



# IBFNA

May 2014  
Volume 22, Number 4

# THE REVIEW

## Attack of the Silver Screen

by Pastor Charles Dear, Moderator *IBFNA*

One of the truly basic realities for believers in these last days is that Hollywood and the entertainment industry are not friends of biblical Christianity. In fact, they never have been, but I fear that this understanding has been lost on evangelicals and even fundamentalists of this present generation.

Many years ago, under the direction of Cecil B. DeMille, who translated Bible stories into film, some pretense of godliness prevailed. But these translations always included a Romanist perspective and presented the ultimate objective of Christianity to be the brotherhood of man. Today, Hollywood and the music entertainment industry have succeeded in making millions of dollars by venturing into the religious realm. Recording artists experiencing a slump in their sales can always rebound by cutting a religious recording. Hopes of seeing Bible stories come to life on the silver screen draw many into theaters from across the evangelical spectrum.

We have come a long way, however, from the kinder, gentler deviations from biblical truth in these venues to a more hateful and determined deconstruction of biblical principles and scriptural facts. Of the many such movies recently released by Hollywood, the one titled *Noah* demonstrates both the perversity of Hollywood and the gullibility of professing Christians.

In regard to perversity, the film contains just enough props and images to suggest (to those unenlightened by the Scriptures) that its presentation is somehow related to the biblical account recorded in Genesis. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Noah of the Bible was a preacher of righteousness, warning people of impending judgment from God for 120 years, without one convert outside of his immediate family. Unlike Nineveh in Jonah's day, everyone outside of the ark of safety perished. The movie *Noah* is a clever ruse foisted on the public by an atheistic producer for whom God is nothing but an enemy to be destroyed in favor of the worship of Mother Earth. The sadder part of the story, however, is that professing Christians are taken in by the ruse, spending good money to voluntarily subject themselves to anti-Christian rhetoric and propaganda.

The movie *Noah* is projected to earn tens of millions of dollars, some of which will come from professing Christians who should know better. An even greater irony in this movie is that while one of its major themes is the promotion of environmentalism (which has nothing to do with the Bible story), the true biblical account includes a profound promise from God after the flood, which is directly antithetical to environmentalism: "While the earth remaineth, seedtime and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night shall not cease" (Gen. 8:22). The science behind the sustained seasons of the year presented in this verse, like the water cycle and the tilt and rotation of the earth, demands the inescapable conclusion that there is nothing that man can do to change what God has promised to preserve. While we are to be good stewards of all He has entrusted to our care, we have a greater problem that calls for our attention. Mankind is still broken because of sin.

Although most of us are familiar with the name A. W. Tozer, you may not be familiar with his article entitled, "The Menace of the Religious Movie." I strongly suggest that you find it online and print it out [see <http://www.biblebb.com/files/tozermovie.htm>]. In it he warns against being drawn into the use of acting, fictitious characters, and improvised storylines and scenarios to portray spiritual truth and give the gospel. Tozer emphasizes how the gospel is communicated in the Scriptures by the hearing of the Word of God. Tozer's article also addresses much of what has become accepted as necessity in contemporary worship.



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7 2014 CONFERENCE INFORMATION

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The religious movie embodies the mischievous notion that religion is, or can be made, a form of entertainment . . . The idea that religion should be entertaining has made some radical changes in the evangelical picture within this generation. It has given us not only the “gospel” movie, but a new type of religious journalism as well. It has created a new kind of magazine for church people, which can be read from cover to cover without effort, without thought—and without profit. It has brought a veritable flood of religious fiction with plastic heroines and bloodless heroes like no one who has ever lived upon this well-known terrestrial ball . . . That religion and amusement are forever opposed to each other by their very essential natures is apparently not known to this new school of religious entertainers. Their effort to slip up on the reader and administer a quick shot of saving truth while his mind is on something else is not only futile, it is, in fact, not too far short of being plain dishonest . . . I believe that most responsible religious teachers will agree that any effort to teach spiritual truth through entertainment is at best futile and at worst positively injurious to the soul.

Tozer was concerned about breeding more disciples like Thomas. After the Lord’s resurrection, Thomas missed appearances by the Lord and became weak in his faith to believe that Christ lived. His struggle begins with his difficulty with believing the testimony of the other disciples: “The other disciples therefore said unto him, ‘We have seen the Lord.’ But he said unto them, ‘Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe’” (John 20:25). Whereas the Apostle Paul tells us that faith comes by hearing the Word of God (Rom. 10:17), the acquired compulsion to see and feel has displaced the sufficiency of hearing the Word.

Over fifty years ago, I remember an aspiring minister who bought a closed movie theater in the Germantown section of Philadelphia. His ambition was to open a “Christian movie theater” that would show religious movies on a schedule that would not be in competition with the regular services of Bible-preaching churches in the vicinity. To garner their support, he asked to be ordained as the first known “cineminister,” whose work would be devoted to providing this silver screen ministry. Amazingly, Harry Bristow actually did receive ordination as a “cineminister.” The religious movies continued for years, but eventually Bristow went ecumenical with his endorsement of Romanism on his radio program, and the theater closed. I quote again from Tozer: “If the movie is needed to supplement anointed preaching, it can only be because God’s appointed method is inadequate and the movie can do something which God’s appointed method cannot do.”

Tozer echoes the words of the Apostle Paul: “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” (1 Cor. 1:21).

We need to condemn soundly and publicly Hollywood and the entertainment world from our pulpits. Rather than have our people fawn over their personalities and wretched personal lives, we must teach the folly of being “envious at the foolish” (Ps. 73:3). Otherwise, much of what Tozer has written so long ago will come to pass in our own time, before our own eyes.

The rising generation will naturally come to look upon religion as another, and inferior, form of amusement. In fact, the present generation has done this to an alarming extent already, and the gospel movie feeds this notion by fusing religion and fun in the name of orthodoxy. It takes no great insight to see that the religious movie must become increasingly more thrilling as the tastes of the spectators become more and more stimulated.

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## Why We Need the IBFNA

by Pastor Allen Harris

My introduction to fundamentalism was wide and varied. My father took me to a number of different state and national meetings to give me an overview of the fundamental Fellowships. Among these were the GARBC, the ACCC, the FBFI, Sword of the Lord, the Southwide Baptist Fellowship, and the New Testament Baptist Fellowship. I learned to appreciate each for some strengths, and I also discovered some weaknesses among them. While no Fellowship will be perfect, the ministry of the Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America is uniquely important for today’s fundamentalism and the lives

of its pastors, laymen, and churches. Note some of its qualities with me.

1. The IBFNA was formed and currently stands as a Fellowship of pastors and individuals who are separated unto God. By this I mean that we are wholly committed to separation unto the holy God of Scripture without loyalties to other institutions or individuals. We are not looking for the approval of a school or any other body that would limit our voice for the Lord. The IBFNA was forged in the fires of adversity. Friendships were lost because we believe that faithfulness to the God of heaven

is more important than earthly acceptance. The position of biblical separation may not be popular in modern evangelical circles, but it is required for faithfulness to God.

2. The IBFNA articulates, without compromise, a scriptural stand regarding the issues of the day. These issues may be theological, such as open theism and the new perspective on Paul, or they may be issues of compromise, such as areas of music, associations, church marketing philosophies, and modern entertainment methodologies, corrupt substitutes for proclaiming a holy God to an unholy world.

3. The IBFNA is a Fellowship of pastors and laymen, which places each on equal footing. This unusual commitment has some very liberating benefits to its members. There are no celebrity pastors whom others follow. Our modern religious community is full of preachers who follow some celebrity pastor or book author. They wait for them to speak on a subject before they take a position, while they eagerly read every book they publish. The lack of a celebrity status in this organization of “brothers” means that each member must think, study, and participate personally in the issues at hand. Consequently, every individual must study and take his stand based on the Scriptures.

4. The IBFNA encourages and informs its

members. The lack of climbing some religious ladder of acceptance leaves every member free to encourage other members in their work for the Lord. Younger men and those struggling with present difficulties find help. The messages at the annual conference encourage, inform, and call believers to faithfulness to the Lord. The *Review* not only articulates the issues of the day, but also warns of trends in modern Christianity.

The IBFNA holds a very unique position in the fundamentalist movement. Its independence and its primary purpose of separation to the Lord gives it an opportunity for a fresh and unhindered declaration of the Scriptures. This Fellowship affords the greatest opportunity to build strong friendships with other godly men and women of like mind, believers who have chosen an organization that is separated unto God first and then willing to stand for God among men. These men and women may not be the celebrities of modern Christianity, but they quietly love their Lord, love each other, and desire to stand faithfully while winning a lost world to Christ.

I believe that these qualities in the IBFNA mean that it has a very important place in modern fundamentalism. It is these qualities that drew me to the IBFNA, and they continue to keep me fellowshiping and standing together with its work for the cause of Christ.

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## Why I Attend a Conference

by Pastor Justin Kauffman

As a pastor, I have greatly benefited from attending conferences. I look forward every year to the three or four conferences that I am able to attend. Conferences can greatly benefit a pastor in his ministry. At a conference we can be challenged, encouraged, and informed. Who does not need these things? It can be dangerous for a pastor to serve all alone without the benefits of fellowship, which one can receive at a conference.

Today, there seems to be fewer and fewer fundamentalists attending conferences. Some do not see a benefit worthy of the cost to attend one. After all, we can simply sit down at our computer and spend some time reading the many blogs available on the internet. They do not cost any money, and you even do not have to leave your house. This seems to be the case with many of our younger men today.

I am not against blogs. I have one, but there can be some disadvantages to using them to substitute for conferences. Just a few that immediately come to my mind are the lack of face-to-face personal encounter, missing out on singing corporately and preaching, missing the opportunity to meet new people facing our same experiences, and forfeiting the encouragement of visibly observing a group of people wanting to stand together for

the cause of Christ.

The advantages and disadvantages of blogging would make for an interesting article, but I would rather spend our time in this article looking at what are three important benefits of attending a conference. I am sure you could make your own list of reasons, but I want to focus on three that I feel are very important: encouragement, dealing with doctrinal issues, and calling one another to action.

Let us first consider the benefit of encouragement. The ministry can be a lonely place at times. Few in our churches understand the pressures of the pastorate. Discouragement is threatening the pastor constantly. This is not to say that there are never joyous times, because there are, but there will also be plenty of hardships along the way. At times, caring for people can take as much energy, if not more, than physical labor. Burnout is found all too often among pastors.

So what can we do to prevent burnout and extreme discouragement? One help is to attend a good conference, where one can be among other pastors going through the same battles. God created us as relational beings. Coming together, we can encourage one another and remind each other of the goodness and magnificence of our God. This is what Paul did for Timothy in 1 Tim.

6:11f. After encouraging Timothy to “fight the good fight of faith” (v. 12) and to “keep the commandment without spot” (v. 14), Paul breaks out with a magnificent doxology in vv. 15-16. Why did he do that? I believe that Paul was motivating Timothy by pointing him to the greatness of our God. Timothy needed to be reminded of the greatness of God so that he could keep up the fight against false teachers at Ephesus.

One can hardly think of encouragement without thinking about Barnabas, “the son of consolation” (Acts 4:36). The word *consolation* is the Greek word *paraklesis* which includes both exhortation and encouragement. The word is a feminine noun that is related to the verb *parakaleo* meaning to *call to* or to *come along side*, often to *comfort*. Barnabas is a scriptural example of this quality (Acts 11:19-23; 14:19-22). The point is that all of us need encouragement, and we can find much of this at conferences as we personally fellowship together with others in the ministry.

Second, conferences allow us a place to deal with doctrinal issues. Attacks on the gospel and the Word of God are constant. Good conferences give us a platform to discuss these attacks and plan our defense. In Acts 20:13-38, Paul calls together all the elders from Ephesus to say farewell and to warn them. In v. 28 Paul challenges them to guard themselves along with the people they are pastoring. Then in vv. 29-31, he gives the reason: false teachers will appear from without and from within to disrupt and corrupt the faith.

Jude wanted to write about the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, and who would not, but instead he saw another pressing matter that needed addressing—attacks on the gospel. “Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jude 3-4). So as we observe in the Scriptures, attacks on the gospel started almost immediately at the founding of the church, and they continue to our present day.

Attacks on the gospel are numerous and varied. They must be continually addressed and countered. We see an example of this in Acts 15, a chapter known as the Jerusalem council or conference. Certain Judaizers came to Antioch from Judea who were teaching that it was necessary to be circumcised and to keep the Law of Moses to be saved. Obviously, this upset Paul and Barnabas. The Church at Antioch sent Paul and Barnabas to the Jerusalem church to discuss this matter.

This was a serious matter, for it was an attack on the purity of the gospel. The matter was discussed, disputed, and deliberated on by the apostles and elders (v. 6). A conclusion was finally reached in vv. 19-21. Like

the Jerusalem conference, it is beneficial for us to meet together to discuss doctrinal matters and solidify our positions. Yes, we could solidify our positions on our own through much study, but it is good to discuss these matters with other godly and gifted men. Each person will have different ideas, insights, and solutions that can benefit the whole.

Third, conferences allow us a place to be reenergized and to receive a renewed call to action. Even pastors can become tired and complacent. Good conferences with strong doctrinal preaching can reinvigorate us and remind us of the importance of our calling. By the God-given means of preaching and fellowship, we can become motivated and excited about the ministry to which we are called once again.

In Acts 20:28, Paul not only warned the Ephesian elders to guard themselves, but also he implored them to “feed the church of God.” Sometimes we need a little feeding from other godly men. 2 Tim. 4:1-5 also comes to mind, where Paul is giving shy Timothy a charge. Notice especially the five commands in v. 2: “preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.” Occasionally, Timothy needed prodding to “make full proof of thy ministry” (v. 5), to carry out his ministry unto the end, to never give up.

Conferences also allow us to observe the lives of many faithful men. We can observe men who have been fighting the battles and persevering through many difficulties throughout long ministries. Do you think Timothy and Titus were encouraged to endure by Paul’s life? I think so. In 2 Timothy 4, Paul seems to be motivating Timothy in vv. 6-8 by expressing his own readiness to depart this life because he was faithful to the Lord in the ministry given to him: “For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth, there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

Good conferences ought to reinvigorate us and excite us to go back to our pulpits, to proclaim God’s truths, and to serve our congregations with renewed purpose. We cannot give up the fight. Satan is always looking around to see whom he may devour.

For these three reasons, I believe conferences ought to be an important part of a pastor’s life. Again, you could come up with some other good reasons, but we all need to be encouraged, to consider continually doctrinal issues, and to experience a renewed call to action. Conferences have done that for me, and I am not sure where I would be today if I did not have some good conferences to help me and encourage me to keep serving for the Lord’s glory. If you have not seen the importance of conferences for yourself, would you give some prayerful consideration to what one may do for you?

# Why Christ-like Love is better than Corinthian-like Knowledge

by Pastor Kevin Hobi

On January 3 ABC News carried a story about a man who raised \$850,000 from investors to establish his own security company. Part of the pitch he made to investors and incoming employees about the viability of his company was the claim that he was a former highly-decorated Navy Seal. Evidently, there is a service of some kind that verifies service records, and this man was exposed as an impostor. He never had been a Navy Seal. The news report said that on average twenty Navy Seal impostors are exposed every day.

In 1 Cor. 8:1-13, Paul is exposing an impostor that I am going to call Corinthian-like knowledge in this article. What exposes it as a phony form of Christian truth is its inability to coexist with true Christ-like love. It is a knowledge that knows better than to love. Paul tells these believers that they must choose between Christ-like love and their Corinthian form of knowledge. It is a Bible fact that, for the Christian, love and truth peacefully coexist in the godly life lived by the power of God's Spirit and for the glory of God's Son. Many Bible verses tell us this is so (Eph. 4:15, 2 Thess. 2:10, 1 Pet. 1:22, 1 John 3:18, 2 John 1:1, 1:3, 3 John 1:1).

Paul is not objecting to the existence of too much truth in the lives of these Corinthian believers. He is objecting to a phony substitute for truth that had no place for love the way biblical truth always does. He wants them to understand why Christ-like love is better than Corinthian-like knowledge, and he gives three reasons this is so.

## **One is humble, and one is proud; Corinthian-like knowledge puffs up**

One of the things we are told about Christian love in the great love passage of chapter 13 is that Christian love is not *puffed up* (v. 4). Paul tells us that the opposite is true of Corinthian-like knowledge (8:1). Pride was a serious problem in this church (4:6, 18, 19, 5:2). Many of the issues that occupy our minds and raise the questions that concern our behavior and convictions are poorly understood as questions about knowledge and facts. Paul indicates that they are really questions about virtue and character. Here the specific question is, "Can a Christian eat meat sacrificed to idols?" That was a very important question in this day.

There were a number of pagan temples in Corinth. One was called the Sarapeum, which was dedicated to the worship of the Greek god Sarapis. Sarapis was invented by the Greek general Ptolemy who ruled Egypt after the conquests of Alexander the Great. The god looked like a Greek but dressed like an Egyptian, and so the point was to foster more unity between the Egyptians and their Greek overlords. Archeology has recovered an invitation to the Sarapeum in Corinth that reads this way,

"Cheremon requests your company at the table of the lord Sarapis at the Sarapeum tomorrow, the 15th at 9 o'clock." The purpose of the invitation was that Cheremon's daughter was going to be celebrating her birthday. The Sarapeum was kind of like a Chuck E Cheese of the ancient world. If you wanted to celebrate your friend's birthday, this was how it was to be done. The meat sacrificed at such an occasion would be divided into three parts—the part burnt up for the god, the part that was eaten in the sacrificial-meal celebration, and the leftovers that went home or to the market for sale. There were a lot of these celebrations and a lot of this kind of meat in the town of Corinth.

So how were Christians to live in such a place? Paul sums up the answer to that question in 10:14, "Therefore, my beloved, flee idolatry." In issuing this command, Paul is especially concerned about demonic influences in this regard (10:18-20). He will go on to say that Christians should not eat meat that they know has been sacrificed to an idol (v. 28; Acts 15:20, 29; Rev. 2:14, 20). The point is never that there is anything wrong with the meat, or that Sarapis is in any sense real, but that we must be known as a people who have nothing to do with demons, people who flee idolatry. That can be a difficult thing to do when you are invited to a birthday party in this kind of culture, right? Well, when a believer is invited, the question is not, "How can I prove that I am allowed to do this so that I do not look ridiculous to my friends?" Rather, the question is, "How can I act in such a way that the body of Christ is edified?" One approach is puffed up; the other is humble.

## **One is infallible, and one is fallible; Corinthian-like knowledge is mistaken**

A teachable disposition is a necessary component of learning and knowing correctly. This point is where Paul begins with correcting the Corinthian-like knowledge of these believers. He warns them that if they have come to the conclusion that they have fully known (perfect tense; v. 2), then they really do not know much at all. We should all know that we have to be teachable. And we should all be committed to the truth that it is not what we know that is important anyway, but what God knows. God knows those who love Him (v. 3; Ps. 1:6, Nah. 1:7, Jer. 1:5, 2 Tim. 2:19).

This is, of course, the knowing of God's gracious and eternal election. We are His chosen ones in Christ. Corinthian-like knowledge knew about monotheism, and it knew that entities like Sarapis did not really exist, but it had forgotten about the incomprehensible and graciously saving love of God for us in Christ. It knew about monotheism against polytheism, but it failed to bow in awe at the true mystery of our incomprehensible

Trinitarian God (vv. 5-6). His monotheism is beyond our comprehension, His work as Creator is beyond our comprehension, and His saving purposes in and through Christ are beyond our comprehension. Love knows the love of God that passes understanding (Eph. 3:19). Corinthian-like knowledge is superficial, unawed, and consequently terribly incomplete and mistaken.

### **One is for others, and one is for self; Corinthian-like knowledge destroys**

One can often demonstrate the absurdity of a position by following its logic to some extreme ends. I have heard this done against the position that calls for raising the minimum wage. Some have argued, “Well—if \$8/hr is better than \$5/hr, isn’t \$10/hr better than \$8/hr?” There is kind of a slippery slope here, and one wonders, “Where does it stop?” given the reasoning process. What in the logic says that the minimum wage should not be \$100/hr or even more?

Paul seems to do that here. Some with Corinthian-like knowledge have argued that because idols are nothing, because there is only one God, and because food does not make us worse or better before God, it should be ok to buy meat that we know was sacrificed to idols in the marketplace. Paul responds with a hypothetical following that reasoning process—“Well how about just going into the temple under those assumptions and lying down for the sacrificial supper?” (v. 10). If it is ok to do one given your knowledge, how can it not be ok to do the other?

Paul answers his own question—the problem is what that behavior is going to do to brothers around us who have weak consciences. A good conscience believes that it is doing right. A defiled conscience believes that it is doing wrong. A weak conscience is a good conscience that is not strong enough to keep from becoming defiled under a certain set of circumstances. We do not participate in the temple meals because we are a brotherhood for whom Christ died that flees idolatry. We do not eat sacrificial meat from the market or in the home if we know it to be that for the same reason. The Corinthian-like knowledge has gotten hold of a set of truths and has turned it into a personal right that they are going to exercise for themselves no matter who gets hurt and no matter who has to suffer (v. 9). Paul gives us three reasons not to do this.

(1) We must never ruin someone for whom Christ died (v. 11). The ruin spoken of here is the defilement of the conscience in v. 12. Christ did not ruin him; He died for him. How can we possibly risk ruining him? (2) To sin against a brother this way is to sin against Christ (v. 12). As a local church, we are the body of Christ. He takes very personally the harm we do to one another. (3) Brothers are more important than meat (v. 13). We all would say that, but would we all be willing to do what Paul was willing to do about it—give up the meat? Are we willing to draw thick bold lines between right and wrong if that is what it takes to protect the body from idolatrous

and demonic influences?

### **Comparable cultural issues**

Gordon Fee, in his commentary on 1 Corinthians, concludes his remarks on this passage with the following observation: “Western Christianity for over a millennium has had nothing in its culture comparable to this issue” (NICNT, p. 391). While I have appreciated the many insights of this important work, this observation was not insightful. Let me offer three comparable applications to challenges we face in our own pagan culture.

(1) Halloween. Can you see any demons behind the celebration of Halloween in our culture? Corinthian-like knowledge and Christ-like love answer that question in two different ways. Corinthian-like knowledge concludes, “For us, there is no such thing as ghosts and witches, and it is all make-believe and harmless. Halloween is all about candy and fun.” Christ-like love warns, “We live in a culture given over to a fascination with the demonic and the occult, and we need to do our best to make sure that people, especially our brothers and sisters in the Lord, see that we have nothing to do with the demonic and occult practices in our culture. We flee Halloween celebrations as a part of fleeing idolatry.”

(2) Rock Music. Can you see any demons behind the power of rock music and other forms of worldly music in our culture? Corinthian-like knowledge – “Musical scores are morally neutral. There is no genre or musical form that is in and of itself immoral and wrong. I have a right to listen to what I want to listen to.” Christ-like love – “We live in a culture that has been given over to a musical form that has advanced in a mysterious way, perhaps not yet entirely well-understood, rebellion, sexual promiscuity, and drug abuse. These musical forms originated in African paganism where demonic worship played a role. We flee forms of worldly music as a part of fleeing idolatry.”

(3) Recreational use of alcohol, marijuana, and other drugs. Can you see the relationship between demonic activity and narcotics in our culture? Corinthian-like knowledge – “God gave us all natural things to enjoy. Drunkenness is wrong, but I know when to stop. There is even wine-drinking in the Bible.” Christ-like love – “The recreational substances of our day are addictive and dangerous to our homes, our church family, and our testimony for Christ. We flee alcohol and drugs as a part of fleeing idolatry.”

### **Finding Corinthian-like knowledge in the mirror**

Like pride, the knowledge that puffs up is easy to spot in others but difficult to find in ourselves. In my experience, four questions have been particularly helpful in spotting Corinthian-like knowledge in the mirror.

(1) Do I disagree on an issue with people older than I who have walked with the Lord longer than I, viewing them as my weaker brother? If so, some Corinthian-like knowledge may be involved. (2) Do I find myself unteachable on a topic, unwilling to investigate

it thoroughly and to dig prayerfully through the Scriptures to find God's mind on the matter? If so, I need to figure out why. The problem may be knowledge that puffs up. (3) Is the cause I am advancing protecting my personal rights while damaging the body of believers? When it is, I need Paul's willingness to never eat meat again. (4) Am I strangely unique in my assertion that demons really have little or nothing to do with what I am defending? For me, what I had said about Halloween for a long time simply

no longer made any sense in the context of wiser counsel and a deteriorating cultural context.

Paul wrote these things to the Corinthians, of course, because he desired that they were furthered in Christ-likeness. He wanted only their best in the Lord in a pagan culture determined to destroy their testimony and work. We face the same enemy today, and we need the same Pauline determination to never eat any meat we know to be sacrificed to an idol. "Therefore, my beloved, *flee* idolatry."

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June 17-19

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If you choose to contact the hotel by telephone, be sure to mention that your reservation is for the IBFNA Conference. The hotel can be contacted at 1-717-339-0020.

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