

# Regular Baptist Review



"A Perspective of Historic Baptist Principles"

Dr. Richard A. Harris, Editor

Fall 1988

## Where Do We Go From Here?

Dr. Richard A. Harris

A friend of Regular Baptist separatism recently wrote in a publication asking the question concerning the agenda for the future. It is a good question, and many people are beginning to discuss it. At this point, we would not presume to say what actions ought to be taken, but certainly if we are willing to talk with one another honestly and face our problems, God has promised to give us His wisdom and direction "But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering" James 1:5) James said, "A double minded man is unstable in all his ways." Obedience to His Word, and dedication to the original purpose clause of the GARBC, a Biblical precept, is not optional. We dare not waver. We must correct our course.

To deny the "drift" in our fellowship, or to refuse to admit there is division, is to condemn ourselves to ultimate shipwreck. Are we "spiritual" enough to judge all things, as Paul writes? Are we mature enough and gentlemen enough to discuss issues and correct our course? We hope we can. God can send us revival. Only the future will tell whether we pastors in the Fellowship, have the willing and courageous hearts to effect the return to an honest alignment with our historic purpose.

For some time now, we have been asking God to give us and our brethren a revival of obedience to God's revealed will concerning the purity of the church. In a brochure, printed over a year ago, we enumerated our goals. We repeat them here, so that we do not lose our way in the discussion that is

thankfully beginning to occur.

*"In view of the changing emphasis in our beloved GARBC, we, as loyal pastors and laymen, wish to articulate our goals:*

1. To reaffirm in our hearts and minds the original purpose of the GARBC, as stated in its Biblical purpose clause.
2. To seek God's direction for the unity and growth of our Regular Baptist Movement.
3. To articulate our Regular Baptist heritage.

4. To stress the doctrine of ecclesiastical 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."

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## Church Sovereignty And The GARBC

Mr. David A. Norris

Setbacks at Anaheim are only proofs of problems in the GARBC involving some very important doctrines. Primary is the doctrine of church sovereignty. Failure to uphold this doctrine organizationally at the Association level has created confusion and contributed to difficulty in curtailing deviations from the doctrine of separation. We are encouraged by what seems to be a lessening of the fear in pastors of incurring hierarchical disfavor, and a growing willingness to openly disagree. This will help in the dialogue needed at the grassroots to get changes in the GARBC Constitution. We believe it can at last be turned around.

It seems to us the KEY ISSUE of this struggle is whether to correct the hirearchical problem that exists, when agencies (education, mission, social)

are given church equivalency to vote on the churches' Association's ruling Council. We do not believe the proliferation of opinion and practice, at odds with the traditional position of the GARBC on separation, can be dealt with realistically until the hierarchical problem is corrected. By the Association's ruling Council, we are referring to the Council of 18. The Council meets, has an agenda and votes on various matters. It has working committees. It appoints individuals to carry out tasks and has a chairman. The Council has total authority to rule on continued endorsement of agencies initially approved by the Association. A salaried employee of an agency on the churches' Association's ruling Council gets to vote for approval of the See "CHURCH SOVEREIGNTY" page 4

## What Shall We Do With Jehoshaphat?

Rev. Darris Hauser

"Oh, to be recognized! To be treated as an equal! If it is true that power corrupts, it is also true that the desire for prestige corrupts.

Ahab, King of Israel, had ruled four years when Jehoshaphat ascended the throne of Judah. He was a rightful heir to Judah's throne, being a descendent of David. But King Ahab was a child of the Devil. The other a child of God. And herein lies the tale.

Ahab was exceedingly wicked! I Kings 16:30. He married outside the family of Israel and adopted the worship of his wife's religion and built an altar to Baal. He was truly a liberal. He also was a man of unbridled passion as seen in the unhappy story of Naboth, as well as his attitude toward the prophet, Micaiah.

Jehoshaphat, on the other hand, was a godly man who has the eternal epitaph: "He sought the Lord." Therefore God gave him, among other things, honor. In his first years he recognized the danger of Ahab's Israel: II Chron. 17:1,2. But after certain years something apparently happens. The Lord's enemy is no longer his enemy! Could it have been that corrupting power of desire for ever greater prestige? We see this great man saying to one who hated the Lord "I am as thou art." I Chron. 18:3. "How are the mighty fallen!" To Ahab's stinging criticism of the faithful Micaiah, Jehoshaphat could only

muster a mild "Oh, don't say that." He not only (yoked) the people of depraved Israel with Judah, but also their horses! I Kings 22:4. It appears that his ecumenical spirit had taken over his evangelical heart and though he worshipped in the Mosaic tradition and experiences the blessing of Jehovah, he finds some reason to fraternize with one whose God is not the Lord. Did he believe that Ahab could be won to Christ? Ahab's only sense of repentance came, not from this compromising friend, but from the scorching rebuke of Elijah: I Kings 21:27.

Indeed such activity by Jehoshaphat brought rebuke to himself. Consider the stern rebuke by Jehu: "Shouldst thou help the ungodly, and love those that hate the Lord." II Chron. 19:2. It makes one think of II John vs. 11 "He that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deed." (This verse clinched the separation debate for this writer nearly 40 years ago.) Consider also the statement by Elisha in II Kings 3:14. Why did not Jehoshaphat have this same attitude? Surely he must have blushed with shame. He got involved with some type of business venture with Ahab's equally wicked son, and God's wrath destroyed the enterprise. II Chron. 20:35 -37. It appears that Jehoshaphat may have now learned the lesson, for he refused another venture. I Kings 22:49.

But the damage was done. It was too late to retrieve the defiled purity of Judah. The results of this compromising good king were to haunt the people of God for years to come. Jehoshaphat would not see it, would not have to witness what his actions would eventually cost the kingdom, and how those actions would bring the dynasty and thus the Seed Line of the Messiah dangerously close to extinction. Jehoshaphat's son married Ahab's daughter! And why not? Any wise father should see that potential of such fellowship. This son, Jehoram, with his wicked wife, Athaliah, introduced the ways of Athaliah's father to Judah. II Chron. 21:4 - 11. One of the saddest epitaphs possible was written of him: "departed without being desired." He was only 40 years old, but died of great disease.

Now his son is on the throne: Ahaziah (also called Azuriah) is a young man and has his mother, that daughter of Ahab, as his counsellor. He also dies at a young age. Like his grandfather, he was visiting Ahab's people, but was killed in the effort.

It is now time for the takeover. Athaliah apparently already has a plan. She kills all the royal seed line, her husband's relatives, and sets herself up as Queen of Judah. The promises of God to Abraham's son Judah, and to David, the great king and thus the prom-

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## Separating From Erring Brethren

Dr. Bryce B. Augsburg

For the last two years, **Council** men have accused us of misinterpreting II Thessalonians 3:6 & 14 and have raised a question regarding our separating from erring brethren. They asked, "Can we draw a line?" We ask, "Has not the line been drawn?"

It was drawn by our founding fathers and national representatives: Dr. H.O. Van Gilder, Dr. R.T. Ketcham, Dr. Paul Jackson, and Dr. Joseph Stowell. Read the **GARBC** literature items, their books and articles. All have used II Thessalonians 3:6 & 14 to support this position. They all believed that we were not only to separate from apostates, but from erring brethren. It was for this reason they refused overtures from the **CBA** brethren to join forces. The **CBA** men were not apostates. They were men who allowed for dual affiliation.

Were the founding fathers wrong in their interpretation, and did the **GARBC** develop a separation on a false premise?

It was drawn by present **Council** men as well. Dr. Ernest Pickering, author of *The Theology of Biblical Separation*, and probably the greatest theologian among us, uses this passage as one of his strongest arguments (pp. 220 - 227.)

It was drawn by well-known Biblical separatists of our time: Tulga, McIntire, Clearwaters, Woodridge, Dollar, Jones, Weniger, Cohen, Ashbrook, Augsburg, and others. All of these men have included II Thessalonians 3:6, 14 as a proof text for what some call "secondary separation."

The lines have been drawn by proper Biblical interpretation. Our position does not rest upon one isolated text such as II Thessalonians 3:6,14. There are numerous other passages that speak clearly of our position, such as Matthew 18; Romans 16 - 17; I Corinthians 5:11; I Timothy 6:3-6, II John; Ephesians 15:18; 17:19. Even if our position rested alone upon the II Thessalonians passage, we would have Biblical justification to draw the lines where our forebearers and fellow sepa-

ratists have drawn them.

Should the passage refer only to separation from brethren who wouldn't work (as we have been told), this would be an argument in favor of secondary separation. If we should separate from brethren simply because they were lazy, surely we ought to separate from brethren who join hands with known compromisers and who are content to follow an inclusive policy or walk with men who do.

Paul, however, is not simply referring to men's refusal to work, but men who, while not working, have become busybodies, have broken rank and are meddling in other men's business, creating problems in the body of Christ (Hiebert, DeBoer, Lenski).

It was the principle of a disorderly walk, of deliberate disobedience, of disobeying the Scriptures that led Paul to say, "Withdraw thyself" and "have no company with them." Laziness, which led to trouble-making was only used as an illustration to drive home Paul's emphasis of separating from an erring brother, in order to bring him to his spiritual and moral senses. This technique appears similarly elsewhere in Scripture as in Romans 7:1 - 6, in which divorce is used to illustrate the Christian's relationship to the law.

The lines have been drawn by us in recent days. Our resolutions in Niagara Falls re-affirming our position on separation and on **Baptist Fundamentalism '84** are examples. **The Regular Baptists for Revival** is another example, as separation is their concern. Dr. Pickering's forced resignation is yet another example.

The question is not "Can we draw the line?" It is rather, "Are we going to continue to stand where the Scriptures and our forebearers have drawn the line in the past?" Strict adherence to these Biblical principles should determine our direction, fellowship, the people we invite to our programs, our national and state associations, our schools, agencies, and local churches.

We should refuse to get our theol-

ogy from Jack Van Impe, who has changed his interpretation and theological views to justify his changed and compromising position (J.R. Rice.) These men are evangelists and not theologians. Was Jack Van Impe wrong for 30 years? If so, he would be a poor one to follow now.

The line is drawn! We must stick to the Scripture and not be withdrawn from the fight. The war for truth must continuously be waged. Attempts at purity and restoration cannot last nearly so long. When erring brethren do not respond, separation is a matter of time.

## One Year Old

Dr. Richard A. Harris

Happy Birthday to the *Regular Baptist Review!* It is the official publication of **Regular Baptists For Revival**. Since it is a quarterly publication, the last issue (Summer 1988) completed our first year. This issue commences our second year.

It has been a very good year, for which we gladly give all glory to our wonderful Lord. He has allowed and enabled us to produce each of the first, four issues in a timely manner, by a quality method, and with imperative content. For that we praise Him!

We have received ample criticism, from which we have attempted to profit. Overwhelmingly however, have been the compliments and encouragement, for which we are grateful. Our primary purpose: to inform and instruct concerning the need for revival in our own ranks, is being fulfilled. Revival means a new appreciation for the truth of God, as expressed in His Word. Revival means a determined return to obedience no matter what the cost.

Though we would disagree with Dr. Warren Wiersbe on many things, he is right on target in his recent book on our current integrity crises. We are simply pleading with **Regular Baptists** to honor and maintain the integrity of

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agency which pays his salary. This constitutes an interdiction that violates church sovereignty.

The hierarchical problem is that agencies and churches are not equivalent! The authority for this statement comes from the God of the Bible who is the Head of the Church. Their positions (Biblical polity) and agendas are different. A few references that deal with church sovereignty and organization are: Matthew 20:10 - 11; Acts 6:1 - 5, 20:28; Romans 7:14 - 25; I Corinthians 3:20 - 21, 14:40; Ephesians 1:19 - 22, 5:23b, 5:27; Colossians 1:18, 3:23; Hebrews 12:23; Ecclesiastes 7:20; and Zechariah 4:6b.

Hierarchical problems, neglected over time, tend to be very difficult to correct because of the confusion they create, and because the deck tends to become stacked against the legitimate decision makers. The statement, *“Our system is democratic, and if there is a problem having agency employees on the Council of 18, it is the churches’ delegates’ fault for voting them in,”* is not true! The system within which the churches must now work to elect the **Council of 18** bypasses basic rules of organization for representative government.

Agency employees should be considered ineligible for election to the churches’ **Association’s** ruling **Council**. Just as **Association** employees are now ineligible, even though they are members of **GARBC** churches, agency employees should be ineligible. To do otherwise is a violation of the principle of separation of powers and constitutes a conflict of interest. Paid agency employees voting on the **Council**, that rules on the extension of endorsement of agencies in the name of the some 1600 churches, is a glaring violation of church sovereignty and basic rules of organization.

Nine Councilmen are elected for two-year terms at the **Association’s** annual meetings. In the past, recommendation by only twenty-five churches, something like 1.6% of the churches, has been sufficient to become a nominee. This is not representative democracy. This underscores the need for

general revival as well as organizational change. *“I do not know who would be a good nominee for the Council of 18.”* This frequently made statement has come to represent a serious fault as the **Association** has grown. Most churches do not even bother to send in names. *“Who do we nominate?”* they ask.

Who do the delegates at the annual **Association** conference vote for? They vote primarily upon the basis of **NAME RECOGNITION**. This is no way to get and sustain a healthy organization! Many of the delegates, totally unaware of the violation of separation of powers and church sovereignty, vote for agency employees. Agency men have infinitely more name recognition than do pastors or laymen. So what happens? Unrestricted by the Constitution, four slots go to agency employees and church control is compromised.

Dr. White’s resolution at the Anaheim conference was typical of hierarchical agendas. The Holy Spirit does not send angels out to tell churches the stands of likely candidates (nominees) for the **Council of Eighteen**. Those serving on the **Council** are not the only ones who have a right to communicate preferred nominees and positions. The pastors at the grassroots should have that right too.

Total loyalty to the organizational structure established by our founding (**GARBC**) fathers is a mistake. Our loyalty must be to the spirit and principles of their efforts. Agency board members cannot be blamed for wanting their agency employee on the **Council of 18**, if there is going to be a slot for agencies. The founding fathers made a tremendous leap from the system they were in to get the **Association** as we now have it, and they are not to be criticized.

It is a basic principle, in light of shifts of power that inevitably occur, governments need to be changed! Problems have become conspicuously evident over a long period of time. Top-heavy with interest improperly vested, change will be strongly resisted, but change is badly needed.

The people in our churches are not to be blamed or used as an excuse to support agency employees being **Coun-**

cil members. They and the **Association** itself are victims of an organizational alignment that has become unresponsive. The people cannot solve the problem when uninformed. Strong leadership and a broad-based information program at the grassroots are needed in order to get correction.

Types of programs for communicating with our churches at the grassroots are now developing. This is important and crucial if the **Association** is to be a viable center for separatist churches. It may take years, but God will honor a persistent, dedicated and spiritual Matthew 18:16 movement! This type of outreach deserves the respect of all who believe that our church members have a right to be, and the need to be, informed in order to think for themselves and search the Scriptures on an issue. It deserves the support and help of every pastor to be sure that his people are fully informed, and God’s order for church polity is not scrapped. There will be critics, but God’s Word, not man’s, should be our guide and Matthew 18 the procedure.

The *Regular Baptist Review* publication is an example of the movement to get pertinent and previously unreported information to the membership of **GARBC** churches. The violation of church sovereignty is a very serious root problem that adversely affects all other aspects of the **GARBC** ministry and growth. The present chairman of the **Council** is doing an excellent job, but the power of the churches, when agency employees are on the **Council**, is even more inferior should the chairman happen to be lax. An agency head at the Anaheim conference said if he were on the **Council of 18**, he would find it impossible to be totally impartial toward his agency and the other agencies. This is true, and one of many reasons for the separation of powers doctrine.

Of the many changes that could and should be mandated organizationally for the **Association**, by far the most important is to restore church sovereignty. If we fail here, churches understanding the need to be accountable to God through unquestioned control of representation made on their behalf, will be forced to leave the **Association**.

## From The Editor

Dr. Richard A. Harris

As of the time of publication of this issue, numerous positive comments have been received with regard to last issue's cartoon, which was our first. Only one letter has been received expressing that the cartoon was offensive. We neither conclude that most readers liked the cartoon, nor that they did not. A reader's response probably is determined by his philosophical perspective on the issue portrayed by a cartoon.

Feedback has prompted us to explore our intentions with regard to the use of cartoons in the **Review**. We consider a cartoon a legitimate means of creating awareness of issues. A cartoon adds variety, humor, and many other benefits to our overall publication.

Our purpose is always to inform - never to offend. We want to be responsible in all our journalism to the "truth in love." However, we realize that offense is not always avoidable, because some or many will disagree with the positions we hold. This kind of offense is healthy. We only seek to avoid the type of offense which results from mistreatment of our brothers and their ministries.

Our first cartoon mentioned no names. No attempt was made to paint someone as evil or belittle anyone. Our entire purpose was to clearly characterize what is actually happening, even though no one may have intended the approval system to turn out this way. If there is a problem, it is not with the cartoon but with the truth it portrayed.

None of us likes to see our actions, which appear incongruous to others, objectively presented in an unfavorable light.

The truth is that the idolatry of friendship above the Word of God and its historic Baptist principles, which is prevalent all over today, is choking out separated fundamentalism, and is making it well nigh impossible to deal with issues in the **GARBC**.

Nevertheless, we will refrain from the use of cartoons to avoid misinterpretations. We accept the fact that our methods are as important as our message. We always want to respect those who differ with us. We are also always pleased to hear from any reader of our publication. ■

### "WHERE DO WE GO" conclusion

We have not stated where these goals will take us nor what actions they will require. This will become evident as we examine ourselves as a **Fellowship**. One action seems to be coming increasingly clear, however. It is described in this issue by Mr. David Norris. It is the doctrine of church sovereignty. As additional background, read carefully the **GARBC** literature item #7, "Why Forsake The Local Church?" As a good football coach would say, when his team begins to lose; let's get back to basics. The local churches are God's sovereign plan for this age. They must lead the way.

One thing is certain. Passing the buck, blaming one another, calling names, and starting rumors won't get the job done. We hear that **RBR** brethren are described as: 1. We are leaving the **GARBC**. 2. We are starting a new association. 3. We are joining another association. 4. We are just "super-separatists." 5. We are bitter old men. 6. We are the **GARBC** fringe. Probably there are other rumors perhaps you may have heard.

If desiring to honor our original

purpose puts us on the fringe, it is a sad commentary on what has happened to our **Fellowship**. We don't believe that is the case, at least not among our churches.

What we really prefer is found in the words of Christ to the Church at Ephesus. "*Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and I will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.*" (Revelation 2:5)

We don't propose to have all the answers. Wisdom will not die with us. The problem will not be solved, however, by attacks on those of us who desire a militant stand for the truth. May God help us to humble ourselves, pray, exchange views, and develop our agenda for the future. ■

### "ONE YEAR OLD" conclusion

our original purpose. If we say we are **Regular Baptists**, let's live up to what it has always meant.

Modern salesmanship advertises and advocates a **Regular Baptist**

position that has the color but not the character of the real thing. We in the **RBR** expect to be what we say we are. It seems today that anything in the spiritual life that savors of discipline or of really taking up the reproach of the cross is termed legalism and is despised.

We long to be peaceable, but as James 3:17 records, we must first be pure. Eleven times in the Book of Jeremiah we read, "God rose up early." God tried to intervene as they took their first steps to calamity. That's all we in the **RBR** are attempting to do.

It is not easy in the midst of a battle to maintain one's balance, but we are desparately making every effort to do so. We also are committed to publishing the **Review**, but we are trying to maintain strong integrity in our business relationships. For the benefit of our readers, we are publishing our costs for this first year. Out of pocket costs have been \$3907.50. Funds received have amounted to \$2515.95. Time to produce each issue of the **Review** is donated. Please pray with us, that these expenses will be met. ■

## "JEHOSHAPHAT" conclusion

ise "until Shiloh come" were hanging on a thread. But thank God, His thread of promise is an unbreakable cable! Through the bravery of his aunt, the infant son of Ahaziah was spared during Athaliah's massacre and eventually the Davidic dynasty was restored. We must never lose sight of how this horrible chapter in Judah's history really began: compromise by a good man!

The lessons of this story are many, but they are not exhausted apart from dealing with this great question: What Shall We Do With Jehoshaphat? Those of our **Fellowship** need to ponder at length that question. There are limited possibilities. One cannot be part of the Palace staff and simply ignore it.

By God's grace we can say that there are no Ahabs among us. And we believe that there are no new-evan-

gelical Jehoshaphats among us. But that is not the question. This distinction must be clear. We rather are dealing with our attitude toward Jehoshaphat. Two possibilities are immediately apparent:

Number 1. We reprove him for such activity but continue to be on good terms with him and invite him to our banquet table.

Number 2. We not only reprove him but separate from him and not allow any room for him in our palace. Yet count him not as an enemy of Ahab. II Thess. 3:15.

In the early years of our **Association** these two distinctions were quite clearly recognized and emphasized. The two organizations, the **Conservative Baptist Association** and the **General Association of Regular Baptist Churches**, somewhat illustrate these two positions. The CBA has always

tolerated the Jehoshaphats while the **GARBC** has always said "you will break with the Jehoshaphats or you will break with us." The old statement had not been questioned: We will not be "tolerant of those who are tolerant of unbelief." One wonders if the concepts which were responsible for much soul searching and Bible study of the 1930's and early 1940's have been lost in our growth-oriented church society of today.

It finally summarizes into two questions: How seriously do we take Ahab's defection? How seriously do we take Jehoshaphat's compromise? If we recoil with horror to such an alliance as Judah's king made, we must, it seems to this writer, recoil with sorrow to those who would in turn invite such compromisers to their pulpits or classrooms." (Used with permission from **Keystone Baptist**, July-August, 1988)

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