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THE REVIEW

Let Us Pray

by Dr. Bob Payne, Moderator IBFNA

So, How is Your Prayer Life?

Although we could all point out weaknesses among believers today, perhaps one of the most neglected areas of the spiritual life is that of prayer. I fear that as fundamentalists we have had a tendency to deemphasize *prayer*, and have instead replaced it with *activity*. No doubt, the activities of ministry are important, but *activity* should never be divorced from *prayer*. Our ministries should be energized by, and bathed in prayer.

Another common error is emphasizing Bible knowledge to the exclusion of an intimate prayer life. The result is lukewarm Christians who have only a head full of facts. These are believers who could win a Jeopardy Bible knowledge round, and yet know very little of intimacy with God. Although doctrinal and biblical knowledge is vital, it should never be the replacement for a fervent prayer life. Prayer sets our hearts on fire with a heavenly glow.

In this day of spiritual anemia, I think that there are some things of which we need to be reminded concerning our prayer lives.

We Need a Daily Time for Prayer

Several years ago an online survey was taken of young fundamentalists. Although there were many disturbing trends that the survey brought out, one particular question that was asked was "How much time did you spend in private, concentrated prayer last week (not including mealtime prayers)?" Over half of those who responded said 30 minutes or less. Seven percent of those surveyed said they didn't pray at all. It has been my experience through the years that many older fundamentalists have a similar struggle with their prayer lives.

With such a prayerless trend among believers, is it any wonder why fundamentalism lacks the power it once had? I am reminded of a question that was asked of Charles Spurgeon: "What is the secret of your spiritual power?" His reply was, "Knee work!"

Each of us needs a daily time of "knee work." As a former Bible teacher of mine used to tell his students, "Make a daily appointment with God, and keep your appointment." I would commend the same to each one reading this article.

We Need Ministries Bathed in Prayer

We sometimes foolishly ask, "I wonder what's wrong with my church?" or "I wonder why my ministry is so powerless?" when, deep down, we know the answer. A prayerless ministry is a powerless ministry. Churches today seem to be trying to compensate for the lack of Divine power in their midst by substituting things that rouse the *emotions* instead. Perhaps a new praise band will get the people excited. Maybe "ditching" the old "dead" hymns and including some new contemplative praise and worship choruses will rouse folk's emotions and bring tears to their eyes. If not those things, maybe we can try some other form of exciting entertainment, or even some sensational new program.

These sensual, adrenaline-pumping, tear-jerking methodologies are paltry replacements for the power of God. In fact, this combination of worldliness, compromise, and prayerlessness is deadly to any church ministry. What we need today are men and



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We Need to Practice Praying Without Ceasing

women who, as Colossians 4:2 says, “continue in” (or are “devoted to”) prayer! We need pastors today who are men of prayer.

In his convicting book, *The Preacher and Prayer*, E.M. Bounds writes of the prayerless preacher:

His ministry may draw people to him, to the Church, to the form and ceremony; but no true drawings to God, no sweet, holy, divine communion induced. The Church has been frescoed but not edified, pleased but not sanctified. Life is suppressed; a chill is on the summer air; the soil is baked....the Church [becomes] a graveyard, not an embattled army. Praise and prayer are stifled; worship is dead. The preacher and the preaching have helped sin, not holiness....Preaching which kills is prayerless preaching. Without prayer the preacher creates death, and not life. The preacher who is feeble in prayer is feeble in life-giving forces. The preacher who has retired prayer as a conspicuous and largely prevailing element in his own character has shorn his preaching of its distinctive life-giving power.

I believe that the command to “pray without ceasing” from 1 Thessalonians 5:17 goes beyond simply having a daily time of prayer. The Greek word translated “without ceasing” was used in secular Greek to describe things like the uninterrupted payment of hard taxes, a continual uninterrupted cough, repeated military attacks, and the regular and consistent production of fruit. I do not believe that the point is either that we go around all day mumbling prayers, or that we are just to have a regular time of prayer (although that is part of the idea). Paul is asking believers to have their lives *dominated by the spirit of unceasing prayer*.

As a believer, I ought to be in constant fellowship with my Lord, and always conscious of His presence. As such, I am always quick to, and in an instant able to, pray to the Lord whenever appropriate, needed, or desired. Walvoord, in his commentary on 1 Thessalonians, writes that this verse not only implies a regular time of prayer, but also “...represents the fact...that we are always in touch with God. Certainly two friends can be in the same room and be in harmony and fellowship one with the other, even though they may not be talking with each other all the time. Paul is saying, ‘Do you want a really rich experience? Begin a walk of fellowship with the Lord, not only at stated times of prayer, in which you bring all your needs to the Lord, but also the unbroken walk of communion — praying without ceasing.’”

Again, I ask, “How is your prayer life?” If it is less than desirable, why not confess that sin to the Lord right now, and begin anew an intimate walk with the Lord?

God help us, preacher and “layman” alike, to be people of prayer, and have ministries bathed in prayer!

Lordship Salvation

by Rev. Michael McCubbins



The proponents of “Lordship Salvation” say that it is impossible to be saved without recognizing the Lordship of Christ. On the surface, this seems to have merit, but it does not take into account certain indisputable factors in the areas of doctrine, soteriology, appropriation and compromise.

The Doctrine

True Biblical salvation recognizes the absolute deity of Jesus Christ. Simply stated, there is no way that a man can be saved if he rejects that Jesus Christ is God.

However, those that speak of Lordship Salvation are not asking us to simply agree that Christ is God. Instead, Lordship Salvation emphasizes a total submission to the Lordship of Christ. This salvation is dependent upon making Christ “Lord of your life.” This teaching is in direct opposition to Biblical salvation. We affirm in our doctrinal statement that the Bible clearly teaches that salvation “is wholly a work of God, performed from beginning to end by Him.” Therefore, if salvation is “wholly

a work of God,” which is appropriated by believing in the Lord Jesus Christ, then Lordship Salvation is not the salvation of the Bible.

The Soteriology

Second, Lordship Salvation emphasizes the work of the unsaved man. The unsaved man is told to make Christ Lord over every area of his life instead of simply trusting in the finished work of Christ. Clearly, the Bible never puts the emphasis on the sinner but on the work of Christ for salvation.

Ephesians 2:8-9: For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.

The idea of Lordship salvation shifts the focus away from the work of Christ, who declared unequivocally, “It is finished” (John 19:30), and focuses instead on the work of man to finish his own salvation. This then would lead us to consider a couple of questions:

1. Is it ever appropriate to encourage an unsaved man to focus on his own commitment rather than the commitment of Christ who has promised to finish the good work that He has already paid for?

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2. Why is the promise of the Bible “that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life” never stated as “whosoever committeth” or “whosoever maketh Him Lord”?

The Bible (and the IBFNA doctrinal statement) puts the emphasis on the finished work of Christ not on the work of man.

Appropriation

Third, the Bible clearly states that salvation is the work of God alone and is appropriated by faith. This is expressed more than 600 times in the Bible.

Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. (**I Peter 1:5**)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. (**Romans 1:16**)

What shall we say then that Abraham our father, as pertaining to the flesh, hath found? For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. (**Romans 4:1-3**)

For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. (**I Corinthians 1:21**)

When I was dealing with a man who believed in “Lordship Salvation,” he suggested that I did not understand what the word “faith” really meant and referred to his dictionary in an attempt to define the word “faith” as an action or commitment. I suggested that we should instead use the Bible’s definition of faith which we find in Hebrews 11:1, “Now faith is....” His response to me was that “the Bible is not our authority on the meaning of words like ‘faith;’ the dictionary is our authority.” As a Baptist, the Bible is my authority in all matters of which it speaks, and in all matters to which it addresses itself. I will, and must reject the dictionary when it disagrees with the Bible.

The Bible states that there is only one way of salvation.

Galatians 1:6-10: I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

If there is only one way of salvation, then which one is it? Do we believe in salvation by faith in the finished work of Christ alone? Or, do we believe in salvation by commitment to the Lordship of Christ? Both cannot be equally true, since they are mutually exclusive.

The Issue of Compromise

Finally, we are faced with the uncomfortable fact that there is a growing trend to compromise Biblical truths to elicit favor from those who would adhere to “Lordship Salvation.” However, salvation is not a popularity contest. Paul stated “...do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ” (Galatians 1:10b). Tragically, those who believe in Lordship Salvation have taken a step that the Scriptures clearly declare to be the first, and most decisive, step towards general apostasy.

Lordship Salvation is not *another* expression of the Gospel; it is another gospel entirely. Each and every group that has ever followed this gospel has endured the curse of God. We must not, and we cannot follow this trend of compromise. Paul’s statement to the Philippian church must also be our stand on the purity of the Gospel.

Philippians 1:6-7: Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ: Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defence and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace.

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Pastor Ron Williams

The following is an interview with Pastor Ron Williams, who was gracious enough to share his experience in counseling young women through the ministries of Hephzibah House in Winona Lake, IN; and we are grateful for his participation. Thanks also to Mrs. Donna Dear for transcribing and organizing the interview for publication. - Editor

Editor: Let me begin by asking about some of your background and how you got into Hephzibah House ministry.

Williams: I was working for the U.S. Public Health Service, for the National Venereal Disease Control Program of the CDC in Atlanta. The CDC had a plan on to eradicate syphilis. As a naive farm boy from South Dakota, that was quite an eye-opening job. I was working with very promiscuous people, and I was being asked to be nonjudgmental in everything that we did in working with those folks. Then in 1970 when Patty and I got saved, that put a whole different perspective on my view of what I was doing. When I got saved, I was not filled with a lot of wisdom with regard to my testimony. I was like a bull in a china shop in some ways. I was collaring all the folks I worked with and almost got them by the throat saying you need to be born again, putting tracts in their mailbox and what not. They finally moved me to another building; and, as dense as I was, I thought, "My career is being marginalized." At that point, our pastor came calling. He believed that the Lord would have us start a work for troubled women from the inner city of Chicago. He had a friend who was winning people to the Lord down in the inner city, but they didn't have anyplace to put them after they made professions of faith. I considered that, since it was from my pastor, it was from the Lord; and I quit my job the next day. It was a very foolish thing in retrospect. I had three children, a mortgage, etc, and I had no promise of three cents. The Lord, in His mercy, kept our bills paid. We took in all of these ladies from the streets: heroin addicts, prostitutes, etc; and we created no small stir in our suburban neighborhood.

Editor: You were taking them into your home?

Williams: Yes. We had disappointments with them; because once they got their health back, they would go right out the door. We began to see that there were some limitations on what we were able to do. A lot of them had made false professions, just in order to get help with clothing, board and room. As soon as they got themselves cleaned up and got their health back, they would go right out the door. We decided that it would be the better part of wisdom to work with a group that would not have that freedom. We chose to go with the teenaged girls, who, because of their minority status, could not walk out the door. Then we had some folks approach us from Grace Seminary in Winona Lake, who had heard about our ministry. They said, "We have this house that has always been used in the Lord's work, and we would like to have you use it for your ministry." So, we went to look at it. I was a college graduate and had training with the public health service but was biblically illiterate, so I studied at Grace Seminary at the same time that I was conducting the ministry of Hephzibah House at Winona Lake.

Editor: When did you start with that house?

Williams: 1971. In a few months, it will be 40 years. So I went to seminary and squeezed a three-year program into about seven years, because I could only go part-time while we were taking care of the work. We still were taking some mature women; and, with some of the heroin addicts, we would be up all hours of the night getting them off of their drugs. It was a nightmare.

Editor: How many women would you have there at a time, on average.

Williams: I am not sure. We had a capacity of 24, and we often were full. I'm not sure what the average would have been, but we had our hands full. I was reading, writing papers, studying, trying to be a husband and father and being up all hours. The first seven years we lived with the girls as our family. In retrospect, that was a big mistake; because I believe that was hard on my family.

Editor: When you started with this, it was just you and your wife or did you have other people who helped?

Williams: We had a couple of staff ladies who served with us. They actually stayed with the girls and worked with them on an hour-by-hour basis also.

Editor: Where did they come from?

Williams: They came from a street ministry in Chicago of which we were a part at the time. Then we both mutually decided that we would become independent of each other. When I studied at Grace, I was charismatic. I was a Pedobaptist. I was amillennial, because the church in which we were saved had a pastor that had come out of the Reformed Church of America. He was a five-point Calvinist, and that's all we knew. First of all, we left the church in which I was saved, I was a deacon, the treasurer, the youth worker, etc. Then we were "called on the carpet" for trying to lead our young people to Christ. We were told that when they reached a certain age that because they were children of the covenant, they would make a profession of faith and to just back off. That was very confusing to us. I knew I had been born again, and I knew they needed to be born again. I called Pastor Brown, who had a radio broadcast in the Chicago area and asked him about that. My wife suggested that I do that, because he seemed to answer Bible questions with great wisdom. He said, "Well, sure those kids need to be saved." He was an unusual Calvinist himself, but he agreed that they needed to be saved. As I began to study at Grace, I started to realize the doctrinal error in which we were involved. We wrote to our Pastor and said, "I can no longer, in good faith, be a charismatic; because I do not think it is right. I think it is erroneous based on what I am finding out in my studies." We almost went under. At that time, they were giving us about \$1800-\$2000 per month. Of course, back in those days, that was a fortune.

It was such a blow when that stopped, but then the Lord started introducing us to some fundamental brethren beginning in Ohio and around Indiana. Pretty soon, bit by bit, we started getting some support, and the work stayed open. That is the background of the early part of our ministry.

Then, here were are in this ministry with no local church—sort of the tail wagging the dog. So, I began Believer's Baptist Church; because, although there were a lot of churches in our area, most of them were neo-evangelical. We were separatist from the time we got saved, because we believed in personal separation. I did not know much about ecclesiastical separation at that point; but I learned that as time went on. We saw some of the churches we would not be comfortable in because of how people dressed, the things they did, the music, and so forth. Consequently, we started our own church and went on from there.

Editor: Are you still affiliated with the church that you started?

Williams: Well, yes, our son, Donald, is the pastor there now.

Editor: What is your official title then right now?

Williams: I am Pastor Emeritus of Believer's Baptist Church, and I am Director of Hephzibah House.

Editor: How has your clientele changed in more recent years?

Williams: For most of our history, we have been taking in teen girls. In the early years, we had some adult women mixed with the teen girls, but that was quite a situation for maybe three or four years.

Editor: Are they referred by churches, or do they come from other backgrounds?

Williams: We get these girls either from a family calling us directly or from the pastor of a family who calls us. These are youngsters who have a custodial parent in church. But, even though this child is a child of the Light, they rejected that Light they received and chose to go in the wrong direction in some way, whether it be running away, having a boyfriend on the side that the parents do not approve of or they are actually involved in fornication, maybe abusing some drugs, getting into the occult or any number of the social pathologies that we encounter today in our culture that are represented in our girls. Rather than see the child end up in "the system," which is so often hostile to our faith, the pastor of the family calls us to see if we can help.

We built our new facility about eight years after we were in Winona Lake. The Lord gave us some land, and then we started building on a cash basis. It took us 11 years to complete our facility, because we built on a cash basis. The advantage was that when it was done, it was paid for. So that allowed us to take up to 30 girls. We had room then to take a several more, and we did have that many for a long time. That frankly was too many. Especially today, there has been a palpable change in the students that we have observed over the years. It is not

that they were not sinners back in the 70's, but it just seems like the child of today has a harder heart, if I may put it that way. They are not that easy to work with. They are more determined to do wrong than they were back in the 70's. It seemed we could reach them more easily. Back in those days, it would not be unusual at all for that child to be with us for a few weeks or a few months, and they would make a profession of faith and their lives would start to change. In the last decade, however, it is not unusual at all for a child to go through our ministry and never make a profession of faith. They are just not interested. Sometimes the only thing we are doing is keeping them away from their sin, hoping we are planting some more seeds of truth in their heart.

Editor: Do you see any definite cause and effect for the changes you see in recent years?

Williams: The nuclear family really is being slowly destroyed. There are so many things happening. I can't put my finger on everything but it is more and more frequent for both parents to be working in order to support the family. That results in a degradation of the family cohesiveness and identity. Modern children are left alone a great deal of the time; and, in many of these cases, these kids are raising themselves or there is a harmful dependence on their peers during that crucial period of their life. Also, some parents have accepted the idea of: "We do not want to restrict our child's creativity or some other modern idea." Some of these homes end up being a child-run home, and the parent ends up being a buddy or a friend to their child rather than being a parent. It is a violation of Ephesians 6, those first three verses, where that child is not taught to obey and honor his parents. The obvious relationship there is that if a child is taught to obey and honor his parents then he is much more likely to obey and honor the Lord. I ask kids, "If you won't treat your parents right, whom you can see and hear, what makes you think you're going to obey and honor a God you cannot see who speaks to you from the pages of a book?" They are not very likely to do it.

Another factor would be the advent of social networking. A lot of things that are giving these children independence and freedom for which they are not very well prepared, their cell phones, texting, computers, Facebook and Twitter accounts, e-mail, etc. It is a very dangerous thing. Also, some of them are in private bedrooms, which I think is a big mistake. Obviously, you can't just throw away all of these electronic things; but if you're going to have it, you ought to have it in a public place where you can see what your child is on, as well as having a program telling you what they're viewing to make sure that they are not viewing wrong things. I just saw an article the other day that said the average child first encounters pornography on the Internet at age 11, which is very serious. Some of this becomes so bad that these kids are staying up late and some get up out of bed in the middle of the night to check their Facebook and Twitter accounts and their e-mail. It really becomes addictive behavior. One of the markers of addiction is that this behavior, whatever it is, becomes the substitute for what most people would call a normal life. Of course, these youngsters don't practice security and are prey to stalkers on the Internet, etc., giving information that people who

want to do so could figure out. A lot of these things give a child independence, freedom and liberty for which they are not very well prepared because of their age. In some cases I think there is a sensory overload because there is constantly something in their ear; they are tweeting or they are texting like it is an obsession. As a consequence, they have very little interest in spiritual things because this is what really has captured their imagination and focus.

Editor: We're talking about young people out of good homes and good churches, presumably. We're not talking about the street people.

Williams: Absolutely. These are youngsters that are being raised in church and Sunday School. They go to VBS and memorize scripture, although that's not as common now as it used to be. They are exposed to the Light is my point.

Editor: Would this also be true, presumably, of young people who also have the opportunity of Christian school?

Williams: Absolutely.

Editor: As you go about preaching at churches and retreats, what do you say to parents about these kinds of things? What is your main message to them?

Williams: I tell them that their child is ill prepared to have such liberty and freedom with some of these things that open up a whole world to them to which they should not be exposed so prematurely. Also, they should have controls over their computers. I tell parents, "Your child ought not to have a cell phone or, if they have one, have it just capable of dialing 911 or something like that." If your child is going to have a computer, make sure you have it programmed so that you can regularly check what they are doing. Inspect rather than trust.

Editor: What kind of response do you get from Christian parents? Do you get some people who are antagonistic to what you recommend, or do you get more positive acceptance?

Williams: Well, brother, it is like just about any other subject you cover from the pulpit. Some are very interested, and some are not. Some are thinking, "That is for somebody else's child, not mine. My child would never do such a thing."

Editor: We've been able to prove differently with that, even in our own congregation. My wife looks at young people's Facebook pages, and we've had to bring some of those to the parents' attentions.

Williams: Yes, if the average pastor would go on Facebook and see what their church kids are writing, they would probably faint.

Editor: I think that's been the most telling of all, although I don't know if we can really say that definitively because we don't know what they exchange via cell phone. It's not as public as Facebook is or other social media that's out there.

Williams: Pastor Dave on our staff has just put together a DVD on this whole issue of social networking. It's in the process of being duplicated, and he will have it offered for sale here before long.

Editor: Are there other materials that you make available that would be like that?

Williams: We have a tract on this issue, "The Dangers of Social Networking."

Editor: What kind of response do you get from young people? Do you get any kind of direct feedback?

Williams: I think most young people are pretty upset that they would have their privileges modified in some way.

Editor: Do you get any kind of response where young people will fess up and agree that they knew they were going in the wrong direction with those things?

Williams: I think it depends on the degree of their involvement in these things. If they are already entwined, inextricably almost, then they are going to be very loathe to give it up. If someone is not so deeply involved as yet, they probably would be more likely to listen. As I said, though, it almost becomes an obsession, an addiction.

Editor: Are young people able to recognize this or are you able to point out to them the fact that they may very well be addicted or obsessed by the whole thing to the point where they are willing to own up to it.

Williams: No, I don't think most would acknowledge that.

Editor: As you travel about, what changes do you see in the churches as well as the homes? What would you like to see pastors, S.S. teachers, youth directors, leaders do, either preemptively or responsively to the issues you have identified?

Williams: I think with all of these external factors vying for that child's attention, it would really be helpful if the nuclear family would really circle the wagons and go back to basics. For example, a child involved in a Christian school is really going to be tempted to get involved in this peer-dependence thing where they have a lot of social contacts and a lot of friends. One of the big reasons a child comes to us is because of wrong friends, including from Christian schools. There are certain young people that just aren't good for each other, and I try to point out to congregations and families, etc., that the Lord Jesus only had three friends when He died. So, if at the end of your lifetime you only have three friends, you have done as well as the Lord Jesus did. He had Peter, James and John as His intimate friends. In other words, if this kid is buying in to this philosophy that I need to be popular, I need to have all of these contacts, then that again takes him out from under the tutelage of his parents and his pastor. The family should be the primary focus for that child and not his peers. No matter how young a child is if he would rather be with his buddies than his family, he is already heading in the wrong direction. It is very important to challenge Mom and Dad to get the heart of their child. But, I dare say, for many children in our circles, their heart is captured either by the world, by their buddies or by these social networking things we just talked about.

Editor: I guess that goes for having unsaved friends as well.

Williams: Yes, that would be even more dangerous. Well, maybe I should not say that. You can have kids who have made a profession of faith who are professors, but they are not disciples, if you understand what I am saying. A lot of homes are not having a family altar any more, and that is one of the basics I would encourage families to get back to, that Daddy is leading a family altar where he has that one-on-one time with his children and his wife and to make sure that Mom does it

when Daddy is gone. In other words, we need to make the Lord and the Scripture a priority in our family. Unfortunately, a lot of adults today have a religion of convenience. In other words, "I will be there in church if it is convenient for me, Pastor." "I will be involved if it is convenient; but if it is not, then do not count on me." That faulty set of priorities is going to pass on to the child.

Editor: How commonplace do you think that is today?

Williams: I think it is very commonplace. There are a lot of adults today who have more of a perfunctory attitude to their responsibilities to the Lord and His kingdom. "I'll come, sit and listen to the preacher, but I don't want to get involved too much because it might impinge on what's really important to me."

Editor: Sounds familiar, unfortunately.

Williams: This goes back to what I said previously about the permissive home. A lot of our youngsters, including in youth groups, are mainly given a diet of entertainment rather than being taught to serve. If we are going to have a youth group, or something similar, I think we ought to focus on teaching that child to serve. You are here to serve and not just to enjoy yourself and be entertained. One pastor I talked to day just took his youth group to an out-of-state conference that really was unusual. They were talking about discipleship, being alone with God and getting serious in your relationship with Him; and they had a mini-revival with their young people at this conference. When their kids got back, they were talking with the other kids who did not go. It was not about what a neat deal you missed, this entertainment or that entertainment, but instead was more "Boy, the Lord really moved in our midst." The pastor was just struck by what the kids said to the other kids.

Editor: Would you agree that there are trends in youth ministries to be more entertaining? How should we be competing with the world's influence on our young people?

Williams: We do have to compete. There are all of these peripheral, very seductive things out there in the world. With all of these electronic devices now, one can do this on his own in the privacy of his bedroom. One can live his own life; he can have freedom and liberty to do what he wants. This is interesting and fascinating to him, and do not bother him with spiritual issues or responsibilities.

Editor: In the effort to compete with the world, have we become imitators of the world by offering a "Christianized" variation of what the world is offering?

Williams: Well, yes, that is the whole thrust behind the seeker-friendly groups, absolutely. The seeker-friendly churches have done that very thing. You see some fundamental churches adopting some of these same things, but the seeker-friendly churches are very blatant about it.

Editor: Some of the recent trends seem to cultivate two different groups in one church. There is the church for the adults where they hear Bible preaching and sing the hymns. Then the young people have their own music and their own instruction, but I don't know if what they hear could be called Bible preaching.

Williams: Yes, you are not likely to hear a convicting message. Those messages are either outright

entertainment or "feel good," warm, fuzzy-type pablum; but you are not likely to be convicted of your sin.

Editor: Do you see things like other supplemental ministries as a benefit, camp ministries or such?

Williams: Camps, I think, would be a really good idea in this environment; because one of the things that helps us with our girls is getting them away from all of these temptations (their cell phones, computer, peers, wicked activities) and getting them on a schedule. Some kids do not even have a schedule. When we get them away from all of these deleterious influences, we have a better opportunity of reaching their heart. When you have these siren songs of peer dependence, the wrong music, the wrong entertainment, the electronic devices, it's a pretty sad situation. The kid is not as likely to listen to you as they would be in camp. So, camp, I think is a really good thing.

Editor: But there is always the challenge of continuing those new behaviors when they get back home.

Williams: Yes, a kid can go to camp and make a good decision about something in his life and then go right back to the old activities if he is allowed to do so.

Editor: What would you be your advice to people who set curriculum in Bible colleges and seminaries, especially in the electronic age? Should preparation for ministry be adjusted to our times or is the need still to focus on just good biblical instruction and good biblical preaching and teaching?

Williams: I would certainly come back to that, because so many of the things that we have been discussing here relate to heart issues. If a person has his heart right with God and if a child has been taught self-control and self-discipline, he is going to do spiritual inventory in his own life. We put rules on kids not just to be mean and capricious but so that one day they will put rules on themselves. If we teach them self-control and self-discipline through preaching, teaching and discipleship, that individual will be much more likely to fight the good fight of faith. So we still have to be hard hitting in our preaching and teaching. We cannot go out of this world as Paul said. We are now surrounded with more temptations probably than we ever have been in human history. Maybe that is too broad a statement. We certainly seem to be just inundated. But if a person's heart is right, they are going to practice self-control and self-discipline, doing their own spiritual inventory.

There is one other issue that pulls a lot of our girls away. Here you have this child who is growing, not only physically but spiritually, seemingly doing very well and then along comes Prince Charming. It is with good reason that Paul says to flee youthful lusts. As I recall, I think that word means to run for your life, especially girls; because they can be more easily deceived. Once their feelings and emotions are involved, you might as well talk to the wall. I've seen this many times over the last four decades of my ministry. Once a youngster gets her feelings and emotions involved, she will take all that truth that she has learned all those plastic, formative years and put it on the shelf. That is how obsessive, controlling and powerful those feelings are. That is why I encourage courtship rather than dating. I encourage parents, "Do not allow your children to date."

Editor: Can you just briefly reflect on some success stories from Hephzibah House?

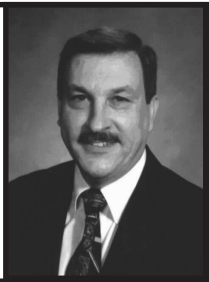
Williams: Sure, we have a number of girls who are now pastor's wives and missionary wives. I can remember one young lady who had a child out of wedlock, but now she is serving the Lord in a full-time capacity. I can remember one other girl, who when I was counseling with her was just weeping inconsolably and I said, "What on earth is the matter?" She said, "You would not believe me." I said, "Yes, I would." It just came spilling out that her father had used her sexually for a number of years. Well, the world would say that a trusted authority figure

like that doing such trauma to this child, she will probably be a vegetable and on meds the rest of her life. As we speak, she is a pastor's wife with several beautiful children. We have had children involved in gangs and drug abuse; but the real key, of course, is genuine salvation. You cannot improve upon regeneration of the Holy Spirit, because that sets a person on the course of his pilgrimage.

Editor's Note: Since the interview, Brother Williams' wife, Patti, passed away suddenly on January 29, 2011. Please keep Brother Williams and the family in your prayers.

Circumstantial Evidence: How Much is Enough?

By Dr. Charles Dear, Editor



There are those who would quickly dismiss circumstantial evidence as worthless and of no consequence, but there are others in the world of jurisprudence who have made the case for the power of accumulated circumstantial evidence. The reasoning goes something like this:

The weight of one piece of circumstantial evidence would never be enough to convict anyone; but circumstantial evidence is much like one slender thread that, while insufficient of itself, when woven together with other pieces of circumstantial evidence can form a rope strong enough to hang a man.

Before the turn of this century, churches, schools and other religious institutions had already found themselves at the end of such a rope, because they did not recognize the threads of compromise so subtly collecting around their necks over a length of time. Much like the struggle against Neo-Evangelicalism over 60 years ago, it has been difficult to recognize all the errors introduced; because, separately, they seemed to have no significant impact on Fundamentalism at the time. With the advantage of hindsight, however, we realize the truth of how it is "the little foxes that spoil the vine." We would do well to learn from such history, lest we repeat its mistakes.

To that end, therefore, provided below is a checklist of sorts listing some of the issues and changes that have been introduced over the last 30 years around us. It is by no means inclusive, and you may wish to contribute other marks of change which you have witnessed; but it is a place to begin measuring a pattern that collectively spells serious changes afoot in too many

ministries. Again, like circumstantial evidence, no single mark may define compromise by itself; but the combined impact of multiple individual weaknesses and seeming innocuous changes can be like so many individual dots that altogether form a picture more easily recognized for the dangers they represent. Check the list for yourself:

Changes in the Local Church

A. Worship

1. Changes in Preaching:

- Preaching time in a service has been reduced in comparison to other elements
- Preaching has been reduced in substance and character:
 - There is less Scriptural exposition:
 - A poor or foreign (i.e. Reformed) hermeneutic is employed
 - Subject matter has become more psychological counseling than Scriptural exposition
 - Subject matter has become more formulary: 10 steps to... 5 steps to...
 - Subject matter more frequently focuses on Social/Political issues
 - Significant increased use/quotation of other resources than the Bible in the pulpit, such as books written by authors known to be outside our Fellowship's position, which are offered positively and/or endorsed from the pulpit

2. Changes in Teaching in other local Church ministries: Such as Sunday School, children's clubs, teen ministries

- Reduced time spent in actual teaching of Bible lessons
- Obvious changes in published material used, marked by weaker or absent instruction regarding: Salvation, Baptism, the Lord's Table, living in obedience to God's Word and personal separation
- Setting aside or revision of a Church Covenant: particularly use of alcohol

3. Changes in Music:

- Either a blend of Traditional and Contemporary, or wholesale change to Contemporary music
- A separate, Church-endorsed, music program for Teens and children's ministries where they do not learn any traditional hymns of the Church
- Lack of sound doctrine in lyrics; Songs that could be sung almost anywhere
- Musical presentations that mimic styles commonly found in worldly entertainment settings and more glorifying of men than the Lord

4. Changes in Services:

- Steps towards catering to the convenience of people, such as Saturday evening services
- Changes in normal attire commended for worship, to a more casual appearance in both dress and grooming, both in the pulpit and among the congregation
- Increased concern for what people want or are "seeking" in worship and a willingness to make changes to appease people

5. Alternate Bible versions:

- Gravitation away from verbal translations towards greater dynamic equivalency

B. Changes in Church Polity and Leadership:

- Adoption, or de facto practice, of "laity" Elder Rule by whatever terms used
- Failure of a Church to uphold congregational polity and participation
- Adoption of a "Member Covenant" of loyalty to a Church Oligarchy of leaders

C. Change in Mission Objectives:

- Less evangelistic fervor and more social ministries and activities
- Counseling defined and practiced as a separate ministry from preaching/teaching

D. Changes in Testimony:

- The removal of the term "Baptist" from the Church name
- Tacit acceptance of social drinking, dancing, movies (at home or in theater)
- Encouragement to Church members to "fit in" better with unbelievers in order to be a witness to them
- Recommendation of ministry resources from outside our Fellowship's position, for needs

perceived to be outside the work or expertise of the local Church

- Participation in community activities that have an ecumenical character

E. Other Changes across a broader range of issues that are also potential warning signs:

- Clear evidence of abandonment of doctrinal statements, positional papers, even though they are still published as current and active; as revealed in actual practice, preaching, teaching and even openly contradicted by other more recent official communications
- The credentials and degrees earned or being sought by pastors, missionaries, school faculty, agency executives, etcetera, from schools, institutions and organizations that are clearly outside the camps of Fundamentalism and/or Baptist doctrine
- Awards, commendations bestowed, venues shared by pastors, missionaries, evangelists, school faculty, agency executives, etcetera, from institutions and organizations that are clearly outside the camps of Fundamentalism and/or Baptist doctrine
- Missionary ministries that have become more materially and socially oriented than evangelistic, as reflected in their budget allocations and activities
- The use of acronyms in place of the full or historic name of organizations, used to obscure their Fundamentalist past and/or mask what they have now become

Obviously, there could be more checkpoints but the real question is how many of those listed above did you recognize? Are they just a few threads, or have you found the makings of a rope? Inquiring minds of Baptists should want to know how their money is being spent and how their names are being used to endorse ministries and institutions. To be careless about such things would be poor stewardship on our part, not to mention the lack of a clear testimony of what we believe from the Word of God. While accountability is ultimately unto God, among Baptists, leadership, in whatever venue, is also accountable to the people of the Churches. Willfully blind faith in leaders will always tempt some to abuse the authority lent to them and to seek more power to be gathered into their own hands. Neither belongs in anything called Baptist. The remedy rests with the members of the Church and supporters of institutions, so that an open and honest declaration is made of everything being done in their name.

Perhaps this checklist can be of use as a beginning point for a conversation between pastors and people, school executives and parents of students and their pastors, about the direction and future of our churches and institutions.

Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America
6889 Belleville Rd.
Belleville, MI 48111

Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America
21st Annual Conference Lancaster, PA
June 21-23, 2011
“Holding Fast the Faithful Word” (Titus 1:9)

One of the unique attractions in Lancaster, PA is *Sight and Sound*. Arrangements are being made so that during the free-time on Wednesday afternoon, June 22, you will have an opportunity to see *Sight and Sound's* original production, *Joseph*. It is a favorite among the patrons of *Sight and Sound* and will lift your spirits with its message. A coach bus will take everyone from Host Resort to the Millennium Theatre. Group rates are available as follows:

Children, 3 – 12: \$16.00 ♦ Teens, 13 – 18: \$28.00 ♦ Adults: \$46.55

If you plan to attend, you must reserve all tickets by June 1, 2011. Please send your check for full payment to the IBFNA home office in Belleville, MI. We will hold the tickets for you until you arrive. Please note that there will be no refunds after June 1, 2011. If you do not send your reservations in by June 1, tickets may be available at the door but may be less desirable seats.