



IBFNA

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THE REVIEW

30th Annual IBFNA Conference Canceled

By Dr. Bob Payne, Moderator IBFNA

The IBFNA officers met a few days ago, and after consulting with our host pastor, Jeff Bailey, came to the conclusion that we needed to cancel our 2020 June conference. Although this was a difficult decision emotionally, it was an easy decision logically and practically. Because of the coronavirus shutdown, many states are only now beginning to open a limited number of businesses. In Massachusetts it is uncertain whether our meeting would even be allowed in late June. Additionally, none of the tourist attractions in the state will be open until at least July 4th, making it a very poor time for family activities. Our decision was an obvious one.

What About Next Year?

In spite of this year's cancellation, we trust you will be with us next year, June 22-24, 2021 for our family conference! We are once again planning on having it in Attleboro, Massachusetts at Grace Baptist Church (Pastor Jeff Bailey). Most of our speakers who were scheduled for this year have already signed on for next year. Plan on being with us in 2021 in Massachusetts! Additionally, don't forget to cancel your hotel reservations for this year! We will let you know when we have a new plan negotiated for next year and when you can begin making reservations for 2021.

What About Election of Officers?

Because we will be unable to have a Fellowship business meeting this year, and are therefore unable to conduct elections, the present officers discussed some alternate ways that we might be able to choose our leadership for the next two years. We selected a plan that should be able to involve as many of our members as possible.

Those of you who are more "tech-minded" will be able to use a Google form on the IBFNA web site to register your vote, and those who are more "low-tech" will have already received a ballot by mail inserted into this *Review*. Please complete your vote, or mail your ballot to our normal Fellowship address in Philadelphia by June 30th. You will be notified of the results of the election. Don't forget that to participate in the vote you need to make sure that your membership fee is paid for this year. Contact Donna Dear if you are unclear of your standing.

Some Final Observations

Has it struck you how easy it has been for the some in the government to exercise almost dictatorial powers during this pandemic? We have seen first hand that when people



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THE MOTHER OF
ALL MOMS

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are afraid, they will trade almost anything for perceived security, even if the basis for that security lacks a firm foundation.

Imagine the paralyzing fear that will be caused by millions of people suddenly missing all over the world (1 Thess. 4:16-17)! People of this world will desperately want security, answers, and peace. One man will provide what they seek, but that will only be temporary (1 Thess. 5:3: "For when they shall say, 'Peace and safety'; then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape").

How is it possible that nations will freely give over authority to the antichrist? After watching what went on with the coronavirus and the abject fear that it instilled in the hearts of people, is it really that

hard to imagine what lost people will be like after the rapture? As we said, the masses are willing to trade their freedom for security. Will it be any different in the days following the rapture of the church? Antichrist will offer stability and peace in the Middle East and a solution to their fears. In a time more tumultuous than our own, the masses will flock to the confident, arrogant man of wickedness.

Let's not faithlessly give in to the modern fear (John 14:27). We have a great God who is in control (Ps. 93:1-3)! We have a future and a blessed hope (Titus 2:13)! Jesus is coming in the air for His saints, and it may not be long! Government overreach and illness should not cause us to cower as believers. As A.W. Tozer said, "A frightened world needs a fearless church." We need to faithfully, fearlessly, and enthusiastically serve Him until he comes.

Essential?

By Pastor Kevin Hobi

Dealing with the fear of a COVID-19 pandemic has taught many important lessons. We have learned lessons about China, international travel, and the World Health Organization. We have learned lessons about politicians, the role of government in times of crisis, and the agendas of mass media. We have learned lessons about disease, healthcare, and preparedness. We learned some new names, like Fauci and Birx. We learned a new appreciation for the important work of civil servants like military personnel, medical professionals, and first-responders. We learned that we had a lot to learn.

The Governor

One prominent lesson forced upon us by this virus is the realization that we consider somethings in life essential, and other things less so. Our Lord taught the importance of this distinction to wisdom (Matt. 23:23-24). I pastor New Boston Baptist Church in New Hampshire, and on March 23rd our Republican governor issued his Emergency Order #16 of this year, prohibiting gatherings of ten persons or more in our state, including those for "spiritual . . . activities" and those that are "faith based."

Shortly thereafter Emergency Order #17, titled "Closure of Non-essential Businesses and Requiring Granite Staters to Stay at Home," defined for me and

my fellow citizens which businesses the Granite State considered "essential," and which they did not. As it concerned New Boston Baptist Church, it did not.

On the Lord's Day, March 29, the families of our local church worshipped separately at home. Then, beginning in April and continuing as of the writing of this article, we have gathered in our cars "drive-in" style in our parking lot for worship together in support of our governor's efforts to curb the disease.

We pray for him and those helping him make decisions. We pray for medical professionals and at-risk family, church members, and neighbors. We pray for the sick and those who have lost loved ones. We respect the efforts of officials to curb this disease, recognize that we are not the only ones asked to sacrifice, and seek to set an example of love-for-neighbor in this time of crisis management.

Recently, Governor Sununu granted an interview with NH Public Radio to discuss the greatly anticipated reopening of segments of our state's economy. My wife and I were out for a walk, but I was able to listen intently on my phone to the nine-minute segment. I kept waiting for the question about local churches to come up, but it never did. I and others in our church had sent the governor's overwhelmed

email box inquiries about church openings that he has not been able yet to return with a response.

Then on May 1st came the long-awaited Emergency Order #40. The governor's "Economic Re-Opening Task Force" had been hard at work to produce 45 pages of carefully worded instructions for a May 11 opening of some of the segments of our state's economy. Come May 11th, state parks, beaches, camping grounds, retail outlets, salons, and even golf courses will begin to reopen.

Only two sections applied to local churches, however, paragraphs 9 and 11 on page 4: "This Order shall not apply to any church, synagogue, mosque, or other house of worship, provided that those organizations must still comply with Emergency Order #16 [prohibiting gatherings of 10 or more]" and "Emergency Orders #6, #16 and #27 are hereby extended and shall remain in effect until May 31, 2020."

In my view, Emergency Order #40 declared officially a truth that has been obvious but politely unspoken in our secularized age. Simply put, NH Granite Staters view local churches as non-essential. The many historic and large church buildings populating the central commons of every city, town, and hamlet in this great state remind us that this was not always the case. Emergency Order #40 was a discouraging reminder that it certainly seems to be so today.

Is New Boston Baptist Church essential? Is your local church essential? Certainly, if God's people of New Boston, NH cannot answer this question correctly, we should not expect our state officials to do so either. My calling to serve as pastor here for 13 years now often has boiled down to finding the right answer to that question for myself and others. It is the question that defines the nature of my life's work. It is a question that needs an answer, not only for me, but for my faithful brothers and sisters with whom I labor here for Christ. Your church needs the right answer to the same question.

Many would answer, "No." Perhaps our governors would say, "No." Undoubtedly, you have heard throughout the course of your membership at a local church, as I have, a "No" answer from too many who should have known better. Honestly, at times I have had to search again for the truth as my own heart asks again the question, "Is this church essential?" Whenever I have sought that answer from the Lord, I have heard His reassuring "Yes" (1 Cor. 15:58).

Hebrews 10

Perhaps no passage of Scripture answers the question before us as followers of Christ with greater force than Hebrews 10. According to this chapter of Scripture, there are certain commands that must be followed and certain consequences that must be avoided, which demand that believers not forsake the time, place, and purpose of their local church gatherings (Heb. 10:25).

The commands that require commitment to local church gatherings are three imperatives (technically, horatory subjunctives) that are modified by the participles of verse 25, *not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together . . . , but exhorting one another*. So those two phrases, *not forsaking – but exhorting*, tell us how to obey three commands. The commitment to gather for the purpose of encouragement is an essential component of three acts of obedience before the Lord. The Greek word translated *forsaking* is an intensified form of the ordinary idea. It is what God did to Christ on the cross of Calvary as He judged our sin (Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:24). It is the negative idea captured by the word *abandonment*.

We will notice the three commands in reverse order. The third command to be obeyed through gathering and encouraging is *and let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works* (v. 24).

Recent evidence suggests that social distancing has caused a spike in hatred and harm in our society. Shortly after the stay-at-home order, our governor issued Emergency Order #21, "Establishment of the COVID-19 Emergency Domestic and Sexual Violence Services Relief Fund," and #22, "Authorization of Emergency Funding for Child Protection Services." The first order explained that NH police had "reported an uptick in domestic violence calls during the month of March" and that "victims of domestic and sexual violence are at greater risk of violence, and face significantly increased barriers to accessing help when required to stay in their homes" [<https://www.governor.nh.gov/news-media/emergency-orders/documents/emergency-order-21.pdf>; accessed 5/9/2020].

According to Hebrews 10, even believers face the risk of a sinful flesh that fails to live in love and good works. Essential to our ability to maintain these virtues in our walk with the Lord is the provocation provided by local churches gathered for the purpose

of encouragement. We get our English word *paroxysm* from the Greek word translated *to provoke*. Webster defines a *paroxysm* as “a fit, attack, or sudden increase or recurrence of symptoms (as of a disease).” That sounds a lot like a pandemic. It is as though the author is calling for a sudden outbreak of contagious love and good works, and the way to get there from here is gathering for the purpose of encouragement.

Working our way back through the passage, the next command requiring this gathering to encourage is *let us hold fast the confession of our faith without wavering* (v. 23). The Greek word translated *faith* in that command is normally translated *hope* by the King James translators and other English versions. Certainly, gathering for encouragement is important for maintaining a common confession of faith. Common belief constitutes the center of local church unity, a body that is normally comprised of members who are often diverse in most other ways.

But here the author is thinking specifically about faith in God’s promise, which is the believer’s hope. That is what gathering to encourage helps us to hold on to rather than lay it down (the idea behind *wavering*). Hope in God’s *promise* is a major theme in Hebrews. The word occurs 13 times in the book, and the verb *to promise* another 4 times, which is more than any other New Testament book. Also important to this theme are the verb *to swear* (6 times) and the noun *covenant* or *testament* (14 times). The promise we hold on to together through gathering to encourage is that of our eternal inheritance (Heb. 9:15). Isolation can cause loss of hope (Eccles. 4:9-10).

New Hampshire has found that social distancing can be expensive in terms of hope. Rick Cornell, the Vice President for Community Relations at The Mental Health Center of Greater Manchester, explained to a local newspaper that “the pandemic has created the need for services among a lot of people who never sought them before. The death of a relative, job loss, income loss, stress, and depression and anxiety all build as they are locked home, in some cases with their children” [<https://www.ledgertranscript.com/Mental-health-care-a-team-effort-in-New-Hampshire-during-coronavirus-pandemic-34164096>; accessed 5/8/2020]. The gathering-for-encouragement routine of the local church keeps hope in God’s promise alive among those gathered.

The final command that necessitates gathering for encouragement is perhaps the most significant of all. Although I mention it last here, it is first in the Hebrews passage. In view of the glory of our High Priest, and because His own flesh was torn and bloody to give us bold access into the holy of holies, *let us draw near* (vv. 19-22). The worthiness of Christ requires that He be worshipped, and the worship He requires is corporate worship, a drawing near of us together as we gather to encourage. What New Hampshire needs according to these verses is an emergency order for believers to worship their worthy Lord. Would not God then spare our sinful land for the sake of a righteous few? (Gen. 18:20-33).

Perhaps answering the question about what is essential and what is non-essential is best discerned by looking at the consequences of doing without the thing we are asking about. What consequences ensue if a local church like New Boston Baptist Church fails to draw near, hold fast, and consider one another by gathering to encourage?

Verses 26-31 cover those. The consequences are severe. The penalty will fit the crime, and the crime is outlined with stark detail in v. 29: “who hath trodden under-foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace.” We shutter at the thought of equating a lazy or selfish habit of church-attendance neglect with what is described in that verse, but the author of Hebrews is clear about the equation.

Yes, even in our New Testament times, the Lord shall judge His people (v. 30). That truth was a fearful thing in Moses’s day (vv. 27-28), and the author stipulates that it should generate more fear in our day of greater spiritual revelation and blessing (v. 31). We should know better. Local church gathering times, places, and purposes are essential because they are consequential. The Son of God is worshipped this way and trodden under foot otherwise. His shed blood for our sins is treated holy this way and treated like nothing special otherwise. The Spirit of grace is humbly obeyed this way and treated with contemptuous disobedience otherwise.

In the end, perhaps the lesson we as believers must learn from this trying experience with COVID-19 is that our local church gatherings to encourage are essential, not non-essential. Here in New Boston, we cannot expect the people of New Hampshire to

believe otherwise until the members of New Boston Baptist Church live lives that demonstrate we do. Maybe that is a crying need in your town too. Let us draw near, let us hold fast, and let us consider one another, not forsaking the assembly of ourselves together to encourage.

The ACCC

Our IBFNA Fellowship is a constituent member of the American Council of Christian Churches. The counsel of that organization has served the churches of fundamentalism well for many years. In 2016, the Council issued a resolution titled, "Resolution on the Assembly of Believers." It said in part:

After Christ's ascension, His followers began assembling themselves together in their respective localities to worship their Lord and Savior on the first day of the week, the day of His resurrection [John 20:19-31]. At these Lord's Day assemblies, believers heard the Word read and preached, sang praises and offered prayers unto God, observed the Lord's Supper and baptism, contributed gifts unto the Lord's work, and fellowshiped with one another (Acts 2:42-47, 20:7, I Cor. 16:2, Eph. 5:19, and Col. 3:16).

The writer of Hebrews soon noticed that some were developing a habit of neglecting their local churches, and therefore charged all to "not forsak[e] the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but [to] exhort . . . one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching" (Heb. 10:25). . . .

[The ACCC] resolves to exhort all believers to join a sound, local church and to be faithful to it as much as is physically possible. Likewise, we resolve to encourage churches to cease canceling services to accommodate the spirit of the age. David said: "I was glad when they said unto me, 'Let us go into the house of the LORD'" (Ps. 122:1). We urge professed Christians to examine themselves to see whether such a joy for God's house characterizes their lives, and if not, to repent.

That joy in gathering to encourage is essential. As we emerge from times of pandemic prevention, let us examine ourselves to see if we have this joy; if so, thank the Lord for His gracious gift; and if not, repent and ask Him to restore it.

Lessons from the Mother of All Moms

By Pastor Kevin Hobi

Mother's Day is a day for remembering what our mothers mean to us, and I suppose that no one has a greater appreciation for the value of their mothers than those who are themselves mothers.

During the Nazi occupation of Poland in WW2, the Germans constructed a death camp at Treblinka, about 80 miles outside of Warsaw. A young Polish woman named Irena Sendler rescued 2,500 Jewish children from the Warsaw ghetto before they could be exterminated in that horrible place. Those rescued painfully lost mothers and obtained new mothers. Perhaps like no other generation mankind has ever known, these two sets of mothers taught the world what a mother's love truly is. Though cruelly beaten at one point by the Nazis, Irena Sendler survived the war and lived to be 98 years old. She would ask on Mother's Day that the legacy of these mothers of WW2 be remembered.

The Bible is clear that God desires that every mom who has ever lived take some time to remember the legacy of the same good mother that they all share. Her name was Eve, and the Bible begins with her story. Today, the daughters of Eve live in a time when many of them are forgetting the example of their first mother. Many of the Polish Jewish children saved in the 1940's from Treblinka grew up not knowing their first mother. In a similar way, our world has grown up to forget their first mother, Eve.

With evolution's false claim to scientific expertise, a claim that was at the root of the Nazi's eugenics doctrine, the life of Eve has been relegated to the irrelevant category of myth and fairy tale. In her stead stands a sub-human ancestor of some kind whom we have to share with apes, chimpanzees, gorillas, and orangutans. At the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History, there is no exhibit on Eve in their

section on the history of human origins. For those who have studied the science of human origins far more than I have, I would commend a recent article to you called, "Human Chromosome 2 Fusion Never Happened," by Dr. Jeffrey Tomkins in the May 2020 issue of *Acts & Facts* (ICR). For the rest of us, I will simply quote the last paragraph:

This is an undeniable double whammy against the whole mythical fusion idea, utterly destroying its validity. The overwhelming scientific conclusion is that the fusion [of chromosomes from ape (48) to human (46)] never happened.

We creationists who believe our Bibles can still profit from the example of our first mother. It seems that now more than ever we need moms who understand and live the lessons we learn from the mom of all moms. I want us to notice two of these.

God's Design for a Happy Home

The life of Eve teaches us that mothers are an important part of God's design for a happy home. It is good and proper that we honor their God-given role in our homes. Not one of us would be here today were it not for the fact that we had a mother. The life of a good mom is the life of loving sacrifice for her offspring. Her love is much like that of our Lord.

Mother hen is a term that is common for moms who seem to go overboard in the loving attention they give their children. It is being replaced by *helicopter mom* in our day, but I like the older term better. Jesus does not call a mother's love a nuisance. Instead, He taught that His love is like a mother hen's: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!" (Matt. 23:37). To respond to this saving love as though its Giver were a nuisance is to make the most fundamental mistake anyone can make, one with eternal consequence.

That mothers are a God-designed component for a happy home has been denied by civil authorities in our nation. In New Hampshire, that denial first became law in 2009, when the governor at that time, John Lynch, changed marriage law to include homosexuality in our state. After doing so, Lynch issued a press release that said the following: "I recognize

that the issue of same-sex marriage is intensely passionate and personal, and raises strong emotions on all sides. I still believe the fundamental issue is about providing the same rights and protections to same-sex couples as are available to heterosexual couples."

The governor misunderstood the fundamental issue. If your fundamental issue is wrong, the policies you build on that foundation will do more harm than good. There is no such fundamental doctrine in the example of the life of Eve, or anywhere else in the Word of God. In Gen. 1:26-28, we find a different fundamental truth when it comes to the role of mom in the home – God created man male and female and told them to be fruitful and to multiply.

When the governor spoke of "rights and protections," he was not referring to anything that comes from our Creator the way all our other unalienable rights do. This so-called right to a homosexual marriage did not come from the Bible's God, but from man's sin, political intrigue, and struggle for power.

In the Jefferson Memorial, which commemorates the author of our Declaration of Independence, there is etched in stone this former president's words about freedom of conscience from his "A Bill for Establishing Religious Freedom." It says in part, "Almighty God hath created the mind free. All attempts to influence it by temporal punishments or burthens...are a departure from the plan of the Holy Author of our religion." When Jefferson wrote of our "Holy Author," he referred to the biblical Creator.

His fellow Virginian, James Madison, whom history remembers as the "Father of the US Constitution," our nation's other founding document, wrote this in his "Memorial and Remonstrance against Religious Assessments, 1785," speaking of the right of religious freedom:

"This right is in its nature an unalienable right. It is unalienable, because the opinions of men, depending only on the evidence contemplated by their own minds cannot follow the dictates of other men: It is unalienable also, because what is here a right towards men, is a duty towards the Creator. It is the duty of every man to render to the Creator such homage and such only as he believes to be acceptable to Him. *This duty is precedent, both in order of time and in degree of obligation, to the claims of Civil Society. Before any man can be considered as a member of Civil Society, he must be considered as a subject of the Governor of*

the Universe" [capitalization of *Him* and emphasis added].

Governor Lynch taught us that what he calls "same-sex couples" should have the same rights and protections to marry as heterosexual couples, but he did not get that teaching from Jefferson and Madison's Creator. Can we conclude then that the former governor refuses to celebrate Mother's Day today on the grounds that it discriminates against some of his "same-sex married couples" - the two-dads kind? Far better is Scripture's fundamental teaching on the issue: moms are God's design for the happy home.

God's Design for a Happy Husband

Though we often remember Eve primarily as the mother of all the living, she would have probably told us that she wanted to be known first as Adam's wife. Genesis 2 does not call her *mother*. Instead, she was called *woman* because she was made for the man (Gen. 2:18-25). Though magnificently equipped for giving birth and for conducting the ministry of motherhood, Eve was especially designed to be Adam's wife. This was her first ministry and calling.

Her husband-directed ministry is summed up with a single word in verses 18 and 20, *helper*. The helper role is an equal role; it is different from the husband's role but not inferior to it. Note two evidences of this from some details in this passage.

The first has to do with why God made Eve. God is correcting Adam's loneliness here, not the fact that his socks may have needed to be washed (v. 18, "it is not good for man to be alone"; vv. 22-23). God created a companion for Adam, not a servant. Note also that God gave them both dominion, made them both in his image, and blessed them both, male and female (1:26-28). They are equal partners in this plan of God for His creation.

In addition, only two entities are legitimately labeled man's *helper* in the OT: Yahweh God and wives. Similar to the analogy from Paul that Christ is like the husband and the church is like a wife, the use of the Hebrew term *'ezer* to describe the wife here presents the analogy that a wife is in some important sense like Yahweh, while God's people are very much like Adam.

Note the praise of Yahweh's strength and majesty as a helper in Deut. 33:26-29. The role of the helper in the OT is never the role of an inferior or subordinate.

It is the role of someone whose strengths complement and compensate for our weaknesses. As husbands, we need to recognize the dependence we have on the help of our wives, and the glory of the strength and majesty of their role as our God-given helper, fully capable of compensating for our weaknesses. This term *helper* indicates that wives need to be like the Lord our help in specific ways.

For instance, wives need to defend their husbands, not attack them. Defense from enemies is closely connected to the kind of help this word *helper* refers to (Exod. 18:4, Deut. 33:7, Ps. 22:19, 33:20, 70:5, 121:1-2, 124:8). Every husband has three enemies that seek his destruction - his sinful heart, a dangerous world, and a relentless devil. With all that attacking a man, God has provided a helper for his spiritual defense. Wives need to make sure that they are on the right side of this equation, that they are helping to defend their husband from these enemies, not being used as a tool of the attack.

In addition, wives need to honor their husbands, not shame them (Ps. 89:19-24). Exaltation and honor are closely connected to this kind of help. In biblical idiom, this help (v. 19) "exalts the horn" (v. 24). It has been said that a husband's greatest need is loving honor, and that a wife's greatest need is loving security. We see the husband's need met in this word *helper*.

Finally, wives need to love faithfully their husbands, not betray them (Ps. 146:5-9). Trustworthiness, kindness, encouragement, love, support - all are a part of the help of a helper. "Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands" (Prov. 14:1). A wife foolishly destroys whenever she refuses to be the trustworthy, kind, encouraging, loving, and supporting helper. These are the tools God has give her to build with.

The Greatest Lesson

Perhaps the greatest lesson we can learn from the life of the mother of all moms is that we, her children, need a Savior just like she did. Eve was the first human being to sin and to need salvation, and she is the first to receive the promise of a sufficient Savior (Gen. 3:15). Eve's promised descendant is Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Mother Hen who would lovingly gather her chicks under her wings. Will you be gathered? Will you turn from your sin and come to Him for the sacrificing love that saves?

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