



IBFNA

THE REVIEW

May 2008
Volume 16, Number 4

Exhibiting Leadership

by Dr. Richard Harris

There are many ways of exhibiting leadership, I am sure. In the context of our testimony for Christ and for our service for Him, however, I would like to make some pointed suggestions.

There is a great lack of knowledge today in the Christian realm. Lay people and pastors are not nearly as informed as they ought to be. One reason is that we are too busy, then television takes up our time, and we are not reading. It would seem that with the coming of all the modern gadgets, such as household appliances, automobiles, and modern technology in the field of communication, we would have ample time to read and keep up with events. It is not true, however. We are more ignorant of trends and movements now than we have been in decades. We must go out of our way to stay informed and to be able to minister to our churches effectively.

First, don't miss the 18th Annual Conference at Shipshewana. Be an example by your actions. Second, work on getting, at least, one family from your church present also. If your church has informed people within it, your church will be infinitely easier to lead as they lend you help among the general congregation. Third, reach out to a minimum of one fellow pastor and invite him to the conference with his family. The Executive Committee is doing everything it can to help you accomplish this. We will pay their conference registration fee and their first night's lodging in the Farmstead Inn, if they are first-time attendees at the IBFNA Annual Conference. I think that is a generous offer and one that pastors would take advantage of, if you provide the leadership to invite them. We wish that we could extend this generous offer to the church people in your congregation, and we may do in the future, if we can. We feel, however, it is best to start with making it available to the pastors.

I hope I don't have to tell you that the time may soon be coming when you will need a few fellow pastors to stand with you in difficult circumstances. The extreme left wing in our nation is not asleep. They are reaching out for the power to silence those of us who stand up for godliness. If you are reading some of the books being written and distributed by the far left authors, then you know they are laying the groundwork for the suppression of Biblical Christianity. In their estimation, religion, and especially Bible Christianity, is the greatest problem our culture faces today. We are "in their way." Stay informed!

We're looking forward to the 18th Annual Conference at Shipshewana, Indiana, on June 17, 18 and 19. The Amish area has a quiet relaxing atmosphere and one that promotes real fellowship. We enjoyed it so much a few years ago, and you will be encouraged by it as well.

Our program is not jammed with meetings, and there is sufficient time for relaxation and discussion which is of utmost importance. Dr. Duane Brown will be having the morning Bible Devotional time as Dr. Delnay did last year. His topic of *Divine Mysteries* is very enticing, and we're looking forward to them. We are privileged to hear Dr. Robert Crane,

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A STANDARD FOR FELLOWSHIP

BY DR. CLAY NUTTALL



How does one determine the boundaries of fellowship? There are probably as many answers to this question as there are readers. The problem may be better defined by asking what the standard of measurement should be. To answer anything other than the authority of scripture seems suspect. It is easy to claim that authority, but it has to be tested with the actual practice of an individual.

We normally make this decision based on whom we will not fellowship with rather than those we will find common ground with. There is wisdom, however, in discovering the answer by asking who we will fellowship with. Challenging the status quo is not easy, but I would like to do just that in this short discussion.

Jesus demonstrated this practice in His own life and ministry. He had fellowship with the one hundred and twenty that he did not have with the multitudes. He had fellowship with the twelve that was not shared with others. He had fellowship with one or two of the disciples that was not shared by others. Finally he had fellowship with His Father that was not shared with anyone.

Each of us will do the same thing, and our exclusion of others is the natural outworking of the relationships we have with people around us. Therefore, mature people would not be offended by decisions that limit our fellowship, and it would be negative to ignore those limitations. The creation of fellowship boundaries is an extremely positive consideration.

If the standard for fellowship in the life of the biblical Christian is the Bible, then why do so many of our peers use something else. The problem of using categories, denominations or organizations is that any such application is going to be flawed. If we only fellowship with those who have the name Baptist, we will include some who comprise the centrality of scripture. There are people in other denominations whose Bible standard is higher, and we exclude them. If the standard is an organization, you have the same problem. We condemn others for fellowship we see unclean but then overlook a violation in the very group we have chosen.

Making the Bible the standard of fellowship requires us to use the content of scripture as the plumb line. That means that our decisions should be based on a theology that is biblical. This being the case, we would have a pure test rather than a corrupted one that is man made.

I grieve that in the past I have made decisions of fellowship based on personalities and human standards. In the last twenty years it has been absolutely necessary that I make some conscious decisions to limit my fellowship. In those cases the decision about fellowship was made on the basis of a theology that is biblical. I cannot tell you why other people decided to separate. However, I can tell you that my decision for fellowship was not about people; it was about their theology. It was not about their organization; it was about the theology of a person, organization or denomination.

In our circles I know many believers who have good principles for this issue of separation, but I do not know anyone who practices them perfectly. Human standards are flawed and will always produce flawed decisions. Even when we use biblical theology as the standard, it is impossible to be perfect and that ought to cause all of us to have a lot of patience.

Human standards produce pride and in the end bitterness. Since none of us is perfect as to our conclusions, we need to be careful about pressing our considerations on others. The only thing we can be sure of is biblical truth. That is why a theology that is biblical must be the standard. How we apply that truth is another issue. Levels of fellowship are not as absolute as we have made them out to be. The central doctrine in this discussion is the holiness of God. That marvelous truth can be lost to the mind that centers on the wrong things. If one deals with this consideration with a carnal spirit, what does it matter if we are the only ones who have the right people in our corner?

You remember the words of the old Quaker: "I am concerned about everyone except me and thee and sometimes I worry about thee."

The question is not what standard we should use for fellowship that is clear. The real question has to do with the use of a theology that is biblical in determining the boundaries of that fellowship. *

Dr. Nuttall is well known to the IBFNA membership having served as Fellowship moderator in the past. Currently he is the Dean of Graduate Studies for Baptists Equipping Nationals.

2008 PERSPECTIVES

BY DR. RALPH COLAS



In 2007, the American Council of Christian Churches (ACCC) issued a Press Release in response to a documentary entitled, *The Lost Tomb of Jesus*. The premise of those who produced this film declared two bone boxes had been discovered that contained the earthly remains of Jesus Christ. The ACCC urged all Christians to reject the heretical teaching it represented. My quote in the release included these lines, **“The word ‘documentary’ implies that you substantiate something with facts. This film is not only spiritually blasphemous, but lacks credible scientific evidence.”**

This was not the first time, nor will it be the last, when enemies of Biblical Truth turn their little pop guns against one of the Fundamentals of the Faith. The infamous Jesus Seminar in 1993 included this statement that, **“Jesus, regardless of where his corpse ended up, is dead and remains dead.”**

The conclusions by these so-called scholars included, “The resurrection of Jesus did not involve the resuscitation of a corpse; Belief in Jesus’ resurrection did not depend on what happened to His body; The body of Jesus decayed as do other corpses; The resurrection was not an event that happened on the first Easter Sunday; It is not necessary to believe in the historic veracity of the resurrection narratives.”

Rudolf Bultmann, a liberal influential scholar of the 20th century said, “It is impossible to use electric light and to avail ourselves of modern medical and surgical discoveries and at the same time believe in the New Testament world of demons and spirits. Thinking people know that bodies do not rise from the dead, and it is time that the church should stop making such claims.”

A few years back, Easter presented an annual dilemma for Ann Lewis, a self-described devout Christian and lay leader of her liberal Presbyterian church in St. Paul, Minnesota. The most important day of the Christian calendar did not sit well with Ann Lewis because of her misgivings about the truth of the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ. **SIMPLY PUT, SHE COULD NOT ACCEPT THAT TO BE TRUE.**

Today, however, Lewis, 54, looks forward to Easter. For Lewis, the traditional belief that Jesus’ body

literally rose from the dead has ceased to be a roadblock to her faith. Along with many in her church, she says that whether or not Jesus cast off his burial shroud and left behind an empty tomb makes very little difference. Lewis calls herself a “revisionist Christian,” which is the concept of Jesus’ “SPIRITUAL” resurrection, a reference to belief in Jesus’ ongoing spiritual influence.

In recent years a significant number of “Christians” have adopted revisionist beliefs like Lewis did. These beliefs have been championed by many liberal theologians and others involved in “the search for the historic Jesus.” Supporters say that now they can worship again without feeling like hypocrites.

Lewis’ pastor, John M. Miller preaches, “It does not matter at all whether or not Jesus was physically raised from the dead. We are not obligated as Christians to believe in a physical resurrection.”

These liberal clergy and lay folk fail to understand that a belief in the bodily resurrection is the cornerstone of the Christian faith. **No one can be a “Christian” who denies the bodily resurrection of our blessed Lord and Savior.** Romans 10:9-10 makes it very clear, “That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

Paul also wrote, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to the church at Rome in chapter 1:3-4, “Concerning His Son Jesus Christ our Lord, which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh; And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.”

Wilbur Chapman gave us these words that we sing with joy in our hearts, *“One day the grave could conceal*

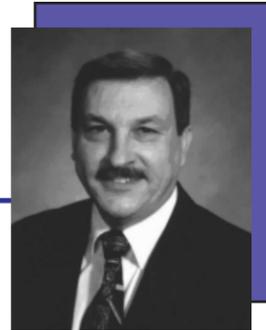
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Philadelphia Perspective

The High Cost of Friendship

Your friends you choose. . .
your relatives you're stuck with!



by Dr. Charles L. Dear, Editor

Over the past 18 years that I have been a part of the IBFNA and its parent, Regular Baptists for Revival, I have found that friendships in the ministry can be both the most refreshing and most frustrating experiences, whereby I have met good brethren I did not know before and at the same time had to break close ties with men who could no longer hold to the Biblical principles once shared in the past. Friendships in ministry can be a great source of encouragement, information and mutual strength; but just as there are rampant changes going on all around us, so also our common ground with friends may change.

It is good to find common ground with others who share our precious faith. The foundation of doctrinal agreement and Biblical practices forms the only common ground upon which we can stand and work together. The challenge comes, however, on how narrowly we draw the lines while continuing to respect local church autonomy within our fellowship. Some groups have succumbed to the temptation to describe themselves in terms of what they oppose, but that can be a never-ending process of revision as churches and other organizations continue to compromise. It becomes, therefore, a task of determining what principles are absolutely non-negotiable and which others we will grant a latitude of application or practice that is still within the bounds of acceptability. It also requires careful evaluation, lest we be guilty, as some have charged, of elevating personal preferences to the level of non-negotiable principles. As we consider who might be included by principles written in our doctrinal statement, we need also recognize that there will be others who will be excluded by those same principles. I remember when Dr. L. Duane Brown spoke in one of our IBFNA conferences and made the distinction between those who were our family and others who were our friends. Our richest fellowship is with our spiritual "family;" that is, with those who stand together with us on the doctrines of the Bible and the issues of our day. But there are some who are just "friends," whom we respect but might not invite to

preach in our pulpits.

The importance of agreement upon doctrinal principle is itself a guideline that must be jealously guarded. For many of us, our ties with others in the ministry were formed early, as we were classmates in Bible college or seminary. Those formative years of training, as well as the late night "discussions," not only helped settle some doctrinal issues in our own hearts but also formed bonds of friendship that have continued long after school days are past. For others, there were men we met while in the ministry, whom we have come to know and appreciate through associations and fellowships in which we participate. However, many of us in more recent years have been brought to the awkward place of having to choose between friendship and fellowship and Biblical principles. Fast friendships are priceless and beneficial until change and compromise on the part of one tests the principles once agreed to, but now only maintained by the other man. So what shall we do? Scripturally, we must begin by admonishing our brother, counsel with him and learn the reasons for the change. Indeed, what value is our friendship if we watch in silence as a brother compromises his own reputation and ministry? Some of the explanations you will hear smack of conventionism, where friendships are means unto the ends of other ministries, recommendations to para-church positions, etcetera. Some have sadly confessed that they only paid lip service over the years to Biblical principles they did not truly believe while having another agenda upon their hearts. Pressing others has revealed that their fellowship has been broadened to such a degree that even the most sacred Baptist principles, such as congregational polity, have been undermined and set aside. Perhaps, like some of the people in our congregations, we need to guide some of our brethren in the ministry as to where they should and should not seek friendships.

There comes a point, however, where every one of us must ask what price is being paid for this friendship and answer the question in light of the fact that my own spiritual

continued on facing page

“Philadelphia Perspectives” continued from facing page

integrity will be reflected by my answer. I must recognize that a loyalty to friendship above loyalty to Scripture, will do neither of us any real spiritual good. Over the last twenty years I have parted company with so many whom I respected and blindly trusted, from others in whose pulpits I had preached years before and still others who stood in positions of leadership and authority who have abandoned what they taught me to be in the ministry. I cannot afford the price of such friendship and neither can you, lest our efforts to help them be misunderstood as some kind of approval or we become drawn into their compromise ourselves. Thankfully, the Lord has provided a gracious alternative in a Fellowship such as ours. Many of us in the IBFNA, have also turned the page on past ties and moved ahead with others who will not compromise for the sake of friendship.

We need strong friendships in the ministry with those of like precious faith. The lone rangers who have need of no one else have not demonstrated the benefits of their isolationism. In fact, in recent years it has been my experience that some who prefer to stand alone become so inbred with their own peculiar doctrines and hobbyhorses as to become cultic within their closed world. They have no objective basis for comparison for their unique perspectives and twists of Scripture, and without the work of iron sharpening iron from without, they magnify the peculiarities of their own making to the detriment of preaching the whole counsel of God.

For Baptist preachers the foundation of fellowship has been the Associations of Baptist Churches, whereby independent Baptists need not surrender any of their autonomy by gathering together with brethren in ministries of like precious faith. Historically, such Associations served to further the work of the Lord by cooperative efforts among the churches represented to further the cause of Christ or to redress grievances with the powers that be. It was the value of a larger united voice that drew men out of their respective ministries to gather together in one place for a time of important business, fellowship and the preaching of the Word. The blessing of hearing others preach should not be taken lightly.

How often do we hear other brethren preach? If we're in the pulpit most (perhaps all) of the time (another weakness of lone rangers), the only real time we ourselves are fed is in the personal study of the Word or in our preparations to preach to others. More recently, there are

other alternatives in our computer age and, as one who has about 50 sermons online, the Internet can help relieve some of the isolation. Nothing, however, compares with the gathering together of preachers, where we can hear blessed preaching, engage in stimulating conversation across the dinner table and meet new people who face the same trials and triumphs that we do in our own ministry. If we are going to preach to our people the importance of the ministry of encouragement between one another, ought we not to model that ministry by being a blessing to our peers in the ministry and encouraging one another in the work of the Lord? Likewise, when we promote the concept of accountability to our people, does not our gathering together with others in the ministry promote a measure of accountability with each other? Is it not the heart of iron sharpening iron that we voluntarily offer others the privilege to test the edge on our sword, as we also test theirs? The struggle we face today is more about orthopraxy than orthodoxy, more about actual application of Biblical principles than their recitation or publication. I am always reminded how the Presbyterian Church had long abandoned the Westminster Confession functionally before it abandoned the Confession officially and publicly.

Churches need to recognize the value of sending their pastor to a good Bible conference that will revive and refresh their man for the pulpit and other labors for the Lord at home. There are spiritual challenges that can be brought to the heart of a pastor that cannot be gleaned from the members of his church. There are issues abroad in this rapidly changing landscape called Christian ministry that will have a definite impact if not upon his church, then upon the community where his church ministers. Likewise, the turbulent changes in schools and agencies, that might be otherwise unknown, will have a definite impact upon the future of our churches in terms of the next generation of leadership. Isolation, inbreeding and the presumption that “all things continue as they were since the fathers fell asleep,” will contribute significantly to a threatening measure of ignorance and naiveté that could radically change or destroy a local church's testimony in the future. *

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Him no longer, One day the stone rolled away from the door; Then He arose over death He had conquered; Now is ascended, my Lord evermore! *

“Compelling Call” continued from page 1

President of the Pillsbury Baptist Bible College in Owatonna, Minnesota. He is working hard to maintain a strong, separatist, Baptist stance at the College that has gone through some difficult waters lately. Dr. Ralph Colas, Executive Secretary of the ACCC will be speaking on Tuesday night, and Evangelist Ken Lynch will be speaking Wednesday night. There will be great workshops and speakers throughout the conference.

We will be electing a new Moderator and officers, so don't fail to take part in the process.

Nominating ballots have gone out; but if you did not receive one, please email me at richard_h18073@yahoo.com or call me on my cell phone at 215-913-6181. I will see that you receive one. Of course, if you would like to wait until the opening day of the conference, nominations will still be open.

Below is an incomplete but general outline of the conference program, though all message titles are not yet finished. Hopefully we will see you there.

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**18th Annual IBFNA Family Conference
“The Compelling Call For Leadership”**

Tuesday, June 17, 2008

8:00 a.m. Registration and Greeting of Friends
9:00 a.m. Dr. L. Duane Brown – “Divine Mysteries”
9:45 a.m. Prayer Time
10:15 a.m. Break Time
10:30 a.m. Dr. Robert Crane – “Leadership in a Dysfunctional World”
11:30 a.m. Break for Lunch
1:30 p.m. Dr. Robert Crane – “Failure of Leadership when Needed Most”
2:30 p.m. Afternoon Break
3:00 p.m. Workshops –
Dr. Charles Dear & Rev. Dan Cleghorn – “Crossing the Blue Line”
Rev. Allen Dunckley – “Leadership Anchored in Genesis”
Mrs. Karen Harris – “Leadership Through Trials”
4:15 p.m. Break for Supper
7:00 p.m. Evening Session – Dr. Ralph Colas – “Facing Life's Storms Prepared”

Wednesday, June 18, 2008

9:00 a.m. Dr. L. Duane Brown – “Divine Mysteries”
9:45 a.m. Prayer Time

10:15 a.m. Break Time
10:30 a.m. Rev. Justin Kauffmann – “Talent or Chemistry”
11:30 a.m. Fellowship Business Session
12:00 a.m. Break for lunch and free afternoon
7:00 p.m. Evangelist Ken Lynch – “God's Watchmen”

Thursday, June 19, 2008

9:00 a.m. Dr. L. Duane Brown – “Divine Mysteries”
9:45 a.m. Prayer Time
10:15 a.m. Break Time
10:30 a.m. Dr. Dave Reinhardt
11:30 p.m. Break for Lunch
1:30 p.m. Dr. Magdy Ghabbour
2:30 p.m. Afternoon Break
2:45 p.m. Workshops –
Dr. Dan Brown – “Leadership Response to the Emerging Church”
Dr. Clay Nuttall – “The Pattern for Biblical Leadership in the Local Church”
Mrs. Marlys Johnson – “Love and Lead”
3:45 p.m. Break for Supper
7:00 p.m. Dr. Richard A Harris – “Who's Going to Fill Their Shoes”



Messing with the Fountain

by Pastor Thomas Hamilton

The female hillbilly voice croons over the radio, “I may hate myself in the morning, but I’ll love you tonight.” She illustrates a society living in total disregard for the consequences of wrong actions. A life lived without cognizance of eternity weighs life in hedonistic terms—Is the pleasure worth the pain? I understand the thinking process. I love licorice. Unfortunately, it gives me migraines. I hate migraines, but I love licorice. There exist some brands of licorice that are worth a good migraine. But physical consequences are not to be compared to the eternal ramifications of moral ejection. A generation or two have risen which are ignorant of matters of faith. We have so immersed ourselves in secular neutrality that the worst crime in popular culture is to admit that there may be a God who lives to hold us accountable for our choices.

The kneejerk fundamentalist first cries out, “What are you doing listening to that radio voice in the first place?” Oh, stop. Who are the philosophers of today? Are they the dusty-halled professors of University classrooms? Not anymore. The population cares not for their squeaky banterings. The crowds hearken to idols of screaming music. The masses want shallow and carnal, fast and dirty, crazed and trashy. Distract me. Occupy my lusts. Entertain my visceral cravings. Don’t bore me with eternal consequences. Don’t remind me of life’s brevity. Let me blaze now. Tomorrow may never come.

And so we pause. How do we reach into this culture and yank it back to yesteryear’s morality? We don’t. That’s not our mission. We don’t change the message to dress up the Christ and paint Him attractively to the world. Christ’s holiness demands otherwise. His form is not comely. His visage is unattractively marred in the



bloody Cross. We were not sent into the world to change the world. We were sent to make disciples. We acknowledge that the message infers the method. Yea, it demands a method of character not compromise. We don’t have the authority to drag Jesus down to the people’s level. We leave Him where He is and point. Thirst for Him will be assuaged only by drinking at the purity of His fountain. Messing with the fountain contaminates the Water. *

Pastor Tom Hamilton is the pastor of Stony Point Baptist Church in Kansas City, Kansas. In the past he has served as an officer of the IBFNA.

We need your

Nominations for Officers for 2008-2009

This year we need to elect our officers for the next two year term. Our present Moderator, Dr. Richard Harris, cannot be re-elected, having served two successive terms. All other members are eligible to be nominated.

All members may submit nominees for Moderator, Secretary and Treasurer for the new term of office. Nominations must be submitted in writing, either by mail or electronically (Fax or Email) to the Fellowship Secretary, Pastor Bob Payne, Berean Baptist Church, 44141 Escorse, Belleville MI 48111, bpayne@flash.net.

Both those who offer nominations and those who are nominated must be active members, in good standing, of the Fellowship.

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