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THE REVIEW

The Dangerous Slide into “Progressive Dispensationalism”

by Dr. Bob Payne, Moderator IBFNA

In his excellent article, “Keeping Institutions True,” in the July 2009 *Faith Pulpit*, Dr. Robert Delnay wrote that one of the first doctrinal shifts that institutions make is “the way that dispensationalism goes out of fashion.” He goes on to say,

It is too much to believe that a literal rapture can happen at any moment, and the teachers tend to postpone it to the remote future. The Kingdom smacks too much of “pie in the sky,” and the sweet here and now becomes more urgent. **A less evident, but equally dangerous, shift is the move to progressive dispensationalism in which a school blurs the lines between Israel and the church and adopts a modified Reformed position** (emphasis mine).

Today we are seeing on a large scale that dangerous slide of fundamentalist educational institutions into the Reformed hermeneutic and consequently Progressive Dispensationalism. Although some readers may feel that the word “dangerous,” as used in the title of this article, is a bit “melodramatic,” Progressive Dispensationalism’s threat to biblical Christianity will become apparent as we consider the movement’s history, teachings, and doctrinal implications.

The Movement, the Men, and Their Message

On November 20, 1986, the “Dispensational Study Group” began meeting in connection with the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society in Atlanta, Georgia. The theological discussions which took place there laid the foundation for what was labeled “progressive dispensationalism” five years later at the 1991 meeting.

In 1992 the first major work on Progressive Dispensationalism was published: *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*. Craig A. Blaising and Darrell L. Bock edited this work to which several well-known theologians contributed: Bruce A. Ware, Carl B. Hock, Jr., Robert L. Saucy, W. Edward Glenny, J. Lanier Burns, David K. Lowery, John A. Martin, David L. Turner, and Kenneth L. Barker. This book was quickly followed up by two other major works published in 1993: *Progressive Dispensationalism* and *The Case for Progressive Dispensationalism*.



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Dr. Manfred Kober writes in the March/April 1997 issue of the *Faith Pulpit* that the purpose of Progressive Dispensationalism seems to be...

To develop further the system of dispensationalism. A remaking of dispensationalism to their theological presuppositions, in part adopted from European theologians. To discover similarities between dispensationalism and covenant theology. A rapprochement with a totally dissimilar system. To delineate the progressive fulfillment of God's plan in history. A rejection of God's distinctive purposes for Israel and the church. It is a sad commentary on the present situation that whereas premillennialism (out of which dispensationalism gradually emerged) arose in America primarily through early Bible conferences held in opposition to the postmillennialism and liberalism of the day, progressive dispensationalism, in following the ecumenical spins of the times, is seeking common ground with amillennialism.

The theological mantra of the Progressive Dispensational movement is "already, but not yet." Those steeped in this movement teach that Christ has *already* inaugurated the Davidic reign in heaven at the right hand of the Father (i.e. the throne of David), though *not yet* reigning as Davidic king on earth (that will occur during the millennium). In a similar way, the new covenant has *already* been inaugurated, although its blessings are *not yet* fully realized (but will be in the millennium). It is obvious then that the Davidic and New Covenants are not seen as exclusively for Israel. The clear scriptural lines of demarcation between Israel and the church are blurred by the Progressive Dispensationalist, who holds to a strange amalgamation of Covenant Theology and Dispensationalism (which in reality is an amalgamation of *hermeneutics*).

A Dangerous Movement

The bad hermeneutics of the Progressive Dispensationalist leads to an unending stream of errant theology. If the hermeneutical lens through which a person looks at the Word of God is hazy or dirty, there is always the potential for not seeing the clear teachings of Scripture accurately. Progressive dispensationalist, Craig A. Blaising, in his series, "Developing Dispensationalism," which appeared in the July – September 1988 *Bibliotheca Sacra*, admits to using a non-literal hermeneutic:

In conclusion it can be seen that consistently literal exegesis is inadequate to describe the essential distinctive of dispensationalism. Development is taking place on how to characterize a proper hermeneutic for dispensationalists. Many do not feel, however, that

the hermeneutic itself will be distinctively dispensational. Furthermore, dispensational interpretations of various texts are likely to modify as this development continues.

The style of hermeneutics utilized by the Progressive Dispensationalist is termed a "complementary hermeneutic." It is an admixture of a literal and a non-literal interpretation of the scriptures. By using this dual hermeneutic a person can say that according to the Old Testament, the Davidic Covenant was given to Israel; and that according to the New Testament, this covenant was not given to Israel alone but to the church as well. Furthermore, Christ is *already/now* reigning on the throne of David over His church in partial fulfillment of this covenant and is *not yet* reigning as He will in the Millennium.

The danger of this non-literal hermeneutic does not stop with a person's view of the biblical covenants. Once a person abandons sound interpretation, the floodgate is open to a rush of deviant doctrines. He is on the fast track toward liberalism, since he is using the same hermeneutic as the liberal. David Turner's view of heaven illustrates this well. He calls a normal/literal approach to Revelation 21:21 a "hyperliteral approach." He writes concerning this passage in the book *Dispensationalism, Israel, and the Church*:

The problem here is that the text does not speak of a 'body' of pearl material; it affirms that each gate is from one pearl. Along the same lines, the streets of gold are taken to be 'lined with' gold, but the text literally indicates that the streets are gold in their entirety. Perhaps the absence of oysters large enough to produce such pearls and the absence of sufficient gold to pave such a city (viewed as literally 1,380 miles square and high) is viewed as sufficient reason not to take these images as fully literal!

Additionally, the skewed hermeneutic of the Progressive Dispensationalists not only leads to a blurriness in distinction between Israel and the church, but also an erroneous view of the Kingdom of God, which they say is the unifying theme of biblical history. Dr. Manfred Kober points out these doctrinal problems in his article, "The Problematic Development of Progressive Dispensationalism" from the March/April 1997 *Faith Pulpit*:

By magnifying the continuity of various dispensations, revisionists are minimizing the distinctiveness of the church. Their mystery concept of the church is not that it was unrevealed in the Old Testament but it was unrealized. As a corollary, God has no separate program for the church. The church is simply a sub-category of the Kingdom. It is called a "sneak preview" of the Kingdom and a "functional outpost of God's Kingdom" (*Progressive*

Dispensationalism, 257). The church is the Kingdom today. In fact, David Turner calls the church “the ‘new Israel’” (Blaising and Bock, eds., *Dispensationalism, Israel and the Church*, 288). It is not surprising, therefore, that Bruce Waltke observes that Turner’s “position is closer to covenant theology than to dispensationalism” (Ibid., 334). With their theological neutering of the church, the revisionists are clearly de-emphasizing the pretribulational rapture, God’s distinct event involving the church.

The Spirit of Compromise

In a previous quote, Dr. Manfred Kober stated that progressive dispensationalism is following “the ecumenical spins of the times” and is “seeking common ground with amillennialism.” The spirit that seems to motivate the Progressive Dispensationalist is that of *ecumenical compromise*. Normally to broaden one’s fellowship requires one to broaden one’s theology. In an effort to bring together those who hold to a normal/literal hermeneutic with those who do not, it was necessary, in Postmodern fashion, to meld together two opposite and opposing ideas: Covenant Theology and Dispensationalism. Since the Progressive Dispensationalist can now play both theological sides, he is now “smart” enough to run in Reformed circles and “dialog” with Covenant Theologians, and yet he does not have to totally repudiate his dispensational roots.

The Historic Position of the IBFNA

The IBFNA continues to stand today where it has stood in the past. According to our Articles of Faith, we stand for...

1. Biblical dispensationalism, and against Covenant Theology: “We believe that the dispensations are stewardships, or rules of life, by which God administers His purpose on the Earth through man under varying responsibilities.... Three of these dispensations, or rules of life, are the subject of extended revelation in Scripture. They are the dispensation of the Mosaic Law, the present dispensation of Grace, and the future dispensation of the Millennial Kingdom. They are distinct and are not to be intermingled or confused as they are chronologically successive. Covenant Theology as found in Reformed Theology is unscriptural.”

2. A definite distinction between Israel and the Church: “We believe that Israel is distinct from the Church, the Body of Christ, just as God’s purpose for each is distinct. We believe in the sovereign selection of Israel as God’s eternal covenant people, that they are now dispersed because of their disobedience and rejection of Christ, and that they will be re-gathered in the Holy Land, and after the completion of the Church, will be saved as a nation at the second advent of Christ.”

3. Ecclesiastical separation from theological error: “...whereby we preach against apostasy, and withdraw from brethren who enter into memberships, affiliations and fellowships (including evangelistic crusades, youth movements, mission agencies, and schools) which seek to unite separatist fundamentalists with those who deny Biblical doctrines, including those who do not obey the Biblical teaching on separation, as defined in the purpose clause.”

In spite of the fact that some fundamentalist institutions are now embracing Progressive Dispensationalists and their teachings, let’s make sure that we, as a fellowship and as individuals, stand strong in sound doctrine and for a biblical hermeneutic. In a day when the loudest voices are redefining terms and calling for compromise, let’s make sure that we too raise our voices in defense of what is biblical.

What Do We Really Know about Separation of Church and State?

by Dr. Clay Nuttall



Some years ago I set out to write a series of books on the Baptist Distinctives. The first two were *The Conflict: The Separation of Church and State* and *The Weeping Church: Observations in Church Polity*. Somehow the tide of my workload sidetracked me, and two other manuscripts still lie dormant. *The Weeping Church* has been in constant publication since 1985, and *The Conflict* is scheduled to be reprinted as soon as I finish the edit.

The reason we decided to reprint *The Conflict* has to do with the unstable climate for religious liberty in our country and the lack of understanding of the subject in our own circles. When I set about to do the research for the Separation of Church and State, I discovered something quite disheartening. As part of the research, I contacted 44 pastors whom I consider friends. I asked them for a definition of the Baptist Distinctive Separation

of Church and State. Not only did I get answers that were all over the board, but none of us had a clear understanding of what the Bible taught on the subject, just bits and pieces. I don’t mean this to sound judgmental toward my good friends; the truth is I didn’t know the answer.

While reading a maze of current material, including blogs and emails, I realized that a lack of understanding on this special distinctive persists. With the present anti-Christian atmosphere in our country and impending opposition, it appears to me that we should stop and take stock of this subject that we claim as a Baptist standard.

So why the lack of understanding?

It is quite clear that many individuals get their definition from history or the personal opinions of respected leaders. As Biblical Baptists, we are supposed to go straight to the Bible for such answers. More often, however, the definitions come from society, law or history rather than the Bible; but the scriptures are extremely clear on the subject. Even when discussing the Constitution, Bill of Rights and documents like the Jefferson letter to the Danbury Baptists, they can’t get it straight. The correct

definition for this belief we claim has to come from the Bible.

Even if one is able to set aside the legal and historical issues, why do we miss the clear teaching of scripture? Part of the answer is that some are not using the one Biblical Hermeneutic that rises from the scripture. It is the very reason why we have what I call “the theological error of the week.” We can’t get it right when we are putting things in the Bible rather than letting the text speak for itself. Of course everyone thinks he is doing it right, but the results make it obvious that we have followed some fad hermeneutic rather than the biblical one. We embrace some flawed human system, or use familiar terms for interpretation but then fail to practice them.

There is also the problem of a partial hermeneutic. Instead of a full and complete search of the scripture, they pick those passages that fit their belief and opinion and ignore the rest. Let me digress to say that is exactly what happens with those who want their own answer to divorce, drinking and human-centered ministry. The infusion of Reformed Theology into our ranks could only happen by using a partial hermeneutic, and the list of these errors is too many to mention. We are bombarded with statements that make people think that theology is our idea. That is why I teach my students not to say, “I believe, I think, my opinion is.” Those things are irrelevant in our teaching and preaching. People need to know what God has said; we care little about what men think. “Let God be true and every man a liar.”

I just read an article that claims the myth of the Gospel Only, a man-centered theology that has been with us for a long time. The idea is that we go about living a moral life and sharing the gospel, and that is all. This same human philosophy tells us that the public sector and society are off limits. While this opinion is right in that we have no illusions about changing our country through politics and social movements, their Gospel Monastery idea is false.

Nothing in my discussion plays down the gospel; this is our message without a doubt. Nothing stains the need for living Christ-like, this is our final apologetic. But the centrality of the Biblicist is the Glory of God and the whole counsel of God. I am stunned by those who ask us to set aside the scriptures except for the Gospel. Only a full and complete trust and obedience in the entire Bible could possibly bring Glory to our God.

So what does the Bible say?

While it will be impossible to give detail for every passage dealing with the relationship of Church and State, let me attempt to explain how using the whole Bible will give us a clear answer. First of all, there is an obvious difference between an individual and the church. Some talk about the single member of a church as if they are the church. The church is not one member, it is many. A number of things that are required in scripture of the individual are not required by the church. Similarities are not equals. When doing the exegesis of a text, the interpreter must determine about whom God is speaking. To use opinion here will bring a false definition for our distinctive.

Passages such as Matthew 22, Romans 13 and I Peter 2 are often used to support the taxation of churches. While there is a principle taught in each of them, they are directed at the individual; and none of them teaches the opinion that is held by many who have an erroneous view of the church. This is another place where a partial hermeneutic creates misunderstanding and allows the interpreter to insert his point of view into the text.

Some have the opinion that as individuals we are required to obey every command of the government. “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake whether it be to the king, as supreme; Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well” (I Peter 2:13-14). The interesting thing is that no serious Bible student believes that. If you lived in China and your wife were pregnant with a second child, you would not march her down to have an abortion. If you did, you would be party to murder because God is the final Ruler and Judge. We have several examples in the Bible where people obeyed God rather than man, including Peter, the Egyptian midwives, Daniel and the three Hebrew children.

I know all about the extremes; so, I will let you discuss that somewhere else. Peter clearly tells us we are to disobey but “as free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.” In other words if you do choose to obey God rather than man, make sure it is God you are obeying. Don’t listen to some intellectual about this; find out what God said in the book.

What is it we don’t understand?

So the question is, “What is it that we don’t understand about the Separation of Church and State principle?” Making a pretzel out of Bible texts only confuses the issue. We need to learn to ask questions of the text rather than insert our views into it. Much of this has to do with ecclesiology. What is the church? What is the body of Christ? Who owns the church? When funds and physical things are given to God through the church, who owns those funds? Why would a higher authority pay tribute to a lower authority? This is not the whole exam; but, if you miss one answer, you flunk the test. We are so used to not asking questions or asking the wrong ones that it is hard to work through the fog of tradition and opinion.

God has ordained three institutions on earth, the home with the husband/father as temporal head, government with man as temporal head and the church with an earthly shepherd as leader. All activities flow through the authority of one of these institutions. God has clearly given each of these role tasks that belong to them. Those specific tasks assigned by God are not to be interfered with by the other two institutions. This is the basis for the Separation of Church and State principle.

When the state interferes with the teaching, preaching, beliefs and ministry of the church, it has entered an area that does not belong to them. Those who have an elementary understanding of this will complain that, under this biblical model, the church would be free to sacrifice babies. The answer, however, is very simple. The state does have legitimate authority over individuals; and in such

such a violation, the state is to punish the person or persons responsible for such criminal acts. God has given them that power.

The major problem is that even in our circles we have been so infected by liberalism that we think like them. God never gave the state authority to punish people for what they think they will do. It is only to punish people for what they do. So a church can believe any odd thing it wishes; but, when that belief is carried out in a criminal act, the persons who commit the crime are to be punished.

Some examples

In our view of religious freedom, all other religions have the same privileges we do. When pressed to persecute the Quakers, Roger Williams simply responded, "If the Quakers are not free to believe and practice their faith, neither will we be free" (see the Quaker Quarrel page 55, *The Conflict*). Any religion that stoops to persecution of another is only confessing the inherent impotency of its own faith. We maintain that all religions must be as free as we are.

In the flap about building a mosque near ground zero, there has been a lot of heat but light is seriously absent. Do we really believe what we teach? If so, Islam has the right to build a place of worship. The question of

building one where they want to is only a window into who and what they really are, but they have the right to do it. What they don't have the right to do is practice what they teach that anyone who disagrees with them is an infidel and should be killed. We believe that people can reject the Gospel and have no fear from us, because we will do those people good and not harm. We believe the Gospel is a power unto itself and doesn't need any physical help from us to make converts.

On the other hand, the government has no authority to treat Islam with preferential treatment over other religions in our land; but they do it every day out of fear or accommodation. This problem is growing in our land. At the same time, the anti-Christian fever is mushrooming; and this hatred is going to become epidemic. This is the reason we need to go to the scriptures to find out what God has to say about the Separation of Church and State principle.

Summary

God has instituted both church and state. His written word gives limits to both institutions. When one of them exceeds God's assignments, we have to decide what we are going to do. This means that if we obey God, we should be ready to face persecution from the very institution that is supposed to praise good.

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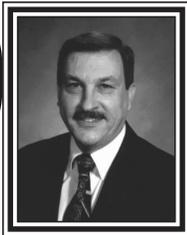
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Reservations: You may make reservations by calling **1-800-233-0121**. Mention that you are with the IBFNA conference to take advantage of the \$99 room rate. Please note that you need to make reservations by May 1st, 2011 in order to be guaranteed a room. If rooms are still available after that time, the hotel has promised to extend the same room rate to late callers.

IBFNA Celebrates 20 Years of Fellowship

by Dr. Charles L. Dear, Editor



It's been a long road from Oshkosh to Philadelphia, to other places across the country and up and down the Eastern seaboard, seeking brethren who want to stand together for the cause of Biblical Separation. No doubt, the cause is still just, but there have been objectors and defectors all along the way, from the very beginning even until now. Looking back over the past 20 years and with the advantage of hindsight, however, we can see that movements like Regular Baptists for Revival and IBFNA are just as necessary now as they were then. We are a "Tea Party," if you will, of our own making and in response to the abandonment of Biblical principles in the name of pragmatism that has sapped both the vitality and supernatural character of the Lord's work.

There are those who still question the formation of the IBFNA, who fail to see the need for such a Fellowship; but changes in other Fellowships, schools and agencies over the last 20 years should silence any such objections. I can remember in the first meeting at Oshkosh, when someone asked if we had permission to hold the meeting. The real question was "Permission from whom?" It was very much a snapshot of the issues we were facing and the mindset that would have to be overcome in order to form a new Fellowship free of any previous entanglements.

Looking back, history has and will continue to vindicate the formation of the IBFNA. For example, how many schools that were "approved" more than 20 years ago would be approved today, using the same criteria by which they were evaluated then?

HISTORY HAS AND WILL CONTINUE TO VINDICATE THE FORMATION OF THE IBFNA

How many of them dropped the title "Baptist," and how many have drifted into a Reformed hermeneutic that now challenges Dispensationalism and other settled doctrines we have known, preached and loved over the past 50 years? By the way, of all the doctrines we have cherished, the one now being disparaged by schools we once heartily recommended is Separation. As one who hates to read endless babble and blogs online, a recent review of some of the better known websites reveals a pattern of redefining the doctrine of Separation contrary to how the IBFNA has maintained the historic position.

On those websites you will find the expression "Biblical Separation" being used frequently; but in the discussions attached, you will only see it being used about separation from apostates, or what some call primary

IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN ABOUT MAINTAINING THE PURITY AND TESTIMONY OF THE CHURCH

separation. There is a disingenuous double talk at work here, not unlike the preaching of Billy Graham 50 years ago, where we hear familiar words spoken but whose definitions they have changed. Not only will you not find separation from erring brethren or brethren who fellowship with apostates, but you will also

see attacks upon the application of Scriptures regarding secondary separation, such as II Thessalonians 3:6,14,15. Since the beginning of the IBFNA, it has always been included in the doctrine of Separation, whether we distinguish separation from apostates or from brethren who fellowship with apostates. It has always been about maintaining the purity and testimony of the Church.

Weakening our resolve to keep separate from erring brethren who keep company with apostate personalities and ministries yields no better results than weakening our requirements for church

FAILURE TO UPHOLD SEPARATING FROM THOSE WHO FELLOWSHIP WITH APOSTATES EVENTUALLY LEADS TO FELLOWSHIP DIRECTLY WITH APOSTATES

membership in order to swell our roles. Baptist history has taught us that such concessions have always led to a compromised testimony and failure to uphold the Truth of God's Word. Furthermore, history has also demonstrated that failure to uphold separating from those who fellowship with apostates eventually leads to fellowship directly with apostates. The arrogance that believes we can stop compromise anytime we want, at any point we choose, sounds just like the alcoholic and drug addict's defense. It also brings us back to Albert Einstein's definition of mental illness where we repeat the same failed experiment, doing it the same way as it was done before, but expecting different results because we were the ones doing it. Some of our brethren need to seriously ask themselves when, in the history of the Fundamentalist- Modernist controversy, did New Evangelicals ever win anyone out of the Modernist camp into Fundamentalism? Secondly, how many New Evangelicals and their Fundamentalist friends ultimately found themselves sold out to Liberalism in their quest to build bridges that proved to be only one way, in the wrong direction?

There are some today who would have us build new bridges to other positions across the spectrum of theology. Whether it be Evangelicalism, labeled New or Conservative, or Fundamentalism labeled Pseudo, Neo or New Image, it all begs the question why such a link is necessary or desirable. Do we really believe that such ties and/or dialog will win them over to a Fundamentalist/ Separatist position? Of the ministries and schools that I have observed closely over several decades, who have built their own bridges and are now openly turned toward compromise, one of the most consistent facts has been the arrogance of their leadership. They are never wrong, no matter how painfully obvious it may be to others. They never retreat from their chosen positions in the face of better alternatives, nor do they retract what they have spoken in foolishness and ignorance. They gloss over any shortfalls, they persist in lies after they are exposed and they defy anyone else questioning their judgment. They are the self-proclaimed experts in church planting, counseling, urban ministry, etcetera, but their "successes" have also left a trail of damage in their wake.

The impact of the changes in Bible Colleges and Seminaries rests not just in the preparation of men for the pastorate, as serious as that is. In recent years there has also been a distinct pattern emerging where the professors and administrators of too many schools have presumed to become the instructors and bishops of the churches. What begins as a fad (in pursuit of "some new thing") in

one school suddenly appears in other schools, and independent Baptist pastors are swept onboard by the tide brought home by their students in those schools and/or by school seminars for pastors. Students are indoctrinated that if their home church is not up to the current trends being adopted in the school, their church

PERHAPS THE LACK OF INVITATIONS REFLECTS AN UNWILLINGNESS TO HEAR WHAT WE WOULD SAY

and pastor are out of date and out of step with the times and are, therefore, unworthy of respect. If that seems extreme to you, ask yourself a simple

question: How many schools invite pastors to speak, either at chapel services or seminars or classes? At best, a handful of IBFNA pastors are asked to speak at Fundamentalist schools, and if they aren't alumni, the number is zero. On the other hand, if you ask how many teachers, administrators from other schools and agencies are invited, including non-separatists, such as those on faculty at Southern Baptist schools, they are the overwhelming majority. Perhaps the lack of invitations reflects an unwillingness to hear what we would say or suggests a presumption that, in the spirit of Separation, we would not accept.

Much the same can be said about the Mission Boards and other agencies we left behind. The newsletters we continue to receive from them tell more about wells dug, buildings built and medical ministries than evangelism and church planting. While it is important to have clean water and a roof over your head, as well as reasonable medical care, they are not substitutes for the clear preaching of the Gospel of Christ. There is also an increasing emphasis upon adaptation to existing cultures that raises the question whether the message is somehow diluted by the packaging deemed best to fit the culture. Ignorance of cultural history can mislead good intentions by adapting a ministry to a culture that has an evil or satanic background.

Perhaps the most telling element in either schools, mission boards or agencies is in their constituencies, both on staff and in the students, missionary candidates, etcetera, that they attract. Faculty rosters list the credentials of their staff, both previous positions held and education. While fundamental Baptists can hold their

ground on any foreign territory, it still begs the question for what purpose would we seek the training and commendation of those who oppose our doctrines.

Likewise, every school has a breakdown of the churches represented by their students; and we might ask a similar question why students out of non-Baptist, or even non-Fundamental churches would seek higher education that presumably reinforces our distinctive Baptist doctrines all across the curriculum. The same questions might be asked when we look at the backgrounds of missionary candidates. If our mission boards are devoted to evangelism and the planting of Baptist churches around the world, why would candidates from non-Baptist churches choose a Baptist board, when there are others of their own denomination or non-denominational? Perhaps we might gain better insight if we knew the credentials and backgrounds of mission board decision makers and other agency leaders.

Of all the Fundamental, Baptist Fellowships that exist today, no other Fellowship has made Separation its keystone doctrine like the IBFNA has. While others have focused more heat than light upon Bible versions and doctrines of Grace, we continue to be generous to one another in the Fellowship, as we have agreed in our doctrinal statement, while we practice according to our

own convictions in our local churches. Few if any other Fellowships will address the issues we have regularly, both in our family conferences and

THE IBFNA HAS ALWAYS SOUGHT TO EDUCATE AND UPLIFT THE REAL PEOPLE WHO ARE CALLED TO DO THE WORK OF THE MINISTRY

in this publication. Other Associations and Fellowships have focused more on pastors, missionaries, school personnel and agency executives than the regular Baptist church member; but the IBFNA has always sought to educate and uplift the real people who are called to do the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:12). If others have ever promoted the "equality of the brethren," as we have constantly, I have never seen or heard it over these past 20 years. These are some of the things that will keep us humble and spiritually sound. May we never succumb to the pressures to grow at the expense of what we believe and practice.

Visit us on the web:

<http://www.ibfna.org>

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