



IBFNA THE REVIEW

May 2006
Volume 14, Number 4

2006 Annual Family Conference in Lancaster, PA

“Building the Body - Defending the Flock”

Listed below is a rough schedule of the program at the IBFNA Conference in Lancaster, Pa. on June 20th through the 22nd. There seems to be a good deal of excitement and anticipation as we plan to gather. We need each other’s fellowship and encouragement. I hope you plan to be there and catch the areas of the conference that will especially be of help to you. There may be a few last minute changes but most will be as listed.

Be sure you are registered for the conference and that your reservations are made at the Quality Inn and Suites. We’re looking forward to seeing everyone.

Tuesday, June 20, 2006			
8:00 a.m.	Registration and Greeting of Friends	3:45 p.m.	Message – “ <i>Creation Science and Its value for Evangelism</i> ” Al Van Osten
8:30 a.m.	Welcome, Introductions, and Prayer for Conference	4:45 p.m.	Break for Supper
9:00 a.m.	Keynote Address – “ <i>Just One Thing is Lacking</i> ” Dr. Bob Payne	7:00 p.m.	Evening Session – “ <i>Christ’s Church and the Church of the Twenty-First Century</i> ” Dr. Thomas Nieman
10:00 a.m.	Fellowship Break and viewing of displays	Wednesday, June 21, 2006	
10:30 a.m.	Message -- “ <i>Mary, Mary, Quite Contrary, How Does your Garden Grow?</i> ” Rev. Charles Edwards	8:15 a.m.	Devotions and Prayer Time
11:30 a.m.	Noon break for Lunch and Fellowship	8:45 a.m.	Message – “ <i>Missions</i> ” Rev. Mark Nelson
1:30 p.m.	Workshops – Phil Gingery – “ <i>Music in the Church</i> ” Karla Armstrong – (for ladies only)	9:45 a.m.	Fellowship Break and viewing of displays
2:30 p.m.	Message – To be announced Rev. Jeff Bailey	10:00 a.m.	Fellowship Business Session This will not be long but it is critical for us all to be present!
3:30 p.m.	Mid-afternoon Break	11:00 a.m.	Noon break for lunch and fellowship. Afternoon is open for sightseeing, family time or attendance at Sight and Sound Theater and evening meal.
		7:00 p.m.	Doctrinal Message – “ <i>Our Hope in Heaven</i> ” Col 1:5 Dr. Dan Brown

“Conference Program” continued on page 7

Inside pages :

- 2 Gospel
- 3 Perspectives
- 4 Strange Fire
- 6 Editorial

Membership & Subscriptions:

IBFNA
754 E Rockhill Rd
Sellersville, PA
18960-1799
215-913-6181
ibfna@verizon.net
www.ibfna.org

GOSPEL - LIGHT

by Pastor Charles Edwards

Though I do not remember because I was too young, my parents were English teachers in the public school system. What I do remember is the correction I received for improper use of the English language. We were not allowed to use slang, improper tenses of verbs, sentences ending in prepositions; any improper English was promptly corrected. I must confess, at times my older sister and I would deliberately misspeak and thus provoke a response from our parents. English to them was extremely important, not just in the classroom but in life as well. Being a successful teacher requires several things. One must have a clear understanding of the subject matter; there must be a comprehensive plan to disseminate the information, and there must be a precise implementation of the plan. On the receiving end, a good student must have a desire to learn the subject taught, be attentive as the instruction is given and put in practice what has been learned. There is more; but by adhering to these basic items, much will be learned.

We expect this from the educational system. We understand both the short and long-term consequences of failure or success in the academic world. The question must be asked, are we this engaged when it comes to spiritual education? The easy answer as independent Baptists is: "We have Sunday school and youth ministries designed to fulfill the educational needs of the church; and we have morning, evening and midweek services to complement this teaching ministry of the church." Unfortunately, this begs the question! Do we expect as much of spiritual education as we do academic education?

For a moment, let us be spiritually correct by referring to Scripture. Deuteronomy 6 gives clear direction for the training of Israel's children. As presented, this training was not optional and was to be diligent. History tells us that by the third generation, the parents were less than successful; and the living God punished Israel because the children repeatedly followed foreign gods. In the New Testament, fathers are given the challenge of teaching; and this is supplemented by pastor/teachers who engage in the teaching of the church body, thus providing for ample spiritual education. Following the pattern of the Old Testament, the outcome has been less than successful.

In 2005 Pastor Charles Edwards retired from being the senior pastor of First Baptist Church of Castaic, California. He currently lives in North Carolina with his wife Carol.

For this article, I would like to provoke your thought processes into considering what is or is not happening in your training arena. More precisely let us narrow our thoughts to the church as it is involved in spiritual education. Is there a comprehensive plan to educate the church body? If your church setting is like most, the Sunday school hour (if it is an hour) uses a quarterly mentality. Thirteen one-hour sessions, one week apart, and the course is completed. We have successfully taught that Goliath could dunk a basketball flat-footed, that his spear weighed about the same as three splitting malls, and that David's slingshot was different than a Wham-O®. Consider though, have we taken the time to explain the difference between a theocracy and a monarchy and the ramifications involved in Israel's change to a monarchy or is it our goal to complete the fill-in blanks and consider the task done? Unfortunately, our youth meetings are even less organized as teaching tools than the approach taken in Sunday school.

Morning worship, evening worship, and prayer meeting services are still available for teaching Bible truths. Bible colleges are adept at preparing preachers for three-point sermons with alliterated outlines. Is there, though, a lesson plan for each of these services that will grow Christians to maturity? This does not address the necessity for review that is necessary to bridge the gaps because of the time gap between sessions as well as the haphazard attendance of many in the church.

Most of us are alarmed at the rising rate of illiteracy in America. Some estimates say that 25% of the population cannot read and another 25% cannot read beyond a third grade level. A more recent survey assessed college graduates and determined that over 50% did not have the ability to analyze newspaper stories, comprehend documents or balance a checkbook. With this situation persisting educationally, it is reasonable to assume that spiritual education is in trouble as well. In fact, there is a growing rate of Bible illiteracy. In a recent survey, even regular church attendees could not answer basic questions about Bible facts. Additionally, a recent poll shows that pastors are not in touch with the reality of their congregations. Volunteerism and attendance are most often the criteria used for determining commitment to God. Pastors measure church health by superficial criteria rather than by items that would express higher levels of maturity. Major adjustments must be made if the

"Gospel - Light" continued on page 7

2006 PERSPECTIVES

by Dr. Ralph Colas



The Pentecostal movement is celebrating the movement's 100th birthday. A series of boisterous revival meetings in a converted stable on Azusa Street in Los Angeles launched a global movement that overcame class, gender and race. Today there are more than 600 million Pentecostals/Charismatics who trace their beginning to the Azusa Street Revival.

During April 2006, more than 60,000 followers came to Los Angeles to celebrate what took place a century ago. The Director of the celebration, Rev. Billy Wilson, said, "We see the centennial as a homecoming for the movement, a wonderful movement of what God did 100 years ago. We want to show the world that Pentecostals/Charismatics are more than just feeling good and speaking in tongues."

Pentecostals were a religious group that lacked credibility until the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) welcomed them into membership, and now the largest number of church bodies in the NAE are Pentecostal and Charismatic. The NAE looks to those churches for the high percentage of their leadership. Dr. Ted Haggard, pastor of the largest church in the state of Colorado, is a charismatic and serves as NAE's president. A previous president, Dr. Donald Argue, held leadership in the Assemblies of God, which is a Pentecostal/Charismatic denomination (The NAE also includes the Conservative Baptist Association of America, which became an official member in 1990 but for many years previously had individual CBA churches and leaders as active participants in that compromising organization).

Dr. Cecil Robeck, professor of church history and ecumenical issues at Fuller Theological Seminary, is a major leader in meetings between the World Council of Churches (WCC) and the Pentecostal and Charismatic churches. In fact Fuller Seminary has even hosted such meetings when the WCC and Pentecostal/Charismatic leaders gathered to discuss how they could work together in ecumenical projects and meetings. A report was given to the 9th Assembly of the WCC of the progress being made as they acknowledge all of them are "brothers and sisters in Christ."

Dr. Vinson Synan, dean of Regent University's School of Divinity and an ordained minister of the Pentecostal Holiness Church, tells that now this movement includes, "the wealthy and poor, Hispanics, blacks, Jews—you name it, everybody is included." He

went on to say that with its growth, "Whole churches collapsed and joined it. There was a force there, it was almost supernatural. People said they could feel it in the air from about three blocks away."

One of the most interesting statements by Dr. Synan, who is considered the best resource person of the Pentecostal/Charismatic groups, was when he said, "Pentecostal/Charismatic influence can also be felt in other evangelical churches, particularly in the music and worship style." Then he added, "**I can go into almost any Baptist and Methodist church and feel like I am in a Pentecostal church because they sing the same songs, the same choruses. They also lift their hands as we do.**"

A World Council leader said that in these consultations with the Pentecostals, Charismatics and Evangelicals, he has learned most of them are ready to define themselves according to what they are **for**, instead of **who they are against**. This head of the Reformed Church in America, a WCC denomination, said, "Among evangelicals I now see a growing theological maturity that is expressed in a strong commitment to a wholistic gospel, this includes social action which has them engaging in issues as poverty, HIV and AIDS, as well as global destruction as expressions of biblical faithfulness."

In 2005, a group of American church leaders met in Great Britain for a forum regarding global poverty. Included in this conference were the Archbishop of Canterbury, Rev. Rowan Williams; Rev. Richard Cizik of the National Association of Evangelicals; Ron Sider, President of Evangelicals for Social Action and Richard Stearns, President of World Vision. They drew up a letter that was sent to President George Bush asking that the USA cancel 100 percent of the debts owed by countries that are poor. This same letter was signed by Rick Warren, Max Lucado, Bill Hybels, Tony Campolo, Leighton Ford and the former president of the National Council of Churches, Bob Edgar.

[continued on page 5](#)

Perspectives is written by Dr. Ralph G. Colas, Executive Secretary American Council of Christian Churches PO Box 5455 · Bethlehem, PA 18015 tel (610) 865-3009 fax (610) 865-3033

STRANGE FIRE: COMMENTS ON LEVITICUS 10

by Dr. Robert Delnay

We marvel at the strange ways of God. At the beginning of a movement He deals sharply with His people, as with the sudden deaths of Nadab and Abihu, or in Acts, of Ananias and Sapphira. Yet in the later stages of a work, wicked men seem to get away with gross sins, even for years; and God seems not to notice. Note Jeroboam, the son of Nebat, who made Israel to sin. He had a relatively long reign, despite his idolatry and wickedness. Alexander the coppersmith (II Tim. 4:14) seems to have come under no summary judgment of God despite his long opposition to the Apostle Paul.

When now do we hear of summary judgments on persons guilty of the grossest sins? Probably only on mission fields.

At the beginning of the Levitical priesthood, God gave certain lessons to His people (Leviticus 10), and we do well to heed them.

Leviticus 8-9 records how God consecrated the high priest Aaron and his older sons. This began the tabernacle ministry, which continued beyond the building of Solomon's temple. The consecration seemed to culminate when glory filled the tabernacle and fire from the Lord consumed the burnt offering that lay on the altar.

At that point Nadab and Abihu, Aaron's older sons, took censers, put in burning charcoal, dropped incense on the coals and offered the smoke and fragrance before the Lord, but on their own impulse. God was not impressed. Fire again came out from before the Lord and devoured them. The charred bodies lay before the tabernacle, and Moses commanded two cousins to dispose of them. There are lessons here that we do well to heed.

1. *The glory belongs to God* (vs. 1-3).
Christian service and worship have no place for a

• Dr. Robert Delnay is a professor of Greek and Bible on the staff of Clearwater Christian College in Clearwater, Florida. He is also a distinguished historian.

performer showing off, whether preacher, musician, worship leader, whoever. When children show off, we tend to tolerate it, especially if the performer is our own child. "Hey look, Mom, watch me do this!" The guests and neighbors get less pleasure out of the performance. In adults our tolerance level may be little higher, as certain TV superstars seem to be able to entertain their people with little show of holiness or humility. They may be glad that in this age God rarely treats his erring performers the way He did Nadab and Abihu.

A gallery auctioneer once was offering a rare painting on an easel. As he began to describe its points, he moved behind the painting so that, while continuing to speak, the bidders could not see him but could concentrate on the painting. "He must increase—"

A Bible school student learns that he can lead singing. Then he realizes that he can make all those people do what he wants as he waves his arms at them. Strange fire. One hopes that in that moment of temptation he does not take himself seriously and that he turns his gaze to the Lord.

2. *Service gets the priority* (vs. 6-7). Why did God forbid Aaron and his remaining sons to mourn their loss? We may offer several reasons. Mourning could be taken as a form of rebelling against the Lord and His holiness, as when church members undercut church discipline by consoling the unrepentent sinner. Mourning interrupts the sacrifices and turns the gaze from the Lord to the fallen. But above all, this command sets the priority on the Lord Himself during services of worship. However we may feel for a man who has just suddenly lost two sons, it should take no great spiritual insight to see the hand of the Loving and Holy One in this demand.

Ezekiel's wife died, and the Lord forbade him to mourn for her, an example to Israel of coming judgments and for Ezekiel what must have been a hard test. But the Lord's service came first, before human sentiments.

3. *The priest needs a clear mind* (vs. 9). This seems like an odd place to insert the rule that the men who

continued on next page

“Strange Fire” continued

offer the sacrifices are not to drink wine or strong drink, probably beer. We tend to have our own reasons for avoiding liquor, and I hope better ones than peer pressure. But this situation gives a particular concern. The servant of the Lord needs a clear mind, a clear intellect, for his service. But, we may ask, for the killing and dismembering of animals? Would not that irksome duty with its blood and smells be better endured with a mild anesthetic? Not before God. As Christ endured the cross, refusing the vinegar until the very last, it seems that the Lord would have his servant perceive to the fullest the reality of sacrifice.

Christian service has no room for a worked-up emotion or a contrived or mechanical worship. We may try to guess what the “strange fire” was. Fire from a pagan altar? Fire from outside the tabernacle? Whatever the fire, it was something foreign to the pattern God had given them. It suggests all that we see as artificial, whether artificial passion, imitation godliness or imitation sincerity. All those things suggest what an unclouded mind would rule out as a work of the flesh.

4. *We have a duty to teach differences* (vs. 10-11). In addition to offering sacrifices, the priest had another duty, to teach right and wrong to the people. Eve thought she could get such knowledge by eating the fruit. The children of Israel were to learn right and wrong by listening to the priests. The Old Testament does not much elaborate that duty; but Ezekiel 22, just before the noted “stand in the gap” verse, condemns the priests who profaned the holy things by putting no difference between the holy and the profane, the clean and the unclean.

All reports from the entertainment churches tell how they minimize sin and avoid talk of separating from it. But the New Testament has a great deal of teaching, from Matthew to Revelation, about what is and is not fitting conduct and belief for the saints. Christ has made us a royal priesthood, laying a duty on all of us to teach others. The doctrine of the cross is for us to give to others. Paul’s gospel was not negotiable. Entertainers and show-offs seem to have their problems clarifying issues vital to the Word of God.

5. *The worker renounces personal gain* (vs. 16-19). The priest offered gifts and sacrifices, and shared the edible parts with his fellow priests. But he did not eat whatever he sacrificed for his own sins; others

could eat them, or he could burn them. He was not to profit from his sins. Aaron seemed to grasp that, when Moses looked for the sin offering and found that it had been totally burned. Aaron felt the guilt of his sons and rightly burned all the sin offering.

Those of us who minister the Word hope to live off our ministry (I Cor. 9:14). The Lord ordained that they who minister the gospel should live off the gospel. But Peter adds another side to it: we do not let money motivate us to service (I Peter 5:1-2). In a sense, we live off the sins of others. Their tithes, paid in part because they have been saved from their sins, become our daily bread. But like Aaron, we dare not presume on them or take their giving for granted.

We dare not take our ministries for granted nor find ways to offer strange fire before the Lord. Serving the Lord is a serious matter, even if these days He does not instantly strike those who selfishly bring discredit on the gospel.

*

“2006 Perspectives” continued from page 3

Rick Warren has now launched a new effort to address poverty around the world, because as he says, “This is a central part of Christian witness.” World Council leaders declared that Warren’s approach may be creative and controversial, “but his commitment to combating global poverty as the central part of Christian witness is undeniable.”

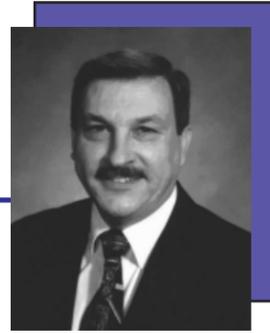
When this writer was recently speaking in a Fundamental Baptist Church, he was challenged by an individual, a leader in that local church. I was told that I failed to recognize that, “Charismatics are wonderful, good and kind people.” I agreed that they may be kind, but I also added that I reject that movement not only because of those who speak in tongues, crawl all over the floor and bark like dogs or bray like donkeys, but because they **accept extra Biblical revelation**. This should be sufficient to emphasize that our churches must NOT permit into membership (and certainly leadership) those who see no difference between New Evangelicalism, which includes and partners with Pentecostal/Charismatic groups, and Bible-believing Fundamentalism.

“To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isaiah 8:20).

*

Philadelphia Perspective

Editorial by Dr. Charles L. Dear



Power to the People: Are We Abandoning Congregational Polity?

While we recognize the dangerous inroads of Reformed Theology in our circles and churches, there is yet an eerie silence as more of the decision-making power exercised in our local churches is gathered into fewer hands. This is a recipe for losing our Baptist heritage that was well understood by our spiritual forefathers. Make no mistake, Congregational Polity has been a hallmark among Baptist churches throughout our history and a principle reiterated in our lifetime. Consider the words of the late Dr. Paul R. Jackson in his classic work, *The Doctrine and Administration of the Church* (p35):

Baptists believe in democratic procedures that permit open discussion of problems and divergent views. This is right and Biblical. Please read Acts 15. Note that this is not a council as is often stated, but a business meeting of the local church in Jerusalem (v.22)...The conduct of the meeting is interesting. Acts 15 for all practical purposes, contains the minutes of that church meeting. The question was freely discussed by many in this big assembly...(and) James, who was obviously the moderator, summarized the discussion and stated the conclusion which had been reached by the "whole church" (vv. 13-22).

If that sounds strange to you, you might consider whether your church is forfeiting a vital process that maintains the accountability of church leadership to its members. Abandoning the exercise of such accountability will lead our churches further away from our Baptist heritage and bring us closer to Reformed Theology, with its hierarchical forms of church government, conventionism and even the authoritarian demagoguery of Romanism. Baptists thrive on openness in sharp contrast to church polities that keep their people in the dark and leaders that operate secretly. We have no time for Baptist "popes"

who rule their ministries with an iron hand and can do no wrong, neither should we countenance heavy-handed Deacon Boards who usurp to themselves the leadership of a pastor and rob the membership of their informed consent. Such Pastor and Deacons have wrought untold damage in many local churches, usually just before they leave the scene of their crime and pass the responsibility to others to recover from the carnage.

Such high-handed leadership undermines a reasonable extension of the Baptist principle of Individual Soul Liberty. We frequently use this expression to describe the right of private judgment regarding the interpretation of Scripture and, I would hasten to add, our accountability before God to understand it and interpret it correctly. However, we may likewise extend that decision-making privilege to church members regarding the business matters of the local church. Indeed, the corollary of Informed Consent should be as true in the business of the church as it is in hearing the Word of God preached. That is, as we exercise the Berean mindset to weigh what is preached, so also we are sufficiently informed about church operations to draw reasonable and proper conclusions.

In fairness, not all of the responsibility for this problem falls on church leadership. Too many church members (please don't call them "laity" in a Baptist church) are also guilty of abdicating their rights to participate in local church decision-making. Like Soul Liberty, our members need to learn that participating in church decision-making is a responsibility as much as it is a privilege. We may squander other privileges and decide not to exercise them for various reasons, but church members have an accountability before the Lord to take an active role best described as Informed Consent. That is, the membership knows what is going on and either approves or disapproves the actions considered and exercises its right to vote on such matters together with the other members of their local church.

continued on page 7

“Philadelphia Perspective” continued

Part of the problem has been the preoccupation and laziness of church members. Our people have become so busy with mundane things that church business meetings are low on the list of priorities. Our society has also encouraged them to be passive and even disinterested in decisions made by others on their behalf. The problem, however, is compounded by the increasing parental spirit of church leaders that treats members more like dumb sheep than scrutinizing stockholders in the work of the church. Lest you protest their ability to make decisions, consider Paul’s counsel in I Corinthians 6:4, about settling disputes between the brethren, “If then ye have judgments of things pertaining to this life, set them to judge *who are least esteemed in the church.*”

Most of this has come about under the banner of expediency; an epitaph for local churches more absorbed in finding shortcuts and easier solutions rather than obeying the Word of God. The IBFNA has stood these many years for the equality of its members. May that stand reflect what we practice in our churches. *

“Gospel - Light” continued from page 2

secular community and the church community are to stem the rise in illiteracy.

As the last bastion of fundamentalism, will we covenant to change the way we ‘do church’? We **must** become teachers of the faith if we are to have something we can defend. *

“And these word, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on they gates. . . beware lest thou forget the Lord. . .”(Deuteronomy 6: 5-12)

“Conference Program” continued from page 1

Thursday, June 22, 2006

- 8:15 a.m. Devotions and Prayer Time
- 8:45 a.m. Message – “*My Professors Didn’t Teach Me a Thing About This*”
Dr. Ted Clater
- 9:45 a.m. Fellowship Break
- 10:15 a.m. Message – “*Reaching the Next Generation*”
Rev. Mark Strangman
- 11:00 a.m. Message – Pastor Pao Hfing Kuo from Argentina
- 11:45 p.m. Noon break for Lunch and Fellowship
- 1:00 p.m. Message on Baptist History – “*The Bible: Lamp of Liberty*”
Rev. Paul Gustine
- 2:00 p.m. Afternoon Break
- 2:30 p.m. Open Discussion Time – Crisis in our Churches!
Ten-minute speakers: Dr. Ralph Colas, ACCC
Dr. Clay Nuttall, BEN
Dr. Chick Dear, Review Editor
- 4:30 p.m. Break for Supper
- 7:00 p.m. Closing Session – “*Getting Past the Past*”
Rev. Tom Hamilton

*



Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America

754 East Rockhill Road
Sellersville, PA 18960-1799

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
Paid
Perkasie, PA
Permit No. 89

2006 ANNUAL CONFERENCE TO BE IN LANCASTER, PA

Plans are coming together for a great conference in June. 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. It's not too late to register so plan on being there. Remember, this is a family conference that will appeal to all ages. Lancaster is a great place to visit.

PLAN TO BE THERE!

