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THE REVIEW

The Demand for Selfless Service

By Pastor Mark Strangman, Moderator IBFNA

Recently, a document published by the Secular Democrats of America was delivered to the Biden/Harris administration. This document has been the subject of a recent news update in the magazine *Israel My Glory* (May/June 2021, p. 40). You can find the document in its entirety at tinyurl.com/SDmanifesto-1. Here are 4 excerpts from the publication:

- We urge you not to underestimate the institutional strength of what we refer to (interchangeably) in this document as the “Christian nationalist movement” or the “religious right.” . . . Its political ideology is anti-democratic and anti-scientific. It provides constant cover for white supremacy. And it advances a reactionary economic policy, tax policy, and dominionist view of the environment that undermines our capacity and will to address the climate crisis. Its agenda rests on a pinched interpretation of biblical principles preached by Christian nationalist leadership and thought leaders. With their political agenda sanctioned by a higher power, their base of support is disciplined, motivated, and deeply committed to a vision that does not align with our basic constitutional values and democratic principles.
- Whenever possible, we urge you to reference and quote the original United States national motto, *E Pluribus Unum*—*out of many, one*. The current motto, “In God We Trust,” is a relic of McCarthyism and the anti-atheist hysteria of the 1950s, and it has been invoked by Christian nationalists to reinforce their historically revisionist narrative of our nation’s founding. They characterize the United States’ founding as a “Christian nation” based in biblical principles, rather than as a secularist nation based in revolutionary democratic ideas. The original motto, which we hope to see restored by Congress, is inclusive of all faiths and none, while “In God We Trust” excludes nontheists and polytheists.
- Recognize that nonreligious Americans celebrate their own holidays and traditions just like people of faith, and many also celebrate Christmas which, by nature of being a federal holiday, is a secular holiday Americans of all faiths and none can take part in. The secular community has a rich tradition of humanist and nontheistic clergy serving nontheistic congregations, as well as humanist and secular celebrants who facilitate life cycle ceremonies for the nonreligious.



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4 NEEDED
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- The rise of white Christian nationalism is a national security threat. We recommend you: encourage the Department of Homeland Security and Department of Justice to dedicate resources to deradicalization programs aimed at hate groups, including, but not limited to, white nationalists; increase monitoring of such groups, including the online environment, and take action to address increased hate crimes toward minority faith communities; and shift rhetoric to label violent white nationalist extremists as terrorists.

Wow! These are just some highlights (or low-lights you might say?), and there is so much more included in this document that is truly appalling (it took me about 30 minutes to read the entire 28-page document, and I suggest you do the same). My Dear Brothers and Sisters, we are witnessing the tailspin of the world away from God as it spirals downward at an ever-increasing pace. This "Secular Democrat Manifesto" is merely the beginning of the world's rejection of the Savior and its setting itself up for the end times. So, what are we to do?

After spending time with the Lord in prayer and searching the Scriptures for answers, I realize that for a child of God, and especially an under-shepherd of the Lord Jesus, the call to His service is more demanding than ever before. There is a line being drawn in this country, and we must be determined to serve the Lord no matter the cost. As we search the Book of Philippians, Paul reveals the true nature of his call to the service of the Lord. In verse one he declares that he and Timothy were "servants of Christ." As you know, the Greek word used here is *doulos*, meaning *bond-slave*. Strong's defines this word as a *slave* (literal or figurative; involuntary or voluntary; frequently, therefore in a qualified sense of subjection or subserviency). Claiming this description for himself, Paul confesses that he has surrendered his life over to the Lord and is fully submissive to Him.

But what does this mean practically for Paul, and for us? As we consider Paul's condition of incarceration, we meditate on what it must have been like for him. We ponder how it must have affected his relationship with his dear brothers and sisters in Philippi. Paul is so burdened by this that he begins verse 12 by telling them he desires them to understand what his imprisonment means and what its results have been. In understanding the true heart of the apostle,

we come to a startling realization that is truly life changing. Paul understood that he did not matter! What happened to him was not the concern. If the safety of the great evangelist of the missionary journeys was not the main goal, what does that say about you and me?

You see, we must understand that our safety and our rights are not the issue. I urged people in my church to consider this idea by asking themselves the following questions: What is most important in my life? What is my overall motivation in my life? What do I live for? What would I die for? Whom do I serve? Why do I serve? If we answer anything else than "the Lord Jesus Christ" to any of these questions, we do not understand what being a *doulos* truly means!

In verses 13-18, Paul shows them that his imprisonment had resulted in the gospel reaching where it could not have otherwise. Even the praetorian guard had received the gospel. Imagine the guard who had to bring Paul his meals. After receiving the food, the apostle may have asked the guard if he could pray for him. And in praying for him he must have spoken plainly of the gospel! Now I realize this is conjecture, but it is also probable. I am certain that Paul had spread the Lord Jesus all throughout the palace. And though, as he states in verses 15-16, there were those who were against him even among the brethren, the outcome of his imprisonment was unimportant, even to the point of martyrdom. His bold declaration - "For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain!" - manifests his true understanding of selfless service to the Lord Jesus Christ.

There you have it - that is true servanthood. Make no mistake. What we are witnessing all around us is just going to get worse as we get closer to the Savior's return. Just today in my beloved city of Pittsburgh, a protest against the University of Pittsburgh Medical School is opposing live tissue experimentation involving aborted babies and lab rodents. This is stuff right out of a cheesy 50's horror movie, and it is happening in my own backyard!

Where do we go from here? Paul told the brethren at Philippi that "many of the brethren in the Lord, waxing confident by my bonds, are much more bold to speak the word without fear." Without fear! Paul declared from his prison cell that it did not matter whether he lived or died, as long as the gospel was spread to as many as possible. With this God-

given confidence he urged the Philippians to press on for Christ in three ways.

1. Paul urged the Philippian church to be true to the gospel with their lives.

He told them that their conversation must become the gospel – their testimony and reputation must support what they preached. As bondslaves of the Lord, they had to be completely committed to Him and His message of the good news of salvation. Their lives must speak as loud as, if not louder than, their words.

2. Paul urged the Philippian church to be strong in the gospel in their stand.

He told them to “stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.” This is a similar plea to what he said to the Corinthians in 1 Cor. 15:58: “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your

labor is not in vain in the Lord.” They must stand fast!

3. Paul urged the Philippian church to be fearless with the gospel in the world.

He encouraged them to never fear what men might do to them, to never compromise their preaching and their testimony. The world's opposition to them only proves its depravity and the brethren's security. He indicated that they may even come to a time of suffering for the Lord. Paul assures them that to do so would be an honor.

As we read the words of Paul to his beloved Philippian church, we are edified by these words in our own walk and stand. It truly does not matter what may happen to us, so long as the Lord is magnified and glorified and the gospel is spread for the salvation of souls. We are inconsequential! For us to live is Christ, and to die is gain! May God truly bless you all as you stand firm for Him, and may He richly bless the IBFNA.

Beale’s *Baptist History in England and America*—A Review

By Greg Ward

David Beale, *Baptist History in England and America: Personalities, Positions, and Practices* (Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2018), 627 pages.

Beale has written an easy-to-read history. He traces this history from the early separatists in 17th century England through 20th century America. About half of the book treats the developmental years through the 18th century in England. After a quick glance through 19th century England, it is off to America. The initial struggles in the 17th and 18th centuries and the battle for religious freedom of America are given a quarter of the book. The rest tells of the American foreign missionary movement beginning in the 19th century and traces the major people and positions to the end of the 20th century.

There are many reasons to read this book. Most of the book describes history using the subtitle: *Personalities, Positions, and Practices*. The author tells the story through people. By doing this he brings out their beliefs, decisions, statements, stands, and practices. He often describes their practices: order of

worship, church government, evangelistic work, writing, or preaching. This makes the story easy to read and allows their testimonies to continue into the present. There are a couple of brief sections that describe the milieu of an era and overview of movements. Also, several sections cover positional development, such as the doctrinal progress of the English Separate Baptists or the progress of liberalism in the institutions of the 20th century.

Beale’s focus on separatists leading up to the early English Baptists is a strong point. He, as a separatist, is willing to note the separatist movements for what they were and the convictions they held. It is interesting to trace the development of belief of what would become Baptist distinctives. One of this book’s strengths is its tracing English separatism through Amsterdam and back to England and the formation of the first General Baptist church. On this journey, Beale highlights the idea of a free church.

The author has meticulously researched the subject and frequently cites primary material or early

authors. Where there is a rare source, he notes the collection location. For example, the first footnote source can be found in the British Library. Throughout, Beale provides original source material in footnotes and end of chapter bibliographies. These serve as a valuable resource for further research on Baptist history.

Reading of Baptists under persecution, including during the politically tumultuous time of the interregnum, cements why these biblical doctrines are so essential even for our time. Beale does not shy away from some of the splinter groups and non-evangelical movements of the 17th century. He fairly treats several individuals or groups that were recognized as Baptist but were not fully baptistic for one reason or another. The author describes their Baptist and non-Baptist features and their significance. He rightly shows the deviation of doctrines and practices that took them away from New Testament truth.

Beale also highlights the doctrinal formation of the Particular Baptists, from the London Confession through other Calvinists, and even the effect of the Hyper-Calvinists. He accounts the missionary movement launched through Andrew Fuller and William Carey, which sprang from the midst of these. The author's focus on people, such as God's preparatory work in the life of William Carey, brings out much more than a historical timeline. Life applications profit the reader. English Baptist history is concluded with the life and ministry of Spurgeon. Beale includes the struggle for biblical doctrine in the Downgrade Controversy.

In America, Beale concentrates on the struggle for religious freedom in New England and in the South.

This makes one appreciate our freedoms today. The struggle for that freedom lasted from the early colonies to the ratification of the Bill of Rights and beyond. He also tells of the evangelism and missionary work that took the gospel westward and around the world.

There are some downsides to history formatted this way. As a person's life spans decades, it is sometimes difficult to place the events of that life within the milieu of the times. Also, there are time-jumps from topic to topic. For example, Beale traces the separatists to the General Baptists and then relates doctrinal failings and decline in the late 18th century. This is one thread. But after tracing the General Baptists, the author jumps back to Robert Browne, a 16th century separatist, as he begins to describe the formation of the Separate Baptists. The reader may desire a more thorough treatment of how the threads of Baptist history related to one another. On the American story, after the struggle for religious freedom and the early 19th century, Beale jumps to the present. Though missing from this book, the latter 19th century and first half of the 20th century are covered in Beale's other work: *In Pursuit of Purity: American Fundamentalism Since 1850*.

This is a good read. It helps one appreciate the times under which separatist and Baptist beliefs were forged and developed from the Scriptures. Reading of lives that chose to hold to those beliefs and stand for them in difficult times helps one see the importance of a biblical belief system. The perseverance of saints gone before encourages steadfastness and evangelism in saints today. Take time to read Beale's *Baptist History*. You will be encouraged in your faith and challenged to live it.

Insensitive or Needed? Criticism of Billy Graham's Influence

By Pastor Justin Kauffman

On Saturday August 26, 2017, America lost one of its most influential evangelists. Undoubtedly, Billy Graham was used of God to lead many to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, and for that we are most thankful. There have been many who have praised Graham's life, and there are some who are more critical. Those who are more critical have been admonished for being insensitive. Is this accusation warranted? It may be so for some, depending on the tone

of their response, but not every critical response is insensitive.

Graham was a public figure who influenced many people. What was his message? Was it always a pure gospel? Should we not discern and judge the words that flow from the mouths of preachers, especially those with a following like Graham's? If many can be led astray, should we not speak up?

Graham's crusades drew very large crowds. People listened to his every word. He had the platform and opportunity to make a great difference for Christ! What did he truly do with his opportunities? Preachers and Bible teachers are to be held responsible before God for everything they proclaim. James 3:1, "My brethren, let not many of you become teachers, knowing that we shall receive a stricter judgment" (NKJV).

Referring to this verse in his commentary on James, Dr. Bob Utley comments that "knowledge and leadership bring greater responsibility." God will not overlook the words that proceed from the mouths of pastors and Bible teachers. Every one of them will give an account to God.

But also understand that every believer is admonished to be discerning and stand against false teaching. Jude 3, "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."

Graham had a responsibility to stand against liberals, modernists, and Roman Catholicism, but instead, he welcomed them onto his platforms to pray with him during his crusades and accepted their sponsorship money. He openly recognized Roman Catholics as brethren, and he sent multitudes of newly professing converts back into Catholic, liberal, and compromising churches. What message did this practice send to the countless unbelievers, some now newly saved and untaught Christians, who attended those crusades and hung on to everything he said and did?

There are legitimate charges that can be brought against Billy Graham, serious ones that undermine and confuse the purity of the gospel and that warrant a critical response to all the praise heaped on him since his passing. These are hard things to say. I understand this, but I do not see how we can remain silent in the face of the seriousness of Graham's actions and words. Here is a list of some of Graham's compromises:

1. Graham willingly turned over converts to Catholic and liberal churches.

For example, David Cline of Bringhouse Untied Church, the vice-chairman of the organizing

committee of the 1984 Vancouver, British Columbia crusade, reported, "If Catholics step forward, there will be no attempt to convert them, and their names will be given to the Catholic church nearest their homes" (*Vancouver Sun*, Oct.5, 1984). There are many more examples of this practice that could be cited. Why would any minister of God turn new converts over to unbelieving churches? How can unbelievers disciple God's children? Would this be the practice of the Apostle Paul?

2. Graham considers Catholics his brothers.

The *Gastonia Gazette* reported in 1967, after Graham received an honorary degree from the Roman Catholic Belmont Abbey College: "After receiving the honorary degree of doctor of humane letters (DHL) from the Abbey, Graham noted the significance of the occasion:—'a time when Protestants and Catholics could meet together and greet each other as brothers, whereas 10 years ago they could not,' he said." The paper also went on to report Graham saying, "The gospel that built this school and the gospel that brings me here tonight is still the way to salvation" ("Belmont Abbey Confers Honorary Degree," Paul Smith, *Gazette* staff reporter, *The Gastonia Gazette*, Gastonia, North Carolina, Nov.22, 1967).

Graham's comments and warmth towards Pope John Paul II gives further proof of Graham's compromise and lack of biblical discernment. Speaking on CNN's Larry King Live program, Graham had the following exchange with King about the Pope:

King: "Did he actually say to you once, 'We are brothers'?"

Graham: "That's correct. He certainly did. He held my hand the first time that I met him about 1981. He'd just been Pope for two years when I saw him first. Because when he was elevated to the papacy, I was preaching in his cathedral in Krakow that very day. And we had thousands of people in the streets. And watching the television today of Krakow has brought back many memories."

King: "You said that he was an evangelist."

Graham: "He was, indeed. He traveled throughout the world to bring his Christian message to the world. And we see tonight the outpouring from the world that he touched. And I think he touched almost everybody in the whole world."

King: "There is no question in your mind that he is with God now?"

Graham: "Oh, no. There may be a question about my own, but I don't think Cardinal Wojtyla, or the Pope -- I think he's with the Lord, because he believed. He believed in the cross. That was his focus throughout his ministry, the Cross, no matter if you were talking to him from personal issue or an ethical problem, he felt that there was the answer to all of our problems, the cross and the resurrection. And he was a strong believer" [Source: (https://www.cbn.com/spirituallife/biblestudyandtheology/perspectives/ans_popegrahamcaviezel.aspx)].

3. Graham espoused pluralism in an interview with Robert Schuller.

Dr. Robert Schuller, who at the time was the pastor of the Crystal Cathedral in Garden Grove, California, interviewed Billy Graham on May 31, 1997 on Schuller's television program, *The Hour of Power*, subtitled, "Say 'Yes' To Possibility Thinking." The two men had this exchange:

Schuller: "Tell me, what do you think is the future of Christianity?"

Graham: "Well, Christianity and being a true believer--you know, I think there's the body of Christ. This comes from all the Christian groups around the world, outside the Christian groups. I think everybody that loves Christ, or knows Christ, whether they're conscious of it or not, they're members of the body of Christ. And I don't think that we're going to see a great sweeping revival that will turn the whole world to Christ at any time.

"I think James answered that, the Apostle James in the first council in Jerusalem, when he said that God's purpose for this age is to call out a people for His name. And that's what God is doing today, He's calling people out of the world for His name, whether they come from the Muslim world, or the Buddhist world, or the Christian world, or the non-believing world, they are members of the body of Christ because they've been called by God. *They may not even know the name of Jesus*, but they know in their hearts that they need something that they don't have, and they turn to the only light that they have, and I think that they are saved, and that they're going to be with us in heaven" [emphasis mine].

Schuller: "What, what I hear you saying, that it's possible for Jesus Christ to come into human hearts and soul and life, even if they've been born in darkness and have never had exposure to the Bible. Is that a correct interpretation of what you're saying?"

Graham: "Yes, it is, because I believe that. I've met people in various parts of the world in tribal situations, that they have never seen a Bible or heard about a Bible, and never heard of Jesus, but they've believed in their hearts that there was a God, and they've tried to live a life that was quite apart from the surrounding community in which they lived."

Schuller: "I'm so thrilled to hear you say this. There's a wideness in God's mercy."

Graham: "There is. There definitely is."

Robert Schuller was a liberal who taught a self-help, self-esteem false gospel. This same Schuller was highlighted and invited to the platform of Graham's 1994 Atlanta Crusade. Schuller also spoke, by invitation of Graham, at the 1986 International Conference for Itinerant Evangelists. So, as one can see, there have been numerous, cordial connections between the two men. Instead of this cooperation, Graham should have challenged Schuller on his false teaching. We have here clear cooperation with men who deny the true and pure gospel.

Several closing remarks are in order. First, we are never to cooperate and work with unbelievers in Christian service. 2 Cor. 6:14-15, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness?" Instead, we are to rebuke and seek to correct them through God's Word! 2 Tim. 3:16, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

Secondly, Graham states in the above interview with Robert Schuller that he believes someone could be saved who never heard the name of Jesus. Look again at Graham's words, "They may not even know the name of Jesus but they know in their hearts that they need something that they don't have, and they turn to the only light that they have, and I think that they are saved, and that they're going to be with us in heaven." What does Scripture say? Acts 4:12, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for

there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Verse 10 reveals that this name is "Jesus." Rom. 10:9, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved." Rom. 10:17, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

Thirdly, even though I believe Graham began with a solid gospel message, his later associations, actions, and words compromised a pure gospel message. In fact, his thinking that the Roman Catholics are his brothers and his remarks to Robert Schuller above pollute and confuse the pure gospel message of the Bible. The Roman Catholic system and the heretical teaching of liberals promote a false gospel, or as Paul puts it: "another gospel."

Led by the Holy Spirit, listen to Paul's very strong words in Gal. 1:6-9, "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."

How then could Graham justify his associations with people and groups that promoted a message that God condemns with very strong language? How could he make associations with God's enemies?

In many ways, it saddens me to write this. I have no malice towards Billy Graham, but it breaks my heart when I consider his actions. Again, I am thankful for every soul he led to Christ, but also saddened by all the confusion he caused throughout Christendom. So, if one honestly considers the words and actions of Graham's life as mentioned above, how can anyone truly praise his accomplishments? Instead, let us be warned by his life, that if we do not carefully guard ourselves, any one of us can stray from the truth of God's Word. Do not let us glory in the failures of others, but let us strive to correct those erring and fight for and promote the pure, unadulterated gospel message of the Bible.

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