

# Regular Baptist Review



"A Perspective of Historic Regular Baptist Principles"

Fall 1987

## History of the Eastern Regional Meetings

Dr. Ralph Colas

A concern shared . . . This was what brought a nucleus of men from a number of eastern states to the first meeting in March, 1986. All of these individuals recognized a drift in our Fellowship that was taking us away from our historic moorings. Prayer and discussion were on the agenda that day, as a possible plan of action was considered. A decision was made to schedule a rally and a conference to determine if others shared this same burden.

These goals were agreed upon:

1) To reaffirm in our minds and hearts the original purpose of the G.A.R.B.C. as stated in its Constitution.

2) To seek the Lord's direction for unity and growth in the Regular Baptist Movement.

3) To articulate our Regular Baptist heritage.

4) To stress the Biblical Doctrine of Separation including "secondary separation."

5) To encourage and challenge our pastors and people to press on for the glory of God, for the purity of the church, and for more effective ministries of soul winning and church planting.

6) To propose projects which will strengthen our Regular Baptist Movement.

Dr. L. Duane Brown and his people of the Parsippany Baptist Church, Parsippany, New Jersey, rolled out the "Red Carpet" and were the most gracious hosts for a Eastern Regional Rally of G.A.R.B. churches on November 10-11, 1986. More than 300

pastors and laymen from 250 churches were in attendance at this rally. There was excellent preaching by eight speakers from across the Nation. A special feature was a two-hour discussion time when questions could be directed to the eight present or former Council of 18 members. In addition, two important resolutions were passed at Parsippany by those in attendance.

The first meeting gave a promise of the good things to come at the Spring Conference scheduled for May, 1987. Dr. Richard Harris and the Bethel Baptist Church in Sellersville, Pennsylvania opened their

hearts and homes to the Conference attendees. The theme was based on Jeremiah 6:16, "Ask for the old paths and walk therein." The goal was to Expound and Explain the Biblical Doctrine of Ecclesiastical Separation.

More than 1,000 Regular Baptists from at least 19 states gathered in that lovely church auditorium. The music was again led by Reverend Gary Briggs of Farmington, New York, and it was a delight. Powerful preaching and timely workshops were appreciated by those who came.

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## Revival! What Is It?

by Rev. Jack Keep

Revival! The word itself makes one think of vitality and new life. Webster defines revival as "a bringing back or coming back into use, attention, or being after a decline." An authority on revival defines it as "a new beginning of obedience to God". Revival is distinctive from evangelism in that it has to do with the "strengthening of those things which remain" among believers.

There are few who would deny that we need revival in America today. We Regular Baptists realize that we need "a new beginning of obedience to God" in our own lives, our churches, and in our Fellowship.

The General Association of Regular Baptist Churches had its birth in the midst of a revival. It was not the kind of revival we usually think of with stir-

ring music, evangelistic preaching and altar calls, but a life or death struggle called the "Modernist-Fundamentalist conflict". It was a revival in the sense that the fundamentalists attempted to revive the fundamentals of the faith within the Northern Baptist Convention. The doctrinal emphasis was revived but not in the way the Fundamentalists had attempted. The course of events over the years 1920-1932 led to the realization that the struggle in the Convention would not be won by the fundamentalists, and that the Scriptural course was to be obedient to 2 Cor. 6:14-18. The G.A.R.B.C. was founded in 1932 as a separatist association. Any church wishing fellowship had to completely sepa-

See "REVIVAL" page 4

## What Happened At Ames?

Dr. Richard Harris

Ames, Iowa, in the heartland of America, was the setting of the 1987 General Association of Regular Baptist National Conference in June. The spiritual temperature was warm and inviting, and the quality of the Conference was great. The insistent demands of knowledgeable and dedicated men and women in our Fellowship was felt, as good music and great preaching prevailed throughout the week. Thank God for His goodness, and let us be encouraged by the evident desire of our messengers for this kind of gathering.

On the other hand, while the spirit of the Conference was great, the alien views we are facing within the Fellowship were never more sharply focused. It reminded me of the words of Charles Dickens' historic classic, *"It was the best of times: it was the worst of times."* The subtle philosophies that could well undermine the future for all of us are becoming progressively clearer. It is true, they are probably held by only a few, but it was disturbing for those who love the Truth and who are determined to maintain continued allegiance to our original purpose.

The only way a ship can maintain a proper course is to constantly check itself by its navigational instruments, and then make the proper corrections. If a ship's crew should become very defensive and either refuse to check the instruments or to admit that they may be deviating from their course, then they will make no adjustments and the drift off course will become more pronounced as time passes. This process of checking our course is so necessary in our individual lives and in our Fellowship, but how difficult it is to do. This is the underlying need for the prayer for revival. May we, in the spirit of meekness and humility, call for His guidance and make the corrections.

Just such a warning and need of a

change of course was sounded at Ames. Pastor Peter Waud, Calvary Baptist Church, Port Angeles, Washington, made the following introductory comments and motion from the platform in Iowa:

*"Los Angeles Baptist College had full approval status right up to the day it was turned over to an interdenominational, non-Baptist leadership and program. Don't look for fundamentalist, separatist, Baptist pastors and missionaries coming from that school in the future. It is lost to our cause. Yet, we were in no way warned by our examining body that there was so much as a problem there.*

*Northwest Baptist Seminary has, in its recent history, lost a professor because he was too conservative for them and its president because his position on ecclesiastical separation was too narrow for them. Our schools ought to be looking for men like this, not losing them.*

*Western Baptist College has been promoting itself in CBA circles for a number of years now. It has run two CBA men for its Board of Trustees. It recruits actively in their churches and uses its men as speakers. This is only the tip of the iceberg. The problem is that the CBA has not gotten more conservative and moved toward us. This just is not the case.*

*All three of these problems illustrate the need for greater care in examining, reviewing and approving schools in our Fellowship.*

*I therefore move that we, the messengers to the 1987 GARBC Conference, request that the Council of 18 use greater care in its review and approval of our schools."*

The motion was seconded by Pastor Dan Corbett of First Baptist Church of Freeland, Washington. It passed by a vote of 355 to 312.

Should we not be thankful for such an evident desire by the churches to keep our Fellowship on course? By

allowing all issues to be clearly and openly debated, truth is identified and right is accomplished. This anxious and honest effort to shed light on the trends in our Fellowship was not easy. It took courage and conviction to call for this reminder to our messengers, and *"no small stir"* was created. The reaction of some in leadership to this however, has been something less than appreciation. It was closer to the *"silent treatment."*

It is our hope that this publication can shed light on our need for revival, so that we might fulfill the purpose our Founders chose for us and with which we agree. *"Give me understanding,"* the Psalmist said, *"and I shall keep thy law; yea, I will observe it with my whole heart."* (Psalms 119:34) It is the opinion and hope of this writer that this is the sentiment of the vast majority of God's people within our Fellowship.

Let's pray together for:

1. A revival of appreciation and emphasis of our Baptist distinctives and heritage.
2. A revival of wholeheartedness within our Fellowship that will reflect and articulate our historic purpose for existence and the Biblical cause of separateness and distinctiveness.
3. A revival of concern for souls and a return to old fashioned soul winning.
4. A revival of the spirit of militancy in the battle for truth. The enemies of the Gospel have multiplied, not diminished in the last fifty years. They have become more subtle and deceptive, and they demand aggressiveness in unveiling their cunning.
5. A revival of emphasis on our local church fellowship, the magnification of the office of pastor, and the concept of accountability of colleges and schools to the local churches. ■

*Coming Winter Issue: February, 1988*

**“G.A.R.B.C. Approval System”**

*Your ideas and comments are welcome!*

## History of the Eastern Regional Meetings (conclusion)

Many requests have been forthcoming for the printed messages and tapes of both of these conferences. They may be ordered from **Regular Baptists for Revival**, 754 E. Rockhill Road, Sellersville, PA 18960.

Five pertinent resolutions were adopted by unanimous vote. One resolution expressed concern over the trends in the approved schools and agencies. *“which are inconsistent with the historic Regular Baptist position.”* Also, a lengthy statement on the danger of contemporary rock music to our churches was published by men who served on the Steering Committee.

The Steering Committee that provided leadership for these meetings consisted of representatives from every state association in the East. These committeemen now believe

they have accomplished what they set out to do . . . to focus national attention on the problem. The purpose never has been to be devious but rather to strengthen our Association by and through our existing state fellowships.

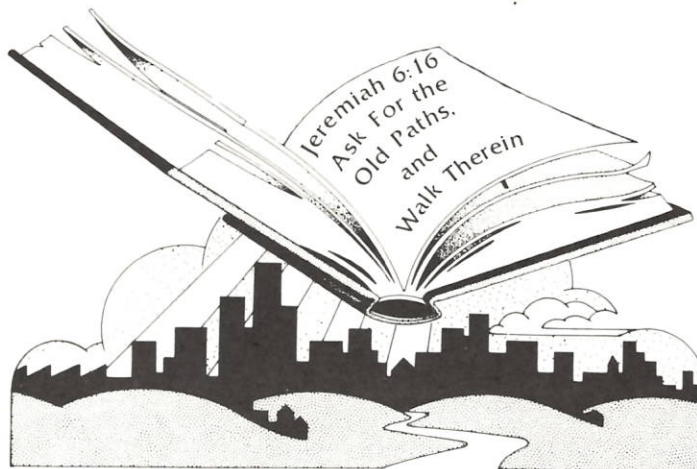
On July 21, 1987, the Steering Committee was disbanded. This was not done because the battle is over. A challenge was issued to the state associations to carry on the struggle for a return to our historic purpose as Regular Baptists.

While our Steering Committee is no longer in the leadership role, a nationwide group of pastors and laymen has been organized. Sensing the great need for revival in our individual lives, churches, and our Fellowship, this group is called the **Regular Baptists For Revival**. Revival will bring growth and strength

into homes and churches as well as to our Fellowship.

The Regular Baptists for Revival have now announced the first of several planned conferences across the nation. Please mark your calendar for *May 3-5, 1988* for the first one. The Bible Baptist Church in West Chester, Pennsylvania and Rev. E. Allen Griffith have invited us for this strategic conference. An indication already is shown that many pastors and laymen from across the U.S.A. are planning to attend.

This new publication, **Regular Baptist Review**, is designed to inform our pastors and people of crucial issues which we face. Let us join in the heart-felt prayer of the psalmist: *“Lord, wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?”* (Psalm 85:6) ■



## Revival! What Is It? (conclusion)

rate from the Northern Baptist Convention and from any other organizations permitting the presence of modernists or modernism.

When the Conservative Baptists left the convention in 1946, the Regular Baptists met with their leaders to determine if there was some ground for merger. The key issue was **separation**; the Conservatives were determined to follow a policy of dual affiliation which would permit churches to remain in the Convention while affiliating with the CBA. With the rise of the "New Evangelicalism" the applications and implications of Biblical separation became more evident. Obedience to God demands that there be times when we must separate from other believers who are disobedient (2 Thess. 3:6, 14).

Changing times, the emphasis on unity, the updating of our faith and practice, the decline of morality, and widespread worldliness among believers began to have an effect on the churches. Popular conferences and seminars organized by New Evangelicals were attended by pastors and recommended to their people.

In the words of James Burns, author of **Revivals, Their Laws and Leaders**: "In the lowered spiritual tone, abuses began to creep in, at first furtively, but with ever increasing effrontery until the whole body is permeated with worldliness . . . In dead and unspiritual times preachers continue to use the old words . . . but now devitalized."

We still pronounce our shibboleths regarding the doctrine of separation, but apologetically and with less conviction. In some areas of our Fellowship, we are closer to the CBA than in 1946, even though the stronger separatists left the CBA long ago. One of our "approved" schools has CBA men on the Board and on the faculty - one of these a former president of CBA. Has the new evangelical position of the CBA become more agreeable to us? Formerly the By-Laws of this school restricted membership on its Council to those who were members of

Baptist churches "which are known to repudiate inclusivism in their ecclesiastical relationships." In 1987 the By-Laws were revised to read: "who hold active membership in conservative, separatist Baptist churches." The CBA constitution incorporates the inclusive policy in Article Four, Section One: "The affiliates of the Association shall consist of: 1) Autonomous Baptist churches **without regard to other affiliations.**" This "Achilles heel" led to a situation that Ernest Pickering described in 1963:

*"Among a large segment of Conservative Baptists, the general philosophy of the National Association of Evangelicals is dominant. This, coupled with considerable interdenominationalism, has leavened the movement, weakened its position on separation, undermined its doctrinal convictions, and helped to foment the difficulty which now obtains . . ."*

### **(Betrayal on the Boardwalk.)**

Have the Conservative Baptists moved closer to us or are we moving closer to them?

The G.A.R.B.C. started out as an association of **churches**. A missionary and educational policy was developed which provided approval for agencies. These agencies are autonomous and theoretically may be removed from the approval list, as several were in the 1930's. However, this has become mere theory as is evident in the continued approval of Los Angeles Baptist College for 10 years, while it was drifting toward New Evangelism and interdenominationalism.

Over the years we have innocently allowed the agencies to exert an undue influence on the Association by having paid agency men and unpaid board members of the agencies serve on the Council of 18 which approves those same agencies! It appears we have developed into a Fellowship to promote and defend agencies rather than a fellowship of churches. This fact was self evident in the debate on the motion from the

floor regarding approval during the business session at Ames. (Described in Dr. Harris' article in this issue). Those who opposed the resolution did not deny the charges raised about the schools, but rather defended the practice of the schools.

In an informal session, one of the speakers was asked about eliminating the approval system. His response was that it would be a mistake to "dismantle our Fellowship" in this way. It is contradictory to insist the agencies are autonomous and also say it would be "dismantling the Fellowship" to eliminate the approval system. The Fellowship existed before the approval system. Now it appears that the Association cannot control the agencies, but the agencies can control the Fellowship. This is not a new problem.

Dr. Pickering complained in 1963 that "Conservative Baptists have gone a long way toward a board-controlled movement rather than a church-controlled movement".

David Benedict, in **50 Years Among the Baptists**, written in 1859, commenting on the conduct of associations, says:

*"Before the rise of modern benevolent institutions, our associations were at full liberty to attend to their own proper work without any interference from any quarter, but as soon as agents began to visit them from different directions and for different objects, a great change took place."*

We need a revival of the concept of a Fellowship of **churches**. The present attempt to pump life into the Association by church growth and church planting is commendable, but it will not give us what we need most - **Revival!** Charles Spurgeon said, "The desire must not be for full churches, frequent conversions, flourishing organizations, but God's glory that we want to see promoted" (**Spurgeon on Revival.**) Revival means new obedience to God, non-conformity to the world and a return to the "old paths". ■

*Plan to Attend . . .***REGULAR BAPTISTS FOR REVIVAL CONFERENCE**

May 3 - 5, 1988

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

**Bible Baptist Church**

West Chester, Pennsylvania

**Rev. E. Allen Griffith, Pastor****An Invitation . . .**

Do you desire to pray with us and be identified as a Regular Baptist for Revival? You may not agree with every view-point expressed in this publication, but you do agree we need revival and a new openness and a new obedience to God. If you wish to be listed, write the Editor, Dr. Richard Harris.

**Listed below are pastors and laymen who desire to be identified as Regular Baptists for Revival.**

Mr. Tom Aikin, NJ  
 Mr. Jim Alderfer, NJ  
 Dr. Bryce Augsburg, IL  
 Mr. Roger Baker, PA  
 Mr. John Barch, NJ  
 Rev. Kevin Bauder, IA  
 Mr. Dennis Belford, PA  
 Rev. Charles Benedict, NY  
 Rev. Warren Birdsall, PA  
 Rev. Daniel Bong, WA  
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 Rev. Daniel Brown, NJ  
 Dr. Duane Brown, NJ  
 Mr. Bruce Christman, NJ  
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**Regular Baptists for Revival**  
 754 E. Rockhill Road  
 Sellersville, PA 18960

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## “Art Thou He That Troubleth Israel”

by Dr. Richard Harris

Ahab's words must have burned into Elijah's soul. It was Elijah whose heart longed for the blessing of God upon Israel. Elijah was the one who had *“prayed earnestly that it might not rain”* and received the answer to his prayers. He was the one who had clung to the promise of God in Deuteronomy 11:16-17, that the deceived eyes of Israel would be opened. Elijah was the one who was *“very jealous for the Lord God of hosts.”*

It is not unusual for God's ministers to be spoken of as troublers of peoples and nations. Faithful Amos was charged with conspiring against Jeroboam. (Amos 7:10). It was said of Paul and Silas at Philippi that they did *“exceedingly trouble the city.”* (Acts 16:20) Even the Saviour was accused of *“stirring up the people.”* (Luke 13:5) It is the duty of God's servant to warn men of danger, though men do not like to hear it. It will not add to his popularity, since it will irritate their false peace, and such plain speaking is annoying to them. He has no choice however, for his burden is the honor of God.

Elijah's answer was clear. He denied the charge and returned it upon the head of Ahab. He then confirmed it with the facts and made it

clear for those who wished to see. Elijah was not easily intimidated, nor was he a cringing sycophant who would throw himself in mean submission at Ahab's feet. Instead, he was the ambassador of a greater King, and he acted the part. He demanded that a convocation of God's people be called together and the truth be faced. *“Away with this confusion,”* was his message. *“If the Lord be God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him.”*

Ahab's shadowy counterpart, our adversary the Devil, hurls the same accusation against us today. *“Art thou he that troubleth the peace of the GARBC?”* We do not hesitate to answer, *“No.”*

What a glorious past we have had as a Fellowship! I cannot speak for others, only myself, but for twenty-six years, we have stood together with others of *“like precious faith.”* For decades, our blessed Association has stood for the honor of Christ and His Word and for the Separatist Cause. It encouraged and challenged me as a young pastor and stirred my heart to accomplish great things for God. I have loved it and still do. I am not for division. I am for the honor of God and the truth of His Word. I am not for a *“trumpet that gives an*

*uncertain sound,”* but for a testimony that is consistent and clear.

The conflict we face in this generation is not the same as was fought in the early days of our beginning. Then it was the control of denominational machinery by the Liberals and Apostates. Now, they are well entrenched in all of the major church organizations. Then, men and organizations took their stand. Relationships may not have always been courteous, but positions were clear.

Today, confusion reigns supreme. The conflict is now the seducing, the demoralizing, the weakening, the crippling and disabling of the men and movements in Fundamentalism. It is the health and vitality of our Regular Baptist cause and its ability to communicate the truth that is at stake. The best protection against the infection of false teaching and compromise is the continued injection of the truth.

No, a thousand times no. We are not the troublers. We are not the enemy. Nor are our Regular Baptist brethren the enemy. Our opposition is the arch-enemy of God and the truth. It is Satan and his insidious philosophies. Our call is the same as Elijah's - a call to revival and consistency. ■

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### Regular Baptists for Revival

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