformed positions is a Reformed hermeneutic which encourages a "cerebral" approach to Theology, placing man's logic at the forefront of biblical interpretation. In order to prove their Reformed doctrine, teachers and representatives of these institutions skillfully and cleverly utilize a contrived exegesis of certain passages. This shrewd exegesis takes the place of the entire hermeneutic process.

Moreover, in their logic-centered approach to the Bible, historical theology becomes eminently important. Suddenly, it becomes far more important what some Reformer or theologian of the past taught than what a consistently literal hermeneutic uncovers. Furthermore, this elevation of human reasoning seems to render these men unable to comfortably admit that there are unfathomable mysteries in the Word of God that cannot be sufficiently explained by linguistics and logic. Those who disagree with these theologians are not as "mentally gifted" as they; and certainly, they must have had a woefully inadequate education from an "unapproved" institution.

## **HIDING BEHIND THE TERM "SEPARATIST"**

There are other institutions that hide behind the word "separatist," when their practice tells another story. Like the proverbial chameleon, they change their theological colors to resemble whatever group in which they find themselves.

When the representatives or teachers from these institutions find themselves in a group of separatists, they will boast how earnestly they are "contending for the faith." I have observed through the years that these "pseudo-separatists" always seem to

feel the need to promote in a loud voice "how separated they are." It is rather like a married man loudly proclaiming everywhere he goes how separated he is from other women, and how dedicated he is to his own wife. Neither moral men nor genuine separatists have a need to convince others of a fact that should be patently obvious by their demeanor and practice. Some time ago I attended a fundamental Baptist conference and asked a representative from one of these institutions if the organization that he represented believed in ecclesiastical separation. He paused and thought a few seconds before reluctantly answering "yes." My observation of this organization since this incident has led me to a different conclusion.

At other times the representatives or teachers from these institutions find themselves in a group of compromising individuals where they feel comfortably "at home." How easy it is at those times for them to exuberantly express with great freedom a "sloppy agape" of "love and toleration." Genuine biblical love is never tolerant of sin and compromise.

Would to God we had more separatists like Spurgeon who preached in a sermon, Sunday, October 7, 1888, at the Metropolitan Tabernacle: "I have preached God's truth, so far as I know it, and I have not been ashamed of its peculiarities. That I might not stultify my testimony I have cut myself clear of those who err from the faith, and even from those who associate with them."

## **CONCLUSION**

As a Baptist who believes in soul liberty, I strongly believe that it is the right of any and all institutions to adhere to whatever doctrine and practice that they may choose. I only wish that some of the institutions would be honest enough to cease mislabeling themselves and be willing to clearly identify themselves with the crowd to whom they belong. If your institution holds to a Reformed position, then be honest enough to tell me. Stop trying to deceive me and others that your college, seminary or missions agency is dispensational. If the institution that you represent believes that ecclesiastical separation is a doctrine that is too harsh and unpalatable for your sensitive theological taste, then be forthright and tell me. The confusing game of theological hide-and-go-seek needs to stop. \*

*Dr. Robert Payne has been the senior pastor of Berean Baptist Church in Belleville, Michigan since 1991.*

## 2005 PERSPECTIVES

by Dr. Ralph Colas



The Baptist World Alliance (BWA) has 211 Baptist unions and conventions in their membership. They say they have 32 million baptized members, but minister to 80 million around the world. While the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) recently voted to be removed from the BWA, the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) with 1,836 churches and 250,000 members is not only in the BWA but very supportive of it. For the most part, CBF churches are the “progressives” of the SBC.

SBC state papers regularly carry articles from both the SBC and CBF. These papers, plus many others, promoted the Baptist World Congress held in Birmingham, England, July 27-31, 2005. This was BWA’s centennial celebration.

It is interesting to notice the lineup of key speakers for this BWA Congress. Dr. Rick Warren, author of the global megasellers, *“The Purpose-Driven Life”* and *“The Purpose-Driven Church,”* endorsed the meeting and is also promoting BWA’s new book, *“Together in Christ, 1905-2005: A History of 100 Years.”* Warren is quoted as saying, “I believe the Centennial celebration of the Baptist World Alliance will be one of the historic hinge points of the 21<sup>st</sup> century church. This event will not only celebrate history, it will make history. I would not miss it.”

Another main speaker was left-wing, liberal American Baptist, Dr. Tony Campolo, identified by BWA as a “charismatic modern-day prophet.” Campolo recently told a group in England that, “The Church needs to revolutionize the way it works. We have got it wrong since Constantine.” He said, “We need to teach churches how to regain their imagination. We have no positive imagination regarding Scripture. We do not need an objective description of the cross, but we need a subjective understanding of Christ. We need to ask the Holy Spirit to enable us to feel what Jesus felt. The imagination has to work on that level. Along with social projects,” Campolo added, “the 21<sup>st</sup> century Church will be defined by charismatic Christianity. Baptist churches that are growing are those that have adopted informal worship.”

Former President Jimmy Carter and Dr. Henry Blackaby were also speakers at the Congress that involved 12,000 participants. Dr Billy Graham was unable to attend but sent his “warmest Christian greetings to all of you and I have many longtime friends among you. May God richly bless you in fellowship.”

Other groups from the USA that maintain membership in the BWA are the American Baptist Churches USA; Baptist General Conference, which is the Conference in which Dr. John Piper’s church continues its membership; General

Association of General Baptists, not the GARBC; North American Baptist Conference, the German Baptist group; National Baptist Convention, USA; Progressive National Baptist Convention, plus others, which make a total of 61,817 churches with 17,901,569 members.

A recent issue of “The Information Service of the Pontifical Council For Promoting Christian Unity” (PCPCU), headquartered in Vatican City, had a major article about “BAPTIST-CATHOLIC CONSULTATION.” It gave a report on the meeting the Baptist World Alliance and the Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity held December 10-11, 2004, in Washington, DC.

The consultation explored two themes. They were “Baptism as Entrance to the Church” and “Mary in the Life of the Church.” On the 10<sup>th</sup> the meeting took place at the offices of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and on the 11<sup>th</sup> at the offices of the Baptist World Alliance in Falls Church, Virginia.

This was the fourth two-day consultation sponsored by these two organizations. The latest meeting was co-chaired by Bishop Brian Farrell (Secretary, PCPCU), an active participant at the WCC’s Conference on Evangelism and Mission held in Athens, Greece, May 9-16, 2005, and Dr. Denton Lotz (General Secretary, BWA).

Papers on the theme of “Baptism: Entrance to the Church” were delivered from a Baptist perspective by Dr. Barry Morrison (Canadian Baptist Ministries) and from a Catholic perspective by Sister Susan Wood, SCL (St. John’s University, Collegeville, MN). The theme of “Mary in the Life of the Church” was addressed on the Catholic side by Sister Sarah Butler, MSBT, who made two presentations: “The Blessed Virgin Mary. God Bearer, in the Mystery of Christ and the Church” and “The Dogmas of Mary’s Immaculate Conception and Glorious Assumption,” and on the Baptist side by Dr. Timothy L. George (Dean, Beeson Divinity School) who spoke of “The Blessed Virgin Mary in Evangelical Perspective.” Both groups intend to explore in which way to continue these meetings.

Beeson Divinity School is a part of Samford University, a SBC school. Beeson states that it holds to the SBC statement

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## THE PASTOR WHO COULDN'T IGNORE IMMERSION

by Rev. Paul Gustine

Milo P. Jewett was born in Johnsbury, Vermont, on April 27, 1808, into the family of Dr. and Mrs. Calvin Jewett. Being the son of a medical doctor, young Jewett was offered the opportunity of a fine education and graduated from Dartmouth College in 1828. Looking forward to a career in the legal profession, Jewett spent a year in a law office in New Hampshire; but in 1830 he abandoned law and entered Andover Seminary. His brilliant mind fully equipped him for the field of education, and "he decided that teaching and not preaching was the work for which God had fitted him.... In 1834 (he) accepted a professorship in Marietta College, Marietta, Ohio." [William Cathcart. *The Baptist Encyclopedia*, ed. Louis H. Everts (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1881), 1:603.]

Professor Jewett was persuaded to accept the pastorate of a Presbyterian church along with his educational duties, and for two years he served as pastor-professor. A disturbing situation developed which changed Jewett's life.

In January 1839 Jewett was baptized and united with the Baptist church in Marietta. Then resigning from the college, he went south to Marion, Alabama, where he established the Judson Female Institute. He was ordained into the Baptist ministry in 1839 and founded *Alabama Baptist*, which became the Baptist magazine of the state. In later life he returned to the North and became the first president of Vassar College. After losing his eyesight, the Reverend Mr. Jewett resigned from the college and moved to Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He continued to be active in the Lord's work, both as a college administrator and church member.

In 1840 he authored *Jewett on Baptism*, and the volume was blessed by the Lord in helping many to see the spiritual truth of the ordinance. Jewett passed into the Lord's presence in 1882 after a full life of spiritual obedience and service.

[Dr. Cummins cites an 1845 edition of *Jewett on Baptism* by the American Baptist Publication and Sunday School

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• Rev. Paul Gustine is the senior pastor of  
• Bible Baptist Church of Northampton,  
• Massachusetts. He served as the editor  
• of "The Review" from 1997 until 2002.  
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Society, 1845. However, the first edition appears to be one by Gould, Kendall and Lincoln in 1839—P. W. Gustine.]

**Milo P. Jewett. *The Mode and Subjects of Baptism*. Boston: Gould, Kendall and Lincoln, 1839.**

### Introduction

Extracts of a letter from the author, giving an account of his change of views, and written a few days after his baptism

*Marietta College, June 28, 1838*

*Perhaps you know I have preached for about two years past to a Presbyterian church in the country. Some eighteen months ago, an elder of that church became a Baptist. On the occasion of his baptism, a sermon was preached by Rev. Hiram Gear, the Baptist minister in Marietta. This sermon disturbed several members of my church, and the session requested me to preach on baptism, in reply. I declined, saying, the best way to manage the excitement was totally to disregard it; pleading my duties in college, &c. Soon the session applied to me a second time, insisting that I must preach on the subject; several members of the church were in trouble, and a discourse must be delivered. Finding that the interest in the subject was not likely to die by neglect on my part, I told the church I would prepare a discourse as soon as practicable, and begged them to remain quiet, till they should hear what I might have to say.*

Thus compelled to write, I determined to go into an original investigation of the whole matter, proceeding just as if I had never heard or read any thing on either side, and endeavoring with a spirit of candid and prayerful inquiry, to seek after the mind of Christ. I began my researches, by reading Professor Stuart [Andover] on *baptizo*, the ablest Pede-baptist work on the philology of the subject. The inquiry was, *What does Christ mean*, when he commands his ministers *to baptize*? I was soon astonished to find in Stuart's investigation, proof so strong that the word in its literal, ordinary sense, universally means *to immerse, plunge, or dip*. It looked as if, with this fact before him, the learned Professor ought to have become a Baptist. I was alarmed, and would have given up the inquiry, but could not. I laid aside Stuart, and entered upon an investigation of the original Scriptures, relative to the language used respecting the ordinance. I also examined

Josephus, and the classics, so far as I had the means. The further I prosecuted my inquiries, the stronger was the evidence, in favor of Baptist views. Thus passed some months. The people had become tired of asking after my sermon on baptism, but my conscience would not now suffer me to abandon the investigation. I therefore continued to apply to it, as other duties permitted, all my powers, till I was compelled to admit, as a philologist and interpreter of the Bible, that *immersion, and that only, is the baptism which Christ enjoins.*

Afterwards I took up infant baptism, and here I found myself in clouds and darkness. I wandered about in the fogs with which writers have shrouded the Abrahamic covenant, the connection between the Old and the New dispensations, the substitution of modern for ancient rites and ordinances, the obscure passages of Ecclesiastical History, bewildered and perplexed—all, as I now believe, because I would not trust to the WORD OF GOD, to guide me to GOD'S INSTITUTIONS. I conversed with my Pedo-baptist friends, I prayed, and wept, and groaned. I would lay down the subject for weeks, then resume it, till, some three or four months ago, I was obliged in the fear of God to conclude, that none, but *believers in Jesus, have a right to the ordinances of Jesus.*

I lay no claim to infallibility, but if I am wrong, I am *conscientiously* so—I am so after a most laborious and protracted search for truth. I have acted also in opposition to all the prejudices of early years—of classical and theological study; prejudices confirmed by twelve years' connection with a Pedo-baptist church, during six of which I acted as a minister of Christ. And not only my church relations, but all my literary associations, my family connections, and my temporal interests, have combined to withhold me from the result to which I have come. These I cheerfully sacrifice to my convictions of truth and duty. \*

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### “Perspectives” continued from page 3

of 1963 on Baptist Faith and Message but is “intentionally interdenominational and explicitly evangelical.” A recent issue of *Christianity Today* had a full-page ad about Beeson Divinity School; and it included a statement by Dr. Timothy George, their Dean, about the direction the school is going. He said it was going to be Confessional, Evangelical, Ecumenical and Reformational and to affirm their core commitments. Under the point of being Evangelical, he said, “We are committed to the central doctrine of justification by faith alone....”

If that be true, why would Dr. George be involved in dialogue with the Roman Catholic Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity when the Roman Catholic Church rejects “justification by faith alone?” **SUCH DIALOGUE ONLY LEADS TO DISASTER.** \*

## INDEPENDENT DOES NOT MEAN ISOLATED OR SECRET

by Dr. Richard Harris

*“And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, besought Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus.”* John 19:38

In the newspapers and on television these last few weeks, we have watched a terrifying and horrendous event. Hurricane Katrina and the resulting floods brought havoc and devastation to Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana and especially to New Orleans. The critical need for communications became evident in the aftermath of the hurricane, the flood, the fires and the free-for-all looting that took place. Personally, I felt the Federal Government, under President Bush's leadership, did a masterful job in the face of the worst natural catastrophe in American history, once they overcame the original lack of local organization.

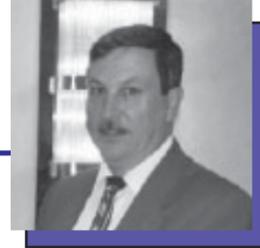
I'm not sure how well we did, however. I received numerous emails and phone calls about how to help Independent Baptists in the area. I did respond with what I knew, which was not too much, because Louisiana is not in our strong area of membership. It did remind me, however, of something I have said before. It is good that we are Independent Baptists, but sometimes our strength becomes our weakness. We are so often afraid to join in fellowship with other believers, and I'm not sure why. Maybe you can help me understand. When catastrophe strikes, many would often like to help “the household of faith,” but we don't know where they are. In addition, we would have great resources to help in time of need if Independent Baptists, who are fundamentalists, across our country would fellowship together. I'm not taking about building a welfare state or the “social consciousness” of New Evangelicals, just a common compassion for other believers of “like precious faith.”

Joseph of Arimathaea was a secret believer, the Scripture says; but I couldn't help wondering how many “secret” or “isolated” believers we have today who fail to identify with other believers of like precious faith because of some minor reason that does not mean anything in times of need. I also wondered how many believers in our churches gave to some secular organization to help in the Katrina recovery where Christ did not receive the glory, simply because they did not know where to give. I don't know whether the hesitancy to fellowship with others is just because of slothfulness, or fear to let others know they exist, or the fear of being contaminated by others. Regardless, it is a tragedy of unbelievable proportions that many times believers

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## Philadelphia Perspective: Set The Pulpit Aside and Put Up the Screen

Editorial by Dr. Charles L. Dear



We've already seen the changes in our churches that have taken us further from being a church and nearer to becoming a movie theater. Now Hollywood is ready to profit from the niche market of religious movies and promote the usefulness of churches as primary places to sell their latest productions:

**Dateline September 22, 2005** LOS ANGELES -

At some of the largest and most influential Christian churches in the country, the lights dim and congregants watch a sneak preview of a new movie — about golf.

The Walt Disney Co. is marketing "The Greatest Game Ever Played" to faith-based groups even though the film, about Francis Ouimet's improbable win in the 1913 U.S. Open, isn't overtly religious.

"Its themes are about family, about not giving up on your dreams, courage," said Dennis Rice, head of publicity at the Walt Disney Studios. "They are very secular virtues, but they also could potentially be Christian virtues."

Other major studios have undertaken similar marketing for films that aren't about God, including the recent father-son story, "The Thing About My Folks," and even the dark drama, "The Exorcism of Emily Rose." Twentieth Century Fox has launched a Web site to market family-friendly videos directly to Christian groups."

Even with all its hatred for Biblical Christianity, Hollywood couldn't ignore the profits made on *The Passion of Christ* and has decided to co-opt willing churches as the new marketplace for so-called religious-friendly movies. Perhaps for some of our younger brethren, it may be too long ago to remember that Walt Disney was an enemy of Christianity, despite reports to the contrary in more recent times (like the Mormons claiming to be Christians) and strenuously promoted Evolution throughout his productions. That anyone would see him or Hollywood as truly family-friendly demonstrates an ignorance bent on jeopardizing our families as well as our churches. You would be amazed how many of your own people in the pews think that actors and actresses behave the same way in ordinary life as their roles portrayed on the screen. The roles played are bad enough, but their personal and (anti) religious lives are some of the worst role models imaginable.

If all this seems far from where you are, read on:

**Dateline October 21, 2005** - *Left Behind: World at War* Opens in Churches, Not Theaters. Cloud Ten

Pictures is distributing *Left Behind: World at War* via the church instead of the traditional movie theater. Churches and ministries are able to sign up to host a screening by paying a licensing fee, based on the size of the ministry...Nationwide, there are currently more than 2900 participating churches and a presence in all 50 states...The film will debut in churches and ministries across the nation the weekend of October 21, 2005...."

The press release goes on to detail here in Pennsylvania some 97 cities and towns where a wide variety of churches are screening the show. Others will probably have signed up since the October 11, 2005 date.

Some of the churches are not strangers to us, which marks the impact made on once fundamental churches by expediency. It also demonstrates the inroads made by prophecy perverted by human imagination and conjured up in living color on movie screens all over the country. It also feeds a lingering appetite found even among professing Christians for religious fiction that clutters minds with the conjecture of men rather than the truth of God's Word.

### The Purpose Drivel Lurch or . . .

#### "I Love Me. Who Do You Love?"

This past spring, *Ladies Home Journal* hired Rick Warren to write a regular column entitled *Purpose*. While known over the years for its recipes faithfully clipped and saved by women everywhere, it has shown Rick Warren's deficient recipes for Christian living and provided sufficient evidence for Bible-believing pastors and people to reject his ministries, books and philosophy.

For example, in the March 2005 issue of the magazine, Warren writes the following:

"To truly love yourself, you need to know the five truths that form the basis of a healthy self-image...1. Accept yourself...God accepts us unconditionally...2. Love Yourself...3. Be true to yourself...consider your heart - what you love to do - as well as the strengths and weaknesses of your personality...Don't deny your weaknesses...be content with them...4. Forgive yourself...God doesn't expect perfection...5. Believe in yourself...The truth is God has created you with talents, abilities personality and background in a combination that is uniquely you...."

No, this wasn't written by Charles Schuller, but it could **continued on page 7**



## Burial or Cremation? Does It Really Matter?

by Pastor Willard R. Benedict

The Word of God is crystal clear. Hebrews 9:27 is unmistakable in its declaration: “And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.” Sadly the fact of death is inescapable for every human being apart from the rapture. The issue then becomes “What of the disposal of the body?” Unquestionably, cremation is rapidly becoming the method of choice of many Americans. But is it for the believer? As my wife and I stood on a street of Calcutta, India, and watched the pagan ritual of burning the body of a deceased Hindu, we were repulsed deeply.

We have heard all of the reasons for cremation. Let us summarize them briefly: (1) It safeguards health. Those who propound this view point to the overcrowding of towns and cities. This is NOT substantial. Josephus, the Jewish historian stated, “In a place of burial there was no current of waters.” Contamination did NOT occur. (2) Some others state that it leaves the land for the living. This is unreasonable thinking. (3) Still some would declare it preserves the countryside. Most cemeteries are peaceful settings, which are NOT detrimental to the environment. (4) There are many who claim that it is more rational to cremate than to bury. The rationale is when you are dead, it is the end. Not so, according to the Scriptures. (5) Lastly, and undoubtedly, the overriding factor in the minds of believers and unbelievers is—the ECONOMICS favor cremation. The famous Florida pyrotechnician, Vic Vickers, chose cremation in 1996. At the age of 74 following his passing, his son stated that his father desired cremation for it would cost only \$800 while burial would be \$12,000. The costs can be debated; but in Florida in 1994, there were 64,511 burials and 58,660 cremations. It is obvious cost is a huge consideration, but does the difference need to be so great? The answer is obviously negative.

The MAJOR question for the BELIEVER is, “Do I make decisions on the basis of secular thinking, or Scriptural principles?” Human reasoning CANNOT be trusted. GOD’S WORD CAN. For that reason, let us summarize Biblical facts:

### “Philadelphia Perspectives” continued

have been! The real problem, however, is that some of us have already opened the door to this questionable, if not dangerous, nonsense for our people; and the question is whether you have the courage to recall the programs you introduced or mark the man and his ministries as a hazard to the spiritual health of your people. While you may have thought you were able to ferret out the wheat from the chaff (a conclusion you might want to reconsider at this point), make no such presumption about your

The words “buried,” “burying,” “burying place,” and “bury” are used 153 times in the Old and New Testaments. In contrast, the Bible refers to “burning” in both Testaments 666 times. Even that number should cause believers to think negatively of cremation. It would take a lengthy treatise to list all the references, but this author has examined each one carefully.

This brings us to our conclusion: (1) In the beginning God intended for man to return to the EARTH from where he came naturally (Genesis 3:19; Psalm 90:3; Ecclesiastes 12:7). (2) The heathen world practices cremation. Buddhists and Hindus maintain the practice today. Are we to be different? Jeremiah 10:2 (3) God’s people denounced the heathen way of treating the dead. Dr. Alfred Edersheim wrote, “Cremation was denounced as contrary to the whole spirit of Old Testament teaching.” (4) The Bible teaches that when the soul returns to God at death, the body enters the grave as into a new “house” (Job 30:23; Isaiah 14:18; Proverbs 7:27; Isaiah 57:2). (5) The apostle Paul pictures death and burial as a sowing (I Corinthians 15:57). Furthermore, burial portrays the body as a seed (I Corinthians 15:38). Sowing of a “natural” body cannot be cremation, which is an unnatural process of disposal. (6) The best expression of love is respect for the body (Matthew 14:12, Mark 14:3-9). BURNING showed contempt (Ezekiel 23:25, Jeremiah 29:22). (7) FIRE has always been related to JUDGMENT: Sodom and Gomorrah—Genesis 19:24; Nadab and Abihu—Leviticus 10:1,2; Immorality judged—Leviticus 20:14; Achan and his family—Joshua 7:15, 25, 26. (8) Satan tried to get the body of Moses, which God Himself had buried. Michael provided protection (Jude 9).

It is not my intention to sit in judgment of believers who choose cremation. However, it seems strikingly clear that the case for burial is overwhelming if we choose Biblical principles. \*

people who simply think that Rick Warren is OK with the pastor - no matter what he writes or where he speaks or what he does. Some of the less courageous among us will continue to use his materials and programs, convinced that such magazine articles are an anomaly compared to everything else Warren has written or done. Time will tell; but in the meantime, what damage has been done to the ministry of the church and the people of God? \*

**Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America**

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**ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO BE IN LANCASTER, PA IN 2006**

Plans are coming together for a great conference in June of 2006. The dates are Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, June 20, 21, and 22. We will meet at the Quality Inn at Lancaster, Pennsylvania. There are going to be some exciting events taking place at this IBFNA Conference, and we don't want you to miss it; so put it on your calendar today. Details will come to you in plenty of time to make arrangements. Remember, this is a family conference that will appeal to the whole bunch. Lancaster is a great place to visit.

**PLAN TO BE THERE!**

**"Independent" continued from page 5**

cannot work together to get anything of major importance done for Christ and His people.

When I read the New Testament and the letters of Paul, Peter, and John, there is a marvelous unity of believers who prayed for and helped one another in times of need. I wonder how they knew that others were in need. I read about letters going between the churches to recommend or warn of individuals or events. What a help it must have been to them. Forgive me if I sound a little critical. It is just that I have seen so much failure among the Lord's people to work together for God's glory, and it doesn't have to be. I wrote a pamphlet some years ago entitled, "A Plea for Christian Statesmanship." I closed it with the following words: "The failure of fundamental believers to live up to the challenge of Christian statesmanship threatens the very survival of a strong biblical voice, united in its belief in the authority of God's Word. Only a revival of wisdom and discernment from the Holy Spirit coupled with the courage of our convictions can protect us. Our plea is for Christian statesmanship among fundamental Christians." \*