

The Connector

NEWS. PRAYER. ACTION.



IN THIS ISSUE

A Glimpse at Five Decades

Fighting 'Woke' with God's Wisdom



A Glimpse at Five Decades

JOHN D. BECKETT, IFA CO-FOUNDER AND BOARD MEMBER

When IFA was established in 1973, our vision was for a crescendo of prayer that would last through our nation's bicentennial in 1976 and then sunset. But in September of that memorable year, we took quite a different turn. A group of Christian leaders meeting in Chicago seemed to be speaking with one voice in encouraging IFA not to "retire," but rather to continue exerting a "commanding presence" into the future.

Even so, few expected that we would one day be observing a 50th anniversary. From the outset, though, we did pray that IFA would become a catalyst, coming alongside believers everywhere who had hearts to pray for our nation.

Now, in 2023, we stand amazed that God has enabled us to continue and to flourish for five decades.

Our early days were quite "bare bones." John Talcott, an IFA co-founder and our first national coordinator, assembled newsletters from his dining room table at home in Plymouth, Massachusetts, assisted by his wife, Rosalin. Little of what was being done then was automated. Every step was a labor of love. Gary Bergel, who later came to oversee the ministry until he retired in 2010, helped shape the newsletter's design and layout.

In the fall of 1975, I offered to take a partial leave of absence from business to assume responsibility for IFA, including the content, production, and distribution of the newsletter. We moved operations from Plymouth to our manufacturing company's headquarters in Elyria, Ohio, where we had office space available. Ironically, years earlier we had built an "upper room" — a "watchman's quarters," with the understanding that if our company ever became a supplier to the military, we'd need a night watchman. It was a perfect fit for IFA! Guy and Kathie Kump, a couple deeply committed to prayer, joined in facilitating these Elyria operations.

We were small, but we thought we could broaden our influence. So, we decided to run full-page ads in several national Christian magazines using the bold headline: "How Will Christians Respond During Our Nation's Bicentennial?" Intercessors across the nation responded to that call to prayer, and IFA's numbers swelled from a few thousand to more than 50,000 in just a few months. During that period, Jimmy Owens, who later joined the IFA board along with his wife, Carol, wrote the inspired musical "If My People" — a production that stirred hearts and passions to pray in ways that only music can.

Indeed, we had much to pray about. A wicked abortion industry had taken root in our nation, a bitter legacy of the fateful Roe v. Wade decision of January 1973. Turmoil engulfed the White House in the aftermath of Watergate and the resultant resignation of President Nixon. The Vietnam War had become a decades-long quagmire, not ending until 1975. IFA joined a massive effort to defeat the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. The official removal of prayer from the public schools brought about a surge in alternative forms of education, notably, private Christian schools and home schooling.

Our challenges seemed to be spiritually rooted, with the Enemy both causing and then seizing upon a pervasive moral decline in the nation. At stake, so it seemed, were America's soul and destiny. And yet, there was also much to encourage us. Out of the pervasive drug culture of the 1960s and '70s, a spiritual renewal arose and swept the nation, bringing multitudes into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ — especially young people.

Following the general feelings of despair in the 1970s that grew out of hyperinflation, high unemployment, and a hostage crisis in the Middle East, it seemed that the tide was beginning to turn. One indicator was a huge gathering

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

in Washington called The March for Jesus. I remember the grounds of the National Mall being thoroughly saturated on that gray, rainy day. But the intercessors weren't deterred. En masse, we went to our knees as speaker Pat Boone took the podium, and we declared the lordship of Christ over the city. Just then, glorious sunshine broke through the clouds, bathing the dome of the Capitol in golden light. It was as though God was assuring us, saying: "I am hearing your prayers. Keep praying. Don't give up."

Not long afterward, several ministries collaborated to hold a prayer gathering at Reunion Arena, in Dallas. Both candidates for the U.S. presidency were invited to attend. Jimmy Carter never responded, but Ronald Reagan did join us. His comments were simple yet profound: "I know you can't endorse me, but I endorse you." Thousands erupted in applause. Some believe that, at least in spiritual terms, Reagan won the highest office in the land that very evening.

As if to underscore the depths of spiritual warfare we were facing, a separate event was taking place that night in a hall adjacent to ours within Reunion Arena. There, the rock group Black Sabbath had drawn long lines of innocent youngsters — lambs unaware of the evil they were about to encounter. Above the stage, a huge image of Satan leered down, a crass reminder of the Enemy's desire to capture those young people as prey, and even to challenge the power of prayer being unleashed next door!

In the early 1980s, we moved our offices to the northern Virginia suburbs and Gary became our executive director. During the Reagan administration, IFA was favored with an occasional "seat at the table" in the White House. President Reagan was attentive and responsive. He saw spiritual breakthrough as more essential than human wisdom in restoring the health of our nation. Looking back, we see this as a high-water mark, a period in which people of faith enjoyed unparalleled access to the president — a president who, as we observed, set righteousness foremost among our nation's guiding principles.

While this access was encouraging, IFA's focus remained on our influence in the heavenlies, not the nation's institutions of power. We were content with a relatively small "Gideon's army" of serious intercessors. We wondered if the numbers could grow, yielding a force more proportional to serving the growing needs of the nation.

That goal seems to have been on God's own heart, and not just on ours. Recently, something quite amazing has occurred. Perhaps believers have become more desperate, and certainly, new technologies have contributed. But whatever the reasons, the number of people linked together through IFA in prayer and spiritual influence is reaching new highs almost monthly.

Today, under the leadership of CEO and President Dave Kubal and his wonderful team, the stature and wide respect now granted to little IFA has been astounding to each of us — including this writer, being "one of modest faith" who happened to be there at the beginning.

We insist on *not* presuming. This is an IFA core value. But we are quite right to view these 50 years with amazement and gratitude that we have been at least a small part of our nation's destiny. From the outset, it was encouraging to us that we could take part in shaping the history of America. And by God's grace and with the zeal of hundreds of thousands of intercessors, we believe that this will continue.

Moving forward, we will continue to hold onto IFA *lightly*. We know that the imperative of prevailing prayer will continue until the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. Our own role in the days ahead is to steward the privilege and the trust He has committed to us: prayer and fasting on behalf of our great nation and its leadership.

We are an *army*:
Intercessors for America.

First Friday

NEXT CALL IS FRIDAY

June 2, 2023

12:15 PM ET

CALL (667) 771-7910, CODE 2452#

WEBCAST IFApray.org/watch

Join with thousands across the U.S. in praying for America, its leaders, and its citizens on the first Friday of every month.

IFA'S 50

Let's offer God joyful thanksgiving for His faithfulness to IFA through these past 50 years. Thank Him for raising up this glorious and growing remnant of intercessors crying out to Him day and night for His justice on the earth. When the Son of Man returns, may He find us faithful. He has raised us up for His own eternal purposes on the earth, making us a shining light and a testimony of His sovereign power to our generation and before all the world. Thank Him for His good plans in the coming days.

WOKE POLICIES

Ask the Lord to restore sanity to our nation. Entreat Him to guide us in His wisdom and to deliver us from the devil's "wokeness." Ask Him to frustrate the plots of those wielding malignant powers of influence. Let's pray that God would instruct and correct those who govern this nation, on every level, so that they recognize "wokeness" for the satanic deception that it is. Ask our Lord to drive back all the powers of darkness in our land and grant us His light and life instead.

PRIDE MONTH

During June, politicians, companies, hospitals, and others publicly celebrate "lifestyles" that grieve and offend the Creator. While the world observes Pride Month, let the Church observe Humility Month: Let's pray, fast, and implore the Lord to grant His mercies to those deceived souls who are trapped in sexual confusion. Let's pray that God would be pleased to transform all "pride" into humility, for our Lord Jesus' sake — and that what the devil has intended for evil, our God would turn into great good for all humanity.



Fighting 'Woke' with God's Wisdom

JUDY MCDONOUGH, IFA COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

Former acting Attorney General Matthew Whitaker (Trump administration) joined IFA in Washington, D.C., for a Policy & Prayer event. Invited to speak about woke policies, Whitaker chose to talk to intercessors about his faith. His personal testimony riveted the audience.



Matthew Whitaker (photo by Stephen Maturen/Getty Images)

"Often, people like me are caricatured," he said, explaining that Bible-believing Christians in public positions of influence experience the pressures of woke policies in ways that most intercessors may not understand. "If I want a dose of humbleness, which I get almost every day from various sources," he said, "I just have to pull up my Wikipedia and see that I've been very much criticized for my faith; for saying that I think judges should be believers; that I think our country is better off with people of faith in public office."

Raised and confirmed a Methodist, Whitaker followed his parents' example. Yet, in adulthood, he was drawn to conservative branches of Lutheranism that hold to the Bible as the inerrant word of God. More personally, he described himself to the group as "a true human being, and, just like you, I'm also a poor, miserable sinner in need of a savior. And every day I recommit, through

devotion, study, and prayer, to continue the walk."

Whitaker says he believes that God has created him for a purpose on earth. He prays for God's will to be done and that he might be used by God "however He sees fit to expand His kingdom here on earth." Believing this, Whitaker has tried consciously never to shy away from representing himself and his life as different because of Christ.

"And at the same time," Whitaker noted, "I try not to be arrogant in my faith — that I think somehow I have solved all the world's problems." He described how the Founders aimed to "form a more perfect union." Whitaker says he aims to display the kind of humility that can undergird the aspirational goals in faith and life.

With years of experience in law and government, Whitaker showed that he knows what he is speaking about when he told IFA: "It's very difficult to find ways to have those conversations with people who, quite frankly, are hostile to *what* we believe and *how* we believe." This is why he talked about his faith first and foremost when asked to discuss woke policies; engaging in the public square at this time in American history inevitably raises these questions for believers.

Whitaker's wise answer? "I'm always reminded that, to some extent, none of what I do is for me. I'm an instrument, and I am someone who is asking God to use me as an instrument." This is the essence of how a public official and an intercessor can battle woke policy — with spiritual weapons given by God, rather than with the weapons of the world.

TEAR-OFF

WE DECLARE

Hope

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope (Jer. 29:11).

God, we know You have good plans for us, and we praise You.

Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer (Rom. 12:12).

Lord, I choose to rejoice in hope, to be patient in every challenge that comes my way, and constant in prayer. You alone are my hope — I will trust in You.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead ... (1 Pet. 1:3).

The hope that lives in me is alive and full of Holy Spirit power through the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ! For this, Lord, I give You praise! Amen.

For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope (Rom. 15:4).

Through Your word I have hope and receive encouragement.

... and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has

IFApray.org

TEAR-OFF



been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us (Rom. 5:5).

God's hope in me never brings shame, nor does it disappoint. God's love has been poured into my heart by the Holy Spirit, and therefore I am filled to overflowing. In Jesus' name. Amen.

For surely there is a latter end [a future and a reward]; and your hope and expectation shall not be cut off (Prov. 23:18 AMP).

I am assured of a future and a great reward. My expectation and hope will not be deterred; it will come to pass. Amen.

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful (Heb. 10:23).

I will hold fast to hope and confess my hope in God without wavering, regardless of what I see or hear, because I trust God, and He who promised is so very faithful. In Jesus' name. Amen.

We have this as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul, a hope that enters into the inner place behind the curtain ... (Heb. 6:19).

Father, You are my sure and steadfast anchor. My hope and my soul are anchored in You alone. Amen.

Since we have such a hope, we are very bold ... (2 Cor. 3:12).

The righteous are as bold as a lion because our hope is in You, God. Thank You for the boldness to declare Your word and Your will throughout our land. In Jesus' name. Amen.

FIND MORE RESOURCES LIKE THIS AT

IFApray.org

TEAR-OFF

Answered Prayers

Konnech Drops Lawsuit

Konnech (the company that illegally stored data about poll workers) dropped all litigation against True the Vote (the organization that exposed them). This aggressive litigation had resulted in the wrongful imprisonment of True the Vote leaders and amounted to an attempt to shut down discussion about Konnech's election activities. True the Vote remains committed to "fostering a public conversation about voting integrity."

Arkansas Protects Freedom

The state of Arkansas enacted the Conscience Protection Act, which bans state government from taking "any discriminatory action against a religious organization on the basis of the religious identity or status of the religious organization." This law ensures a fair hearing for citizens alleging government infringement of religious freedom.

Reversal on Kids' Books

A Georgia school district has been ordered to reinstate a substitute teacher fired for objecting to a book about same-sex couples being read to children, and also to pay that teacher over \$180,000. Progressive groups are decrying the record number of book "bans" this year and last, but Christians know this is an answer to prayer as parents and educators continue to demand the protection of children from unbiblical and immoral content.

Baptisms Sweep Nation

Across the nation, churches of various denominations report an increase in the number of conversions and baptisms of people of every age and background. In Reno, Nevada, 35 men were baptized in a prison — the first baptisms there in seven years. *Not to us, O LORD, not to us, but to your name give glory, for the sake of your steadfast love and your faithfulness! (Ps. 115:1).*



SHAPING
HISStory
CELEBRATION
8 GALA
November 9-10, 2023

50 years of
answered
prayer!



The Connector, provided on request, is published 10 times annually. IFA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit ministry. All Scripture references are ESV unless otherwise noted. Contents may be reproduced, except for items separately copyrighted; please credit IFA.

IFA Office: PO Box 915,
Purcellville, VA 20134;

Tel: 800-USA-PRAY;

e-mail: IFA@IFApray.org

IFA Websites: IFApray.org,
HeadlinePrayer.org, and
PrayforAmericasLeaders.com



*A higher standard.
A higher purpose.*