

Spring 1988

Regular Baptist Review



"A Perspective of Historic Baptist Principles"

Dr. Richard A. Harris, Editor

Spring 1988

West Chester Conference Report

Dr. L. Duane Brown

Pastors and laymen from 21 different states gathered in Bible Baptist Church, West Chester, Pa., for the first national conference of the **Regular Baptists for Revival** on May 3-5. Speakers came from Pennsylvania, Washington, Missouri, Kansas, Iowa, New Jersey, and Illinois.

Highlighting the many outstanding messages was "Our Lost Heritage" by Dr. Ralph Colas, Meadville, Pa. Dr. Colas listed several recent issues which causes concern about the trend away from the original heritage of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches.

The editor of the *Regular Baptist*

Review, Dr. Richard Harris, announced several regional meetings planned for the future. He also made clear that **Regular Baptists for Revival** was working within the Association and not separating from it. He believes revival is God's answer to the drift in the movement. He urged churches to send in their Council of 18 nominations and to attend the conference in California.

In another message, the new-evangelical compromise of the Conservative Baptist movement was documented. The speaker shared his concern about Western Baptist College building bridges to the Conservative Baptists.

Many commented that the preach-

ing was like the annual GARBC conferences used to be! Mr. Robert Regal from Chattanooga, Tennessee, highlighted the wonderful conference music. Other speakers were Dr. John Stormer, author of *None Dare Call It Treason*, Rev. Peter Waud, Rev. Tom Nieman, Rev. Robert Houchin, Rev. John Kain, Dr. Myron Houghton, Dr. Robert Domokos, President of Faith Baptist Bible College, and Dr. Bryce Augsburger. Host Pastor was Rev. Allen Griffith.

Tapes of all the messages are available for \$18 and should be ordered from Bible Baptist Church, 1237 Paoli Pike, West Chester, PA 19380. ■



Who Are The New Style Separatists?

Rev. Jack Keep

Theological liberalism had made inroads among the Baptists of the North even before the formation of the Northern Baptist Convention in 1907. By 1920 the attempt to stem the tide began with the first conference on the "Fundamentals of our Baptist Faith". The movement was called the National Federation of Fundamentalists of the Northern Baptists, or Fundamentalist Fellowship. The goal of committing the Convention to a doctrinal confession, reversing the inclusive policy in missions and overcoming liberalism in the schools was thwarted by parliamentary moves and lack of resolve on the part of some of the fundamentalist leaders. The fight was on.

In 1923, the more militant fundamentalists formed the Baptist Bible Union outside of the Convention, while the Fundamentalist Fellowship remained active within the Convention. In order to understand subsequent developments in evangelicalism, one must understand that two positions on separation were developing among fundamental Baptists at this time. Those in the BBU favored separation from the Convention, while the Fundamentalist Fellowship had as its goal to remain within the Convention and bring it back to orthodoxy.

By 1932, the BBU had declined because of a number of setbacks, and the remnant formed the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches. The Fundamentalist Fellowship eventuated into the Conservative Baptist Fellowship, but still within the Convention. As in other denominations where the battle against modernism was being fought, there were those who believed the Bible taught separation from apostasy, and there were those who believed the unity of the organization compelled them to remain in the Convention. The latter view finally led to a "New Evangel-

icalism" that had as one of its main tenets a repudiation of separation.

In 1947, the Conservative Baptists left the Convention and formed the Conservative Baptist Association of America. At this time, it appeared that the two associations which had the same roots and almost identical doctrinal positions might be able to merge. Committees from the two associations met on two occasions in 1947 to explore this possibility. Both sides agreed that the major reason the merger failed was the differences in views of separation.

The CBA position is clearly stated in Article Four of their Constitution which reads, "*The affiliates of the Association shall consist of: (1) Autonomous Baptist Churches without regard to other affiliations.*" Most of the churches in the CBA at its formation in 1947 were also in the Northern Baptist Convention.

Dr. Vernon Grounds wrote in 1961, "*Such was, has been and still is the official position of the Conservative Baptist Association . . . It means that a church may join the Conservative Baptist Association of America, and at the same time belong to the Southern Baptist Convention, or the General Baptist Conference, or the North American Baptist Convention, or even the American Baptist Convention.*"

Grounds went on to contend that the phrase, "*without regard to other affiliations,*" included participation in the National Association of Evangelicals, Billy Graham Crusades, Youth for Christ, and any other organization regardless of its theological makeup or position.

The position taken by the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches is equally clear: "*Any Baptist Church in the U.S. which is not in fellowship or cooperation with any national or local convention, association, or group which permits the presence of modernists or modernism . . .*" may be a part of the

Association.

Dr. Robert Ketcham, one of the earliest leaders of the GARBC and later its National Representative, then National Consultant, wrote the official literature item entitled, **The Position Of The GARBC On Separation.** In this pamphlet, he quoted Henry Parsons Crowell, as saying the battle for fundamentalism was lost, not because of the "*modernists nor of the conservative who was tolerant of the modernist; but because of the conservative fundamentalist who was tolerant of those who were tolerant of modernists.*" Ketcham said, "*We can conceive of no greater statement of our position than this one . . .*" He went on to make this important point: "*Mr. Crowell feared the battle would be lost unless what some call 'Secondary Separation' was made a working principle.*"

Dr. Grounds also understood this as the official position of the GARBC. He said, "*The GARBC had been organized upon the basis of mandatory, total and immediate separation from inclusivism.*" In a left-handed compliment he said, "*The GARBC argues that the Conservative Baptists were Biblically wrong to start with and are, therefore, Biblically wrong today. Thus the GARBC is also consistent.*"

When Dr. Grounds wrote the paper in "*Old Line Conservatives Vs. New Style Separatists*" in 1961, there was a conflict within the CBA over the issue of separation. The Association was divided between the "hard core" and the "soft policy" factions. The "hard core" maintained that the inclusive policy had resurfaced in a "more insidious form than the first."

The "soft policy" position was articulated in Ground's article. Throughout the paper, he maintained that the old line Conservative Baptists were consistent with their original position when they cooper-

ated with inclusive and ecumenical efforts. The New Style Separatists, he asserted, were "practicing separation as the GARBC defines it." He concluded his paper by inviting those men to seek fellowship elsewhere, which many of them eventually did.

There is a division among Regular Baptists over the doctrine of separation. On the one hand, are those who contend that the original and official position of the GARBC is as Dr. Ketcham expressed it, in Literature Item Number Six, ". . . what some people call secondary separation", and that Scripture forbids "(1) organic union or cooperation with unbelievers, 2) organic union or cooperation with believers who insist upon and practice such union with unbelievers." There are, on the other hand, those whose present views more closely approximate those of the CBA.

In a recent article in *The Baptist*

Bulletin, it was stated that one of the early decisions by the GARBC was "to require a break from liberals in the Convention as a prerequisite for fellowship . . ." The author stated that, "Today that excellent principle is in danger of being distorted. Some seem intent on carrying this principle beyond the parameters intended . . . It is time to recognize room for disagreement on degrees of separation." It is impossible to comment on the motivation of the author of this statement, but on its face, it is an attempt to moderate our historic Regular Baptist position.

The Constitution of the GARBC requires more than a break from liberals in the Convention. It slams the door of association on any church that "fellowships or cooperates with any . . . convention, association or group which permits the presence of modernists." In practice this principle was applied by the GARBC to membership in the

National Association of Evangelicals and similar organizations which refused to separate or require separation.

Historically, the general association of Regular Baptist Churches has opposed New Evangelicalism and ecumenical evangelism and could not unite with the CBA, because of their weaker position on separation. This certainly is "secondary separation."

The question facing us today is who are the New Style Separatists in the GARBC and how widespread is this sentiment which differs from our written and historic purpose? The New Style Separatists of the CBA took the separation position the GARBC espoused at its outset. The New Style Separatists in the GARBC appear to desire to revert to the unBiblical inclusive and ecumenical policies and programs of the old line conservatives in the CBA.



"What would a conference be without fellowship? Bible Baptist Church was a most gracious host, including the provision of delicious food."

CB Or Not CB — That Is The Question!

Dr. Bryce Augsburg

During my over 40 years of ministry in fundamental Baptist works, I have observed the GARBC both from within and from without, and have developed some concerns, of which the greatest is the present rather fraternal relationship that some of our GARBC leadership is having with the Conservative Baptist Association of America and its affiliates. What alarms me the most is that some even dare to defend and justify these relationships.

I am writing this article as one who left the CBA twenty-five years ago, after having held some of its highest offices and served on numerous boards and committees for twenty years. In the mid-sixties, almost all known separatists with deep convictions left the CBA.

In September of 1961, the Conservative Baptist Fellowship (part of the CBA at that time but now the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship), held a special meeting at the Conrad Hilton Hotel in Chicago, with the intent and purpose of launching a Mission Agency opposing New Evangelicalism, because New Evangelicalism had so weakened the historic Baptist witness in CBA Missionary outreach. They wanted to establish a positive soul-winning, evangelistic ministry, resulting in the establishing of local, separated New Testament churches both at home and abroad.

The organizational meeting of the Baptist World Mission took place January, 1962 at the Marquette Manor Baptist Church which I pastored then. The same church issued a call (while I was its Pastor) for a meeting October 22, 1965 to consider the formation of a new National Association of Separatist Baptist Churches (The New Testament Association of Baptist Churches). 200 CB pastors and laymen were present with 91 churches represented. What were the issues that

demand a new Mission Agency and a new association of churches for separatist Conservative Baptist churches?

1. The weak and faulty organization of the Conservative Baptist Association of America with its dual affiliation was intended only to be a temporary arrangement, but it did allow pastors still affiliated with the American Baptist Convention to have strategic places of leadership on the CBA Boards. Many of these men dominated the mission agencies and the Association of Churches. Many of these same men, also dominated the Denver Conservative Baptist Theological Seminary, which had an unwieldy influence over the entire movement.

2. With ABC men in the leadership, there was always a trend towards conventionalism. It was first manifest in a move towards connectionalism (of the three societies) and towards a conference structure; but the ultimate goal was "board control" leading to a full-fledged denomination.

3. There was a continuous drift towards Neo-Evangelicalism, with the National Association of Evangelicals as their national agency (NAE - IFMA & EFMA on the mission field), and a general support for Ecumenical Evangelism.

4. There was a drift towards doctrinal defection . . . away from a pre-millennial, pre-tribulation rapture position to a post-tribulation, a-millennial eschatology, by receiving churches which held these doctrines. Worse still, there was a tolerance of Denver Seminary and its President, Dr. Vernon Grounds, endorsing Kierkegaardian theology. (see 5F below)

5. The CBA was dominated by ecclesiastical politics explained in detail by Dr. Ernest Pickering's paper, **Betrayal on the Boardwalk**, and manifested in repeated requests

by the "soft-core" for the separatists to leave. Because of these unscrupulous politics, all attempts for reconciliation were frustrated.

A. There was the un-Baptistic action by certain regional bodies at National gatherings to determine without constitutional authority that the WCBM would in no way officially or unofficially be considered part of the CB movement. (I was president of that Mission for its first five years).

B. The "soft-policy" element scuttled all attempts at reconciliation, even through their own dominated Reconciliation Committee of Fifteen.

C. At Detroit (1962), the "soft-policy" men were successful in having the CBA Statement of Purpose, with its strong separatistic stand, *rejected* (which had identified the CBA since 1948) by the constituency and defeated the attempts at Atlantic City in 1963, in Los Angeles in 1964 and in Denver in 1965 to re-establish this as CBA policy.

D. The annual meeting which followed, repeatedly in an unconstitutional manner, nullified the actions of the Central Regional "hard-core." Such un-Baptistic, high-handed, illegal, unethical, and un-Christian action demonstrated that the opposition was determined to neutralize any and all separatist elements within the Movement.

E. At both regional and annual meetings a very vindictive attitude was displayed by "soft-policy" leaders in publicly calling for the separatist element to leave. They went unrebuked by any of their peers including the so-called neutrals.

F. Denver Seminary President, Dr. Vernon Grounds, was quoted at Fuller Theological Seminary as saying, "Soren Kierkegaard should be welcomed as a evangelical." Kierkegaard is one of the fathers of existentialism.

G. During my last years in the movement, "soft-policy" leaders were suggesting making the CB movement into a closed-convention set-up. It would be difficult for churches committed to New Testament Baptist ecclesiology to remain within the CBA.

H. On May 28, 1965, the NTA Committee of 21 submitted a document of nine specific areas of ideology which, if the CBA would affirm, could become the basis of reconciliation. The CBA at the Denver Meeting simply read the reconciliation proposal and filed it without any further consideration. The document presented was as follows:

"Whereas there have been a number of reconciliation attempts in the C.B. Movement; the latest of which was the total failure of the attempt made by the Reconciliation Committee of 15 at Atlantic City in 1963, we now respond to the recent solicitation of the CBA Board for such a meeting and we herewith submit an Ideological Basis of Reconciliation.

The culmination of the proposed action of the Committee of 21 will be finally determined by the CBA of A's

constituency's acceptance of this ideological Basis of Reconciliation upon recommendation to them by the CBA of A Board.

1. *Repudiate the misnamed Unity Resolution which calls for the CB Movement to reorganize under a General Conference type of polity.*

2. *Restore to the CBA of A its original sovereign place of planning its own annual and regional meetings (See First Steps Towards Conventionalism by Dr. George Carlson), which will include the messengers of the various CBA regionals setting up their own regionals and the rejection of all interboard 'troika' arrangements.*

3. *Restore the previous Statement of Purpose of the CBA of A as part of the CBA's expression of purpose.*

4. *Consistently reject any church which tolerates a-millennialism among its membership including its pastor.*

5. *Disavow any sympathy for what is commonly known as New Evangelicalism.*

6. *Disavow any sympathy for Kierkegaardian theology, the basis*

of Neo-Orthodox thought.

7. *Disavow any sympathy for ecumenical evangelicalism because of its inclusivistic position and practice.*

8. *Disavow the philosophy that the CB Movement is essentially a foreign mission movement, and rather reaffirm that it is essentially a separatistic Baptist local church movement.*

9. *Disavow the philosophy that only CBFMS and CBHMS can be considered "official" mission agencies in the CB Movement."*

Were we wrong to conclude that by their ignoring of our proposal for reconciliation, that there was a basic insincerity on their part to negotiate when a tangible basis for reconciliation had been advanced? I think not!

At Atlantic City in 1963, the moderates (the West) joined hands with the soft-core (the East) and eviscerated the hard-core (the Midwest). With the hard-core separatists departed, with whom can the GARBC now find fellowship in the CBA, except with those **who did not take a separatist position in the past?** ■

PLAN TO ATTEND THE NEXT RBR CONFERENCE



Monday & Tuesday,
November 7 & 8, 1988

Stony Point Baptist Church
Kansas City, Kansas
Rev. Robert Houchin, Host Pastor



"Jesus loves the little children, and so do we all. This precious child's future is dependent upon our revival."



"Special music was an abundant blessing in West Chester."

Building Baptist Bridges?

Dr. L. Duane Brown

Should the GARBC as an Association of churches, or its approved agencies, seek to find ways of cooperative ministries with Conservative Baptists? Is it wise, for example, that Western Baptist College employs the former president of the Conservative Baptist Association and former director of the Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society as a member of its faculty? Should other faculty members and even Board members who are members (or pastors) of Conservative Baptist Churches be chosen by WBC?

Just what is the Conservative Baptist movement anyway? A short study will reveal from its history, that it is evangelical, but not fundamentalist. An analysis of its leaders will reveal that New-Evangelicalism dominates its schools, its missions, and its philosophy.

When the Conservative Baptist movement began in the early 1920's, it was a reform attempt within the Northern Baptist Convention. It was soon evident to aggressive leaders with strong convictions, such as W.B. Riley, O.W. Van Osdel, R.E. Neighbour, William Pettingill, and others, that the philosophy of this new organization, the Fundamental Fellowship (short for the

National Federation of Fundamentalists of the Northern Baptists), would never rid the Convention of its apostasy. Thus, the "Come Out" movement of separation, called the Baptist Bible Union, was initiated in 1923 at Kansas City. The BBU eventually became the GARBC in 1932.

The Convention liberals won year after year against the "Stay-In" reformers. Finally in 1947, the CBA was formed separate from the Northern Baptist Convention, though a dual membership was allowed. Fifteen year later, in 1962, a major division came in this newly formed association over the issue of separation, when the CBA repudiated its former stand by rejecting its statement of purpose which reads: ". . . *unmixed with liberals and liberalism and those who are content to walk in fellowship with unbelief and inclusivism.*"

Now, in the decade of the '80's, New Evangelicalism saturates the CBA, as evidenced by the following:

1. Approval and support of the infamous Denver Seminary
2. Listed among the membership of the compromising National Association of Evangelicals

3. Defending and supporting the ecumenical evangelism of Billy Graham
4. Evidence of a trend for social ministry comparable with evangelism in the CBA

Why should one of the approved colleges want to build bridges to a sinking island of compromise? Is the "mess of pottage" worth the price? Will the Council of 18 enforce its own standards of requiring the leaders of each agency to agree with the GARBC literature item #6, which teaches and uses the term "secondary separation?"

Is the hiring of Dr. Herbert Anderson, a long time Conservative Baptist leader, by Western Baptist College signaling the breakdown of the separatist heritage of the GARBC? Dr. Anderson has also been a defender and promoter of the National Association of Evangelicals (In 1973 he served as the chairman of the local committee of the N.A.E. Convention!).

This brother is welcome to his views and his affiliations, but to have him serve as a faculty member at Western Baptist College, without explanation or without any hint that his convictions have changed, is an open challenge to the GARBC historical position. ■

From The Editor

Dr. Richard A. Harris

A number of letters have come to me questioning why we are calling Regular Baptists to revival, when we are talking about issues, such as the approval system, etc.

First of all, let us remember what true revival is. It is the true repentance of Christians from their sins. It is not the evangelization or the salvation of the lost, although these are among the wonderful results of true revival. Only that which has been alive can be revived. That which is spiritually dead can only be made anew. True revival is wayward Christians resubmitting to the absolute lordship of Jesus Christ in their lives, and this obedience then produces many positive by-products. In the case of the GARBC, it is we, the pastors, who must get our doctrine and practice right with God, that we may properly lead His people.

Scriptural evidence clearly supports the fact, that when revival comes to our lives, it results in renewed obedience to God's purposes. In II Chronicles 29 and 30, the revival under Hezekiah resulted in many acts of correction and cleansing, and the same can be shown in other Biblical examples.

The need for revival and correction must be substantiated before our

hearts can respond, as in the day of Josiah when the Book of the Law was found. When it was read in the ears of the King, he recognized how far they had strayed from where Israel should have been. He set about correcting it. (II Chronicles 34: 18-21)

Many of our young pastors have not experienced the battles of the past, but they desire to stand where our fathers stood. They need the encouragement of our revival. The following is the verbatim text of a letter received from Pastor Larry Hobbes, of New York, after the recent **Regular Baptists for Revival** Conference at West Chester.

"Having just returned from the conference at West Chester, I am compelled to sit down and write several letters to some of the men who made that conference possible. As in most areas of the ministry, you men hear from more people when they have negative things to say than from the ones who have a positive note. Hearing more about the current events in our fellowship and knowing a little more about the heat that many of you are taking, I want to express my gratitude for what you are doing.

I cannot know or appreciate the labors of love and the hours you have put into informing others, into

addressing the issues that face us, and into dealing with your critics. But I thank God for men who are willing to do what they know is right and who will simply trust God for the results.

The conference at Bible Baptist this week was by far the most helpful and the most valuable I have ever attended. And I had greatly enjoyed and profited from being at Sellersville last year. Those of us who are too young to have experienced the historic position of separatist fundamentalism in its making, are experiencing the next best thing. Hearing men stand to share their concerns, experiences, and the Scriptural basis for us to follow are a great help.

*Keep up the good work, for the Lord's sake, but also for our sake. Keep the **Regular Baptist Review** coming off the press. This may be small ointment for the times when others are shooting arrows and throwing punches, but I want to thank you for the part you have had in these conferences coming about. And I will be praying for you and for other men in our fellowship, that God will preserve the testimony of Jesus Christ in the fundamental Baptist churches of the GARBC, according to His will." ■*



"Dr. Robert Domokos, President of Faith Baptist Bible College in Ankeny, IA, and Rev. Robert Houchin, Pastor of Stony Point Baptist Church in Kansas City, KS, were featured speakers at the West Chester Conference."

Approval System Survey Results

Dr. Richard A. Harris

In the winter issue of the *Regular Baptist Review*, a survey was printed so that you could voice your opinions about the GARBC approval system. We are grateful to those who chose to respond. Thank you. It is obviously healthy for any family or organization, when its members can communicate openly with one another. One of the precious distinctives of our Baptist history has been Individual Soul Liberty. We must revere the opinions of others whether we agree or not.

There were different views expressed by the variety of articles printed in that issue, and some of the survey questions were not discussed at all. Therefore, before listing the results, it is worth noting three things of interest.

1. The number responding was rather insignificant, in light of the total GARBC constituency, so trend prediction is unwarranted. However, analysis of the returns is appropriate. For example, nearly 50% of those responding felt agency men should be taken off the Council.
2. The variety of responses was interesting, since no single position was espoused by the *Review*.
3. It is also significant that when you total the first four opinions,

desiring some form of change, in comparison to the fifth opinion, desiring that the approval system remain as is, the response is approximately 81% for some kind of change.

We should keep in mind that these are individuals, not churches. We further recognize that those individuals desiring change would be more anxious to respond, while those desiring no change would perhaps not wish to dignify the survey by a response. Regardless, it certainly indicates that the issue deserves our attention.

Here are the results to this point:

In my present position of understanding, the following action seems to me, to be the best solution toward strengthening our Association.

87 Take all salaried agency men off the Council of Eighteen

and permit only pastors or laymen of local churches to serve.

- 19 Develop a new procedure for evaluating agencies which would be more reflective of our Association's position, consistent with the vote at the Ames meeting.
 - 14 Have the messengers of the Association vote on approval of every agency each year, rather than the Council. The vote would be preceded by a period of open questioning from the floor of agency presidents.
 - 32 Drop the approval system altogether, and let agencies stand on their own with the churches.
 - 35 Let the approval system remain as it is.
- 187 TOTAL

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