

Text: Jn 4.34-38

This afternoon I want to bring up a topic prompted partly by my recent trip to the FBFI meeting in Greenville.

For the last decade and a bit, I've served on the board of the FBFI, mostly as the editor of Proclaim & Defend. I thought that we should take the time today to talk about the FBFI and what it does.

History:

In 1920, a group of faithful pastors held a "pre-convention Convention" just before the annual meeting of the Northern Baptist Convention. They called themselves the "Fundamental Fellowship."

This meeting was one of the opening salvos in the "Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy" that shook the church world in the 1920s.

The Fundamentalist Fellowship largely protested the presence of unbelievers and Bible-deniers in the colleges and universities of the Northern Baptist Convention and on its mission board.

The Fundamentalist Fellowship lost the fight in the Northern Baptist Convention but continued to hold annual meetings and pursue fundamentalist ministry through all the ensuing years.

Our meeting this week was the 101st such meeting, only interrupted by Covid in 2020 (I couldn't attend last year due to travel restrictions).

Ministry:

For years, the ministry of the FBFI was summed up with three "m's":

Meetings

Magazine

Military

Lately, we added Proclaim & Defend, although we haven't figured out an "m" for that ministry.

The **meetings** include the national meeting (just over) and regional meetings in various locations through the continent and sometimes overseas.

The **magazine** is *FrontLine*, which you are familiar with. Our circulation is not what it once was (many magazines find the internet age challenging).

Nevertheless, it provides a welcome resource and we are glad to make it available to our church people.

The **military** ministry involves endorsing chaplains in the US military and for civilian positions as well: police chaplains, hospital chaplains, etc. We usually have at least one article in the magazine each issue about their various ministries. These men provide valuable ministry.

Proclaim & Defend is a blog ministry. There are bigger blogs, but P&D reaches somewhere around 90,000 unique computers each year as we try to publish helpful and relevant material for Christians in our world.

Support:

Most of these efforts are done entirely through volunteer efforts, but there are some costs.

We support the FBFI three ways:

1. The bulk magazine subscriptions
2. Our church ad in the magazine
3. My travel expenses to meetings

The chaplaincy and other donations also support the expenses connected with the FBFI ministry.

Since we as a church contribute to support the FBFI, I was thinking about it from a Bible perspective — how should churches think about “extra” ministries like this?

Read John 4.34-38

I. The context

A. The woman at the well

1. A Samaritan
2. Despised by Jews
3. Even somewhat outcast in her own community
4. Yet Jesus ministered to her

B. The disciples

1. Shocked...

2. But silent

C. The Lord's message: "lift up your eyes"

1. New way of thinking about people

2. Not "those rotten Samaritans"

3. But fields for harvest

One teacher of mine suggested that as Jesus said these words, the white turbans and clothes of the Samaritans were visible, as the whole village turned out to see Jesus.

II. The fields

A. We have a large field of harvest here in Victoria

1. Our primary field of effort

2. We need everyone to do what they can to bring in our harvest

B. We also have an eye to wider harvests

1. Our missionaries

a. Alaska

b. Surrey

c. Saskatchewan

d. Quebec

e. Germany

f. Mongolia

g. Myanmar/Guam

2. The world: supporting the FBFI

III. The responsibility

A. We all have much to do and many ways to contribute

B. We don't all have the same responsibility in the harvest

C. But we all have some responsibility in the harvest

D. We all rejoice together as the harvest comes in

Conclusion:

The thing is, the harvest is plenteous, and there is much to do. We should be busy doing what we can here in our harvest.

Each of us can have a part in the work, and with training, could do more in the work.

We should join in the labour, and use what gifts and talents the Lord gave us to increase the labour.

The Christian life should be a life of ministry: lift your eyes and look on the fields.