



IBFNA

THE REVIEW

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Is There Not A Cause?

by Dr. Richard Harris

First, before we can clarify this question, we need to ask ourselves, "What is the Cause?" It often appears to me that many of us do not believe that there is a very special cause around which we all, as Independent Baptists, should strongly rally. There are all kinds of causes in the world that people dedicate themselves to supporting; some are worthy and some are frivolous. We have all heard of PETA, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. Though none of us want animals to be abused, we do not go to the extremes that this outfit goes to in order to fulfill their cause.

I'm referring to the "Cause" of which the Apostle Paul speaks when he says, "Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong" (I Cor. 16:13). In Jude, the writer says, "It was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints" (Jude 3). When Paul wrote to the church at Philippi, he challenged them, "Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel" (Phil. 1:27). In these verses, when the Holy Spirit guides the writers to speak of the faith, it is that body of truth that was delivered to us by God; that body of doctrine called the Christian Faith.

The great truth of our age is that we all must be standing together for that body of doctrine that is embodied in "the Faith." Not one of us is exempt from this responsibility. The Gospel is being corrupted today in the minds of the masses; and, I'm afraid, the Pastors and people in our churches do not realize how much it is undermining their ministry. It is confusing to the young people and the young adults. They do not know how to combat it. Recently, I read an article in a New Jersey newspaper of a reporter's interview with the founder of the new hip-hop house of worship, the Church 'N' the Hood. "God does not discriminate," she said, "no matter if you're Jewish, Muslim, black, white, gay, or straight. God loves you." What does that mean to the average churchgoer today? I challenge you as a Pastor or a leader in one of our churches to find out how anchored in the doctrines of the Faith our people can really prove themselves to be. Way too many young pastors and their church people are caving in to this senseless drivel that comes out of the mouths of liberal religious leaders and politicians.

This is what the Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America is all about. We need to be helping one another to stand for the Faith "once delivered to the saints." When we started out as a fellowship some years ago, many of us left another association because it was no longer openly articulating the position that it once took. As a result, many of us could see its drifting. It is clear that we need one another to stand in this warfare for the truth, because it is difficult to stand alone. I am concerned that we are not growing as a fellowship as fast as we ought to be growing. I know that there are many young believers who do not understand the issues of the day as many of us do, but we are not reaching out to them.

There are all kinds of causes that Independent Baptists rally around, but do they rise to the level that would require all of us to support it? Many Independents rally around certain colleges or seminaries, some around mission boards. Sad to say, others rally around personalities and church-growth movements, such as those associated with Willow Creek

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PHILADELPHIA BAPTIST ASSOCIATION

300TH ANNIVERSARY



BY REV. PAUL W. GUSTINE

There was a Baptist History Celebration on August 1-3, 2007, at the historic First Baptist Church, Charleston, South Carolina. It marked the 300th Anniversary of the Philadelphia Baptist Association. A Baptist Symposium that began meeting in 2002 organized the conference. One can find the complete program and other information at www.baptisthistorycelebration.org. Associated Baptist Press reported “an astonishing array of Baptist groups—liberal, conservative, fundamentalist, moderate, African-American, Caucasian, Latino, Northern, Southern, Calvinist and Arminian—gathered...to celebrate and learn more about the diversity they say has characterized the Baptist movement in the United States.”¹ The sessions featured history, confessions, preaching, missions, hymnology, biography, archives and literature. Some of the speakers are well known from their books, such as, William H. Brackney, Leroy Fitts, Tom Nettles, Edwin Gaustad and John Thornbury.

The Philadelphia Baptist Association is probably the oldest Baptist Association in America.² “Most Baptist churches, fellowships, and associations can trace their spiritual lineage to the Philadelphia Association.”³ The organizational meeting was held in the new building of the First Baptist Church, Saturday, July 27, 1707. Dr. Samuel Jones gave the following account of the history:

This association originated in what they called general, and sometimes yearly meetings. These meetings were instituted so early as 1688, and met alternately in May and September, at Lower Dublin, Philadelphia, Salem, Cohansie, Chester and Burlington; at which places there were members though no church or churches constituted, except Lower Dublin and Cohansie. At these meetings their labor was chiefly confined to the ministry of the word, and the administration of Gospel ordinances. But in the year 1707 they seem to have taken more properly the form of an Association; for then they had delegates from several churches, and attended to their general concerns. We, therefore, date our beginnings as an association from that time; though we might, with but little impropriety, extend it back

some years. They were at this time but a feeble band, though a band of faithful brothers, consisting of but five churches. The church at Lower Dublin, Piscataqua, Middletown, Cohansie and Welsh Tract.⁴ [The Philadelphia church “was regarded a branch of the one at Lower Dublin, and the pastors of that church, for nearly fifty years, supplied the pulpit in Philadelphia.”⁵]

The Association defended the autonomy of the churches. In 1749 a statement was adopted that defined the association and limited its jurisdiction. The statement in part is “the association...is not to be deemed a superior judicature, or having a superintendency over the churches, but subservient to the churches.”⁶

The influence of the Philadelphia Association has been greater in shaping Baptist modes of thinking and working, than any other body in existence. It is older by nearly fifty years than any other Association. Its “Confession of Faith” and “Treatise of Discipline” have wielded an immense power in favor of orthodoxy and piety among our rising churches. It has ever been the warm friend of missions at home and abroad, its ministers making missionary tours all over our country. It has always been the friend of Sunday-schools since the system was first presented to its churches. It encouraged the school of Isaac Eaton, of Hopewell, N.J., for the preparation of young men for the ministry, the First Baptist institution of that character in America; and it founded Brown University, formerly Rhode Island College, and through it, indirectly, all our

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Rev. Paul Gustine is the senior pastor of Bible Baptist Church of Northampton, Massachusetts. He served as editor of “The Review” from 1997 until 2002.

2007 PERSPECTIVES

BY DR. RALPH COLAS



The World Evangelical Alliance (WEA) is made up of 128 national evangelical alliances located in 7 regions and 104 associate member organizations. The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) is a part of the WEA. [Some of us may recall a meeting in Columbus, OH when a Baptist leader, who was then president of a Baptist College, stood on the platform and defended the Conservative Baptist Association (CBA). He failed to acknowledge the CBA was a member body of both the NAE and WEA.]

When the liberal World Council of Churches (WCC) met in Porto Alegre, Brazil in 2006, the WEA was represented by Rev. Geoff Tunnicliffe the International Director. These evangelicals used the occasion to express gratitude that they were invited to this Assembly since they do claim to represent 420 million Evangelicals around the world.

During August 2007 another meeting was held, and this one was in France. The WEA, together with Pentecostals from the U.S.A., was invited by the WCC and the Roman Catholic Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue to spend four days discussing the subject of "Conversion."

A Christian Code of Conduct on Religious Conversion was adopted because, as the archbishop of Toulouse explained, "There must be a mutual respect of those who are engaged in a religion." The General Secretary of the Council of Churches of Malaysia proposed that there be among them "an attitude of respect for the right of the faithful of any religion to their beliefs." He added, "**Religious preachers need to be told that no religion has a monopoly on the truth, that there are many ways to find salvation.**"

According to WEA executive council member John Langlois, the code of conduct should express "repentance for past wrongdoings so as to make clear that the superiority mentality in regard to other religions has been overcome."

Some issues considered at this meeting were to find a definition of conversion, a concern for human dignity and to reject aggressive proselytizing and evangelism. One

WCC leader, who serves as program executive for interreligious dialogue and cooperation, was thrilled that "representatives from all these walks of Christian life have been able to meet and discuss such a complex issue, starting to build a consensus, is in itself a success." A Pentecostal said everyone there should understand that there is another problem and that is "We struggle with the fact that we Pentecostals are indeed ecumenical but just don't know it!"

It was underlined that part of the problem is that "Christians seek to convert people to Christ at their Christian schools and their medical work at Christian hospitals and clinics."

We might ask if God's own must stop witnessing to the lost that God has only one way to His heaven. Paul wrote in II Cor. 4:4-5, "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost. In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."

In a pluralistic society where it is taught that all religions are equal, these professing evangelicals in the WEA join with the leaders of the apostate WCC and the salvation by works Roman Catholic Church whose Pope teaches that only the Roman Catholic Church is a "proper church," and then apologize for attempting to fulfill the Great Commission.

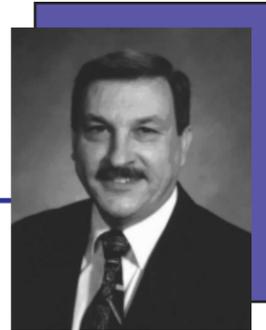
May I ask why send out missionaries if they are restricted from preaching that there is an exclusivity with Jesus Christ? He alone can save. The fact remains that demands will come for us to weaken the Gospel message. However, we cannot and must not yield to the siren calls from these so-called evangelicals who "are indeed

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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

Philadelphia Perspective

Take me to your leader...
If you can find one worthy of the title.



by Dr. Charles L. Dear, Editor

It is not a question asked by invading aliens; it is a tragic commentary upon our times when we are hard pressed for the quality of leadership necessary for our people to survive, whether we look to government, education, the Church or our homes and families.

Considering the slates for public office, we have fallen to a lower common denominator than ever before. For example, a well-known fundamentalist educator has recently recommended support for Mitt Romney as a presidential candidate because he is the best Republican candidate to defeat Hillary Clinton. Never mind that he has the baggage of being a Mormon, never mind that the people who elected Ted Kennedy also elected him as governor of Massachusetts; let's just support anyone who can defeat the more dangerous candidate for office. It is beyond the lesser of evils when citizens can no longer find statesmen worthy of political office, because they have abdicated the principles upon which our country was founded and gathered more power into the hands of fewer "aristocrats" who will mortgage our children's future, both economically and morally, to benefit themselves today. Their threat is compounded as more of the people in our congregations become increasingly dependent upon government subsidies for their day-to-day needs.

We find similar absence of true and consistent leadership in our homes and families, especially where there are more single parent homes and more absentee fathers. Homes broken through divorce not only lose the united leadership of father and mother, but also yield more autonomy and authority to the children who play one parent against the other to gain their own ways. However, even in homes where a nuclear family still exists, the world's cry for equality has weakened the roles of husband and father to such degree that fewer men in our churches meet the criteria for pastor and deacons found in Scripture. All of which brings us to the problem of leadership in our churches.

Not only are there many fundamental Baptist churches like ours that have no pastor, there are some that may never acquire a pastor because the reins of leadership

have been seized by others who would treat a pastor as a mere employee of the church. Much like a resume that shows a person changing jobs every six months, a church which changes pastors too frequently becomes suspect of having problems regarding leadership in the church. The resulting tragedy is that good people in good churches can be deprived of the good leadership they need, and the whole church, its ministries and testimony in the community can suffer setbacks difficult to overcome.

Likewise, it is increasingly more difficult to find those eligible or useful in our ministries as Sunday School teachers, youth ministry workers, deacons, child care providers, etc. First, we need to conduct background checks on all personnel before they can even be considered. Secondly, there are some still unqualified, even though they have never been charged with a crime or arrested. Even so, it is a growing irony in our churches that the unqualified are more willing to serve than the qualified, because the latter are either too busy with other things (often outside the church) or disinterested in service. Many of the problems in our churches, including church leadership, merely reflect the problems of godly leadership in our homes where men in particular seem unwilling or unable to establish biblical roles for husband and wife or parents and children.

Beyond the challenges for good leadership in our churches, there is a similar crisis mounting in our Bible colleges and seminaries. We are in the midst of a generational change in the leadership of most fundamental schools, where the "old guard" is not only being replaced by the baby boomers and younger people but is also reflecting a different attitude and philosophy in comparison to the leadership once respected and followed by the baby boomers and younger people during their formative years. It is part of the reason why we see higher regard for the writings of John MacArthur than Robert T. Ketcham, or Rick Warren than Paul R. Jackson. There are many more examples, but consider the pattern revealed by the heroes or leaders admired and faithfully read by the newer generation. They are seeking leadership from the Evangelical orbit at best and from the secular world at worst. They demonstrate a higher regard for

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Reformed Theology than Baptist Theology. They monitor the market of church people more closely than the presence and work of the Holy Spirit. They draw from broader sources they now adopt as authoritative and trustworthy because of concessions already made through the cliché, “All truth is God’s truth.” The problem seems to be twofold in its evolution.

First, there is a growing leadership vacuum in our fundamental, Baptist, separatist world. The politics and the pragmatism that we despise in government have trickled down into our churches, homes and schools. We have become masters of dialog and diplomacy that render us impotent to speak out about the issues that threaten the very existence of our churches and doctrinal position, lest we offend someone. Indeed, we have become more concerned about offending people than offending the Lord. At the same time, a new wave of leadership has made many among us slaves to these gurus who chide us for being too authoritative and too little “relational” in our ministries. We are told we must be more flexible, more adaptive to the culture around us, yet not absorbing it. These are the same people who chastise us for denominational differences because they are more about turf wars than Biblical principles, more about protecting our numbers and income than any irreconcilable doctrinal differences. These are the leaders who have presented their followers with the Emerging Village and the New Perspective on Paul as new alternatives to expositional preaching and established homiletics. Their reinterpretation of Scripture and/or their confessed inability to understand the revealed Word have actually created new and larger voids of Truth that leave far too much power to the creativity and compromise of its leaders who will lead the sheep to the door of Ecumenicism. We may bark loudly in protest, even threateningly, about the dangers posed; but our warnings will be quickly dismissed, because we have not established or sustained our credibility as leaders to the following generation.

Secondly, what leaders may deserve some respect by the younger generation have been summarily dismissed as unknown, undereducated, unpublished or irrelevant to the post-modern world. The personalities and publications found more often in today’s “Christian” bookstore by our people have filled the vacuum we have left. Nevertheless, it is yet another irony that for all the quests for scholarship, for all the ambition to do it better than our fathers, the resulting teaching and preaching has grown more superficial, more clichéd, more pandering to human hearts than ever before.

For those who question the rationale for the existence of the IBFNA, who cannot see the need for stronger, Biblical leadership, for a clearer prophetic voice in

an encroaching wilderness of religious static and noise that will speak out clearly and unashamedly for the Faith once delivered? The shallow, cowardly concessions we see across the spectrum from home to church to school must be answered by voices courageous enough to stand by their convictions, no matter what the cost. It takes leadership to challenge others to stand up and be counted rather than let them disappear into the crowd of confusion and error. Our fellowship offers no pensions, no guaranteed positions of authority. Quite the contrary, we are on more equal footing than any other fellowship I know. What we do offer and invite others to join is the quest to make a difference in our day that sets forth a Biblical standard for our families, churches and schools, and demonstrates how faithfulness to our Lord and to His Word bring His approval, regardless of the approval of men. Of the many things we have lost in American society over the last 30 years, we have lost a sense of character in the human spirit, where loyalty and duty are still meaningful and valued traits. Their loss has done more harm to our homes, churches and schools than anything else a corrupt society has thrown at us, because their absence has broken our wills to do what is right in obedience to Scripture and in honor to Jesus Christ. If we would be the leaders God can use, we would do well to seek His work

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Church, Saddlebrook Church, or John MacArthur’s Grace Community Church. Some may be worthy of supporting, while others are not. Probably we can learn something from each of them, even if it is only how not to do something. Sometimes people rally around church denominations or associations because of the political advantages that might accrue from being a “member.” There may be some good in a few of these causes; and I am not being overly critical of all of them, but none of them comes near to being equal to the cause of standing for the Faith. Many believers are enamored with some of the Evangelical writers of the day, but are we getting the meat of the Word from them that will enable us to stand?

I know that most of you good men really care about the churches and people around you, so let’s really reach out to them and challenge them to stand with us. It will strengthen them in the Faith, and it will encourage you as well. There is a “Cause” for which each and every Independent Baptist should stand, so let’s get together.

*



**Salute
to a
Fallen
Soldier**

**Sgt. Allen James Dunchley
8 March 1982 – 14 May 2007**

“The one thing I believe in, above all else is love, I love my Savior, my family, my freedom and my friends. Most people view love as a word of emotion, I view love as an act of commitment. My act of love is my service in the military protecting and preserving all the things I believe in most, so that my children, family, and friends can enjoy true freedom. I’ve seen war first hand, and have met people that have never known any of the freedoms we take for granted and I never want that for the people I care for most. Semper Fi....” – Sgt. Allen James Dunchley

Dear Dr. & Mrs Harris & IBFNA Brethren,

Thank you for your kind expression of sympathy in the death of our son, Sgt. Allen James Dunchley. We appreciate your thoughts and prayers. It gives us comfort to know that you are thinking of us as we grieve for the loss of our son.

The Lord’s peace has been very precious during this difficult time. It is a blessing to know that James knew Christ as his Savior, and is now in the presence of his Lord where we will see him again one day. Praise God that we have the surety of heaven!

Thank you for your support, consolation, and words of comfort. We are very grateful for your kindness and compassion towards us. Your kind note was much appreciated. We look forward to being at next year’s meeting.

Sincerely,
Allen & Mae Dunchley

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seminaries of learning. As early as 1788 it took its stand in favor of temperance. It was a tower of strength to our persecuted brethren in other colonies in times when they suffered great legal oppression. It gave them financial aid and good counsel, and lent the weight of its great influence in seeking a redress of grievances from men in power, and it has ever demanded liberty for all men to worship God according to the dictates of their consciences. ...[T]his mother Association had men of learning even in her early history, with sound Baptist principles, great practical sagacity, and with a love for struggling Baptists in the farthest East and in the most distant South; and, as a consequence, the Associational plan became popular, and the spirit of the old Philadelphia body was grafted upon every kindred institution all over the land.⁷

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(Endnotes)

¹<http://www.abpnews.com/2693.article.print>

²R. L. Vaughn points out that the General Six Principle Baptist Conference make a claim to having originated in 1670, but they have no minutes before 1812. See <http://nathanafinn.wordpress.com/2007/04/01/what-does-it-mean-for-local-baptist-churches-to-associate-together/>.

³*Baptist Bible Tribune*, Vol. 58, No. 1, September 2007, p. 34.

⁴David Spenser, *The Early Baptists of Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: William Syckelmoore, 1877), pp. 44-45.

⁵Same, p. 4

⁶John T. Christian, *A History of the Baptists* (Texarkana, Texas: Bogard Press, 1926), Vol. II, p. 151.

⁷William Cathcart, *The Baptist Encyclopedia* (Philadelphia: Louis H. Everts, 1883), Vol. II, p. 917.

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ecumenical but they just don’t know it.”

The words to a little chorus we used to sing in Sunday School express truth:

**“Jesus Christ is the Way, Jesus Christ is the Truth,
Jesus Christ is the Life, and He’s mine, mine, mine.”** *

Abandoned Virtues

by Dr. Thomas Nieman

One of the most poignant places in Israel I love to visit is Beth-shan. Most tourists are impressed with the Greek and Roman ruins; still it is the hill beyond that is most memorable.



That hill is the location of the biblical Beth-shan. When visiting that site, I remember the gallant men of Jabesh-gilead in I Samuel 31, who risked their lives to retrieve the decapitated and desecrated bodies of King Saul and his sons. Why such risk, one might ask? They remembered that forty years earlier Saul had fought for them; and, as a result, they did not have to lose one of their eyes. They demonstrated loyalty to one who was their benefactor.

In contrast, II Chronicles 24:20-22 records a pathetic picture of disloyalty. If it had not been for the gallant Jehoiada, King Joash would not likely have been allowed to live or become the king. Later when faithful Zechariah, the son of Jehoiada, proclaimed the message of God, he was stoned at the order of the very king who had benefited from the earlier kindness. He lacked loyalty.

I am not appealing for blind loyalty, but the absolute commitment to principles and purity cannot be flippantly passed off by claiming that we are living in the post-modern age. As one who is in his fifth decade of service to the Savior, I have seen godly pastors betrayed and abandoned by the very ones they helped or even led to the Lord. The disloyal can be so easily persuaded to follow a self-styled guru, whose chief ability is to undermine and misrepresent their former benefactor. The contemporary, betraying Absaloms justify their conduct in a pragmatic, non-biblical manner. The real fact of treacherous disloyalty has been egregiously manifested.

Closely aligned to loyalty is another virtue that has fallen on hard times—integrity. Integrity is being truthful in speech and action. The commandments given to Israel, and codified for man, are eternal truths. It is never right to tell a lie, to be untruthful. If a promise is made, it is to be kept. There is no excuse for being disingenuous in biblical Christianity. Sadly today Christian workers walk away from commitments and contracts without an apology or accepting

responsibility for the emotional, spiritual and financial detriment their lack of integrity causes. They take away followers to build their own kingdom. The duplicity is transparent, since they claim to have the blessing of God with their following. Yet when there is the attrition of their followers, there is no assumption of responsibility. When confronted with this conduct that would not have been allowed in earlier times, there is simply a shrug of the shoulder with a muttered explanation that we are living in a different day. One may listen to their messages or presentations and be impressed with the quality of their material, yet there is a nagging question about their reliability and truthfulness.

Thankfully, loyalty and integrity have not been totally abandoned. I thank God for hosts of good men who have demonstrated these virtues. They bring joy and delight to my heart. I know I can trust them. They have graced my life with a beauty and strength that has made my personal service to Christ a pure delight. May God increase their tribe!!

*



After many years of faithful service as senior pastor of Galilee Baptist Church in Kent, Washington, Dr. Thomas Nieman has passed the baton on to another generation. He and his wife Marilyn have accepted the position of missionary/pastor-at-large with Northwest Baptist Assistance Ministries where he will encourage and minister to pastors and churches in the Northwest.

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