

# A Report on the IFCA Annual Convention (Part 3)

By PAUL J. SCHARF

Another topic that received almost as much attention as the main theme at this year's IFCA International Annual Convention, which was held in Lincoln, Neb., from June 28 to July 2, was social justice as well as the related subjects of critical race theory, intersectionality and wokeness.

In this final installment of a series about the convention, I will attempt to sum up a great deal of discussion that occurred on this topic.

First of all, on Tuesday morning, it was the subject of the first theological panel called, "Race and the Social Justice Issue." Panel participants were as follows:

- Dr. Richard Bargas, executive director, IFCA International
- Dr. Alexander Granados, president, Calvary University in Kansas City, Mo.
- Dan Fredericks, executive director, UIM International in Glendale, Ariz.
- Dr. Gary Gilley, senior pastor, Southern View Chapel in Springfield, Ill.
- Chad DeJong, senior pastor, Byron Center Bible Church in Byron Center, Mich.
- Steve Wong, senior pastor, Fellowship Bible Church, in Belmont, Calif.

Gilley also presented a theology round table discussion on Thursday afternoon that dealt with these issues, and the subjects came up in other contexts, as well. IFCA members also ratified a resolution titled "Resolution on Social Justice."<sup>i</sup>

All of the men on the panel contributed articles to the May-June 2021 issue of *VOICE* Magazine, which is published by IFCA International. The theme of the issue was "Critical Race Theory, Justice & the Bible."<sup>ii</sup>

Granados, who was born in Bogotá, Colombia, talked about *social justice* as a repackaging of that which was formerly called *liberation theology*—because, he said, that was "a bitter pill to swallow for evangelicals."

Bargas said that the link between the two is actually the *social gospel*.

Granados went on to discuss one of the concerns at the base of all of these "secular philosophies"<sup>iii</sup>—a term used in the resolution—poverty. He referenced the teaching of Christ in Matthew 26:11:

For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always.

Granados stressed the importance of discerning the factors that contribute to poverty before offering solutions. He also emphasized how Scripture must inform any action that we take to deal with poverty. The ultimate need of those trapped in poverty is to know

Christ and to grow in Him, he said, explaining how that is superior to attempting “to advance a social/political agenda.”

“The only way (poverty) ends is with Christ’s return,” he added. “There is no human agenda to change that.”

“It is very easy to develop a hermeneutic of experience,” Granados stated. “Their whole lens is that experience.”

“We are ministering to the whole person,” Bargas stated.

“We have to define justice and righteousness Biblically,” Fredericks said, noting that God’s character alone is the basis for doing so.

“The definitions have been changed so dramatically,” DeJong added. Granados said that the secularists are “dictating terms” by using the language of “power structures” (such as the *war on poverty*), calling that “Marxist language.”

“They are masters of combative language,” he said. “It’s always an attempt to change our hermeneutic and to redefine our terms.”

“Intersectionality is who has power by the world’s definition,” stated DeJong.

Gilley said the proponents of such philosophies “are adding to the gospel.” He said the end result will be that the gospel will become less prominent for them.

“Our identity is bound in Christ,” Granados concluded. “The solution is the gospel.”

Next year’s convention will be held at the Marriott Albuquerque Pyramid North in Albuquerque, N.M., from June 27 to July 1, 2022.

*Paul J. Scharf (M.A., M.Div., Faith Baptist Theological Seminary) is a church ministries representative for The Friends of Israel Gospel Ministry, based in Columbus, WI, and serving in the Midwest. For more information on his ministry, visit [sermonaudio.com/pscharf](http://sermonaudio.com/pscharf) or [foi.org/scharf](http://foi.org/scharf), or email [pscharf@foi.org](mailto:pscharf@foi.org).*

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®.

Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

---

<sup>i</sup> IFCA International; 8 July 2021; <https://www.ifca.org/blog/Advancing%20the%20Cause/resolution-on-social-justice>; Internet; accessed 22 July 2021.

<sup>ii</sup> Vol. 100, No. 3. This issue can also be accessed online at IFCA International; <https://www.ifca.org/file/2ef529c0-e970-11eb-9a41-239c885721a6>; Internet; accessed 22 July 2021.

<sup>iii</sup> “Resolution on Social Justice,” IFCA International; Internet; accessed 22 July 2021.