



The Burning Bush—Online article archive

“Letters to the Editor” — “Allegations of alarming trends at Irish Baptist College”



Dear Editor,

Two years ago, I walked down the Sandown Road full of high hopes and enthusiasm. What would my first day be like at the IBC (Irish Baptist College)? Would my Professors be like the great Baptist men of old: Bunyan, Gill, Spurgeon and Pink? Would they too courageously defend the Truth of God and contest the heresies of man? Nearing the front door, my thoughts quickly turned to one of selfish anticipation as I noticed the students making their way to class. Having been saved, the youngest child of an Irish Catholic family, I wasn't at all sure that my classmates would accept me. Yet the Word of God in Psalm 3:3 steadied my nerves, “But thou, O LORD, art a shield for me; my glory, and the lifter up of mine head.” Little did I know that morning, how beautifully the Lord would protect me from every form of vile heresy, during my next two years at the Irish Baptist College.

I must confess that I entered the College with an unhealthy dose of naiveness. I initially mistook the friendliness of the faculty for godliness and the portrait of Spurgeon in the college hallway for orthodoxy. It was with great sadness that I soon learned that the College was a breeding ground for modernism and ecumenicalism. Women preached to the student body, ecumenicalism with Rome was heralded at morning prayers and Billy Graham was often exemplified for his faithfulness during Bible exposition. Many of the students who attended IBC reflected this same modernistic tone. They often came from Arminian and charismatic churches that denied both the finality of the atonement and the sufficiency of Scripture. Others came from churches where belief in the Trinity was optional or where sodomites were welcomed into the ministry. Worse yet, there were students who knew better and yet remained silent and indifferent to these abominations. They laughed and joked over a cup of tea with the very same students who were headed to a lost eternity. The College lectures presented an even darker apostasy from the truth, where the authority of Scripture was directly challenged. I can never forget the day when a visiting lecturer explained to the student body, that Jesus had given up something of His divinity in coming to the earth. What vile and filthy heresy!

The Lord in His mercy started to use me to speak out against many of these abominations and I was quickly branded as a “troublemaker”. As I spoke out more forcibly against the numerous departures from the Truth, my obligatory invitations to the Principal's office sadly became routine. I was challenged for everything from encouraging the singing of Psalms to my condemnation of the Arminian “easy-believism” within much of the evangelical church. Yet with each challenge from the College (which never involved an appeal to Scripture) the Lord strengthened my resolve not to compromise His Word. I can remember one day walking the four miles home with the encouraging words of Psalm 144:1 in my heart, “Blessed be the LORD my strength, which teacheth my hands to war, and my fingers to fight.” Indeed, nearly every day at the College was a spiritual fight against apostasy.



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Finally, in April of this year, I was asked to lead a devotional service for the entire student body. In preparing an appropriate message, I thought of the many souls in the pews who would soon be under the ministry of the graduating class. These souls would be the helpless prey that these hungry wolves would ravage in a number of weeks. Silence at such a time would have been ungodly. Knowing the consequences, the Lord graciously led me to expose the many heresies allowed to plague the IBC. I pointed out that our reformed fathers would have said with the prophet in Jeremiah 9:1 "Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people" if they had seen the apostasy of this church age. What the church needs today is not another "Amy Grant" concert, but a return to the solid biblical principals that exalt the sovereignty of God and humble the pride of sinful man.

The following day, I was warned that the College would soon deal with me. In the subsequent weeks, I was informed that after two years of full-time studies, I was being expelled for my "contentious" approach. Thankfully, every faithful child of God contends with sin, false doctrine and heresy. Jude 1:3 commands us to "contend for the faith which was once delivered to the saints." Indeed, I count it a great honour and privilege to be expelled for speaking the truth, rather than graduating with the shame of silence. II Timothy 3:12 reminds us that "Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." My hope and prayer is that God will raise up more men in the Baptist Union and its theological college who will stand for the truth, regardless of the cost. May God grant true reformation!

Sincerely, Sean Hanley.

The views set forth in readers' letters are not necessarily those of the Editor.