

Regular Baptist Review



"A Perspective of Historic Regular Baptist Principles"

Winter 1988

Analysis Of The Approval System

One of the most disturbing issues facing Regular Baptists today is the viability of the present system of agency approval or even the advisability of the approval system itself. In the early days of our Fellowship, the "approval system" seems to have worked quite well, but the subtlety of Satan and the modern day religious confusion that abounds has undermined the validity of this practice in the minds of many. Before the loss of the Los Angeles Baptist College, the weaknesses of our present program were becoming glaringly evident, and that tragedy merely served to highlight the issue.

At the National Conference in Ames, Iowa, a majority of voting messengers urged the Council of Eighteen to "use greater care in its review and approval of our schools." As far as we know, no guidelines or procedures have yet been formulated by the Council to implement this request by the messengers. Council members have indicated, however, that a referendum is planned to determine how the constituency feels about the wisdom of any salaried agency men being permitted to serve on the Council. This may or may not be one valid solution to the problem. It is evident, however, that a great deal of discussion needs to take place on this issue, and we need to generate more light than heat, if we are going to preserve the spiritual unity of our Association.

We are not numbered among those who would "distort the excellent principle of separation" or "carry this principle beyond the parameters

intended by the men who used it as an organizational foundation for the Association." We are very much in favor of maintaining the integrity of the purpose of the GARBC, and not scrapping our heritage. If it was a Biblical principle then, it is still true today and deserves to be honored by all of us.

A great deal has already been written on the subject of the "approval system." The remainder of this issue is dedicated to presenting different viewpoints. For the most part, each article is presented as it was received. In some cases, editing was done to achieve clarity or to save space.

Our first article, "Approval of Agencies," is printed from the "IMPRESSIONS" page in the December, 1987 issue of *The Baptist Bulletin*. The writer is our GARBC National Representative, Dr. Paul N. Tassell, who ably presents the case for retention of the approval system as it is presently constituted. This article is printed verbatim, except for two comments added by the Editor.

A laymen's perspective is presented in the article, "Organizational Realignment Needed for the GARBC?" The author, Mr. David A. Norris, is a retired businessman and an Iowa Baptist deacon for many years. These excerpts are from a paper on the topic which Mr. Norris prepared to be presented to the Council of Eighteen.

Dr. Russell R. Camp, long-time Empire State Representative and former Council of Eighteen member, explains his cogent views regarding

the drift from our original Regular Baptist moorings in his article, "Baptist Agencies." The article is reprinted from an earlier source.

The title of the article, "A Statement From The Council Of Eighteen," must be understood in context. The title would suggest that the content of the article was the official position or majority position of the Council. However, such was not the case. Rather, a small, subcommittee of the Council in 1981 drafted the statement for consideration as the position of the entire Council. It was intended to deliver

See "ANALYSIS" page 2

Our New Logo

In this the second issue of the *Regular Baptist Review*, you will notice a new logo. The purpose of a logo is to represent what the essence of an organization is, and to present a symbol by which an organization can be identified over a period of time.

We have changed our logo for essentially two reasons. One is to add the 1 Timothy 3:15 emphasis, which with Jeremiah 6:16 provides the core Biblical philosophy giving birth to **Regular Baptists For Revival**. The other reason for the change is as a courtesy, so that no misunderstanding arises concerning the official status of the *Regular Baptist Review*. Our publication has not sought, been offered, nor received any sanction from the GARBC Home Office or the present Council of Eighteen. (ED.) ■

Approval of Agencies

Paul N. Tassell

One of the most ingenious constitutional customs of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches is the system of approving missionary, educational and social agencies as worthy of the support of GARBC local churches.

Having come out of a dictatorial, unbaptistic convention system where the denomination owned and controlled its agencies, the founders of the GARBC wanted no part of a convention system where there would be financial ties to the Association or control by the Association of schools, mission agencies and social agencies. Hence, the GARBC constitution reads: "It shall be the policy of the Association to abstain from the creation and/or control of educational, missionary and other benevolent agencies" (Article VII, Sec. 1).

This system protects the autonomy of such agencies, while at the same time giving them "a sense of belonging" to a local-church constituency that prays for them, financially supports them and provides personnel and students for them. The system also protects the autonomy of our churches in that no church is ever required or coerced into supporting any agency.

We have no Unified Budget like the American Baptist Church nor Cooperative Program like the Southern Baptist Convention. Their denominational control over the missionary, educational and benevolent expenditures of the local churches results in two very unbaptistic sins. First, the agencies are controlled by the denominational bureaucrats. Second, the churches are robbed of their right to choose whom and what they will support and by how much.

Occasionally someone will sug-

gest to me his feeling that we ought to do away with the approval system because there are times when the agencies "embarrass us" by their use of "non-GARBC" speakers or "unwise associations." I must remind the sincere and candid critic that sometimes pastors and churches "embarrass us,"¹ but true baptistic freedom is still better than dictatorial denominational regimentation. To do away with our unique approval system would be akin to throwing out the baby with the bath water! Sure, we may have problems from time to time (very few over the past fifty-five years), but let's work on the problems instead of dismantling our God-blessed constituency, which includes six mission agencies, six colleges, four seminaries and five social agencies (and 1,593 churches).²

To qualify for approval "an agency must carry the name Baptist in its title or subtitle and must be sound in doctrine, organization, business administration and ethical practices" (Article VII, Sec. 3). No church is under any pressure to support any agency, and no agency need fear interference in its internal affairs by the Association or any local church. Autonomy, responsibility and voluntary cooperation are the watchwords for all those churches and institutions that make up the wonderful, loosely knit Regular Baptist "family." We may have our "moles" or "warts," but seen in the right light they may be ecclesiastical "beauty marks." ■

¹ (but we do not approve churches ED.)

² (We are not a Fellowship of agencies with churches in parenthesis, but a Fellowship of churches which approves agencies - ED.)

"ANALYSIS"

(conclusion)

a message to the nine approved schools at the time. Unfortunately, at least in the minds of some, the statement was never adopted.

Near the end of this issue, a short article entitled, "**Approval System Survey**," appears. This is your opportunity to express your personal opinion on the matter of agency approval. Please complete the survey form and send a copy of it to our Office address.

Hopefully, this issue, entirely about the problems in our approval system, will be informative and challenging. Those of us who are involved in **Regular Baptists For Revival** lay no claim to being "hot shots," nor do we take any joy in being viewed as "taking pot shots." Rather, on bended knee we take this concern to our Savior as we present it to you. Our intent is to help salvage what is precious about our Regular Baptist heritage, in an effort to prevent its gradual decline. (ED.) ■

* RE-ALIGNMENT"

(conclusion)

Eighteen meetings should be open to a reasonable number of GARBC church observers - the only exception being the discussion of national GARBC office personnel problems.

The goal of GARBC pastors and laymen should be to promote:

- A. A Council of Eighteen agenda which reflects total loyalty to the churches, through measures which eliminate conflict of interest and excessive agency influence in the Council.
- B. Improved communications, through clarification of control by the churches and improved Council election procedures. This also would lessen the possibility that confusing messages could come from the Council of Eighteen to the GARBC national office team.
- C. Restoration of the confidence of those, who have begun to question whether the GARBC is a suitable vehicle for church cooperation, around the traditional Bible doctrines of preaching, teaching, evangelism and separation. ■

PLAN TO BE IN WEST CHESTER, PA

MAY 3rd!

SEE PAGE 6!

Organizational Re-Alignment Needed For The GARBC?

Mr. David A. Norris

This is an effort to focus upon the underlying causes and possible solutions to problems in the GARBC which have become very unsettling in recent years. Regardless of our definition of what a fundamental separatist organization ought to be at the national level, everyone who cares one whit about the GARBC, its history and its future, is hurting and hurting plenty. This is a time for brokenness. This is NO time for proud men.

The Biblical principle of congregational rule for churches is significant and ALWAYS applicable! Wives being in submission to their husbands is a matter of roles, God's order; NOT integrity or being less important. Agency employees being in submission to churches (advisory only and without a vote on the churches' Council of Eighteen) is a reflection of Biblical polity/roles; Not integrity or a lack thereof!

Although possibilities for the intrusion of conflict of interest upon Association balance organizationally were not fully recognized, the existence of the principle was. The problem of agendas placing people in roles where there is a conflict of interest is a clear concern in the Constitution of the GARBC where it says, "No salaried servant of the Association shall be entitled to vote."

Churches have the right to say what standards an agency must comply with in order to have their endorsement as an approved agency. It is the duty of the churches' Association leadership (Council of Eighteen) to avoid the violation of the sovereignty of local congregational rule, by keeping such standards clearly in force. The Council of Eighteen also has the duty to remove from the approved list such agencies whose end product or service reflect a deviation from approved standards of faith and practice. The above is axiomatic. It is also clearly stated in Literature Items 5 and 8, published by the GARBC.

There are always spiritual weaknesses which we must not forget. What is threatening to bring the GARBC into a precipitous decline is an organizational imbalance. Organizational imbalance is not unusual. Even with a Constitution such as we have as a Nation, cultural shifts and other factors bring organizational imbalances.

A long-standing need for structural realignment in the national GARBC is now imposing its cumulative effects, namely that a conflict of interest has unintentionally been built into the Council of Eighteen. No one is to blame. The sincerity and good intentions of the agency men who have served on the Council of Eighteen are of the highest order! Organizational relationships also have a big impact, for good or for bad, upon the ability of an organization to function. The practical truth of this statement is what makes polity so important.

Organizational alignment which places men from support-seeking agencies in leadership (Council of Eighteen), which recommends the agencies that are to be recommended for support, is a conflict of interest reflecting serious imbalance. Members of the Council of Eighteen should be pastors or pastors and laymen whose agenda is the church (GARBC churches) and not employees of subcontracting agencies. Even if there were only one agency employee on the Council of Eighteen, that one man would constitute leverage as a swing vote with potential for creating a majority.

This conflict of interest unintentionally built into the Council of Eighteen has led to an agenda that is collectively imperceptible but yet at variance with the stockholders (pastors and lay people of our churches), whom they are supposed to serve. Not only are communications confused between the Council of Eighteen and churches, but the agenda of the Council of Eighteen with its con-

flict of interest is often unable to carry out the will of the churches when perceived. Conflict of interest within the Council causes it to have trouble with its own agenda, due to a misalignment with its stockholders, the churches, and it appears that the Council, as it is constituted, is unable to fulfill its duty to the churches, in the matter of agency assessment and approval or disapproval. This had occurred although none of the Council of Eighteen has ever had anything but the best intentions in the matter of agency assessment!

The loss of Los Angeles Baptist College and the public appearance of offensive music do not just happen. They are the tip of an iceberg, be it small or large, that developed. Policy and administration, or the lack thereof, precede occurrence! It is not a matter of blaming someone else - we are responsible! True, high-standard assessment which leads to probation or removal of the GARBC designation would hurt the agency. The damage is far greater however, if agencies drifting from our traditional stance are not brought into alignment or removed! The reason of course, is the entire GARBC movement (missions, etc.) with its base of churches becomes compromised or fragmented. Some churches even withdraw.

The malfunctions mentioned appear to be causing very serious additions to the normal spiritual problems we encounter. Men who have good motives, are tempted to compromise, and friendships are needlessly strained and suspicions aroused! The Council of Eighteen cannot successfully serve two masters. Agency heads and employees should be excluded from membership on the Council of Eighteen.

Prior to the election of the Council of Eighteen, voting delegates should be given a biographical sketch prepared by the nominees in answer to prescribed questions. All Council of

See "RE-ALIGNMENT" page 2

Baptist Agencies

Dr. Russell R. Camp

Scripturally, God has placed the local New Testament church in the "driver's seat" throughout the Age of Grace. The local church acknowledges the complimentary, but disavows the competitive. The local church is primary, and all else is secondary.

The Lord Jesus Christ has vested His authority in the New Testament local church to fulfill the Great Commission (Matthew 16:16-19; 18:15-20; 28:18-20; I Timothy 3:15), The local church therefore, should bring into being and then exercise control over all Agencies which aid in the fulfillment of world missions.

Since the local church has not always founded needed Agencies, it has turned to non-local church-authorized and controlled instruments to achieve desired ends. Any Agency, whether Educational, Social, Missionary, or whatever, which enhances or expedites the task of the local church, ought to be sensitive and responsive to God's medium for world evangelism. Such an Agency is not to exert undue influence that would in any way diminish the authority of the local church. Both the local church and the non-local church-controlled Agency, to which the local church looks for help, must practice mutual encouragement and support.

Mutual encouragement and support means Baptist prayer, promotion, interest, and money for Baptist Agencies, Baptist young people for Baptist camps, Baptist publications for Baptist churches, Baptist speakers for Baptist churches, Agencies, and Associations, and Baptist young people for Baptist schools. Also, let every mission, camp, publication, Association, educational institution, or whatever, produce a Baptist product. While a diploma is never a guarantee, it is and must always be a strong indication of Baptist pastors and missionaries for Baptist churches and missions.

It is most desirable that Agencies, not under the authority of the local

church, stand on their own merit. When Agencies seek Association approval, then they should be subject to the Associational, periodic, policing process. When an Agency man serves on a Council and votes on the approval of his own Agency, this flouts wisdom and is a serious flaw in the approval system.

Note: Edward T. Hiscox, in *The New Directory for Baptist Churches*, writes regarding "independent societies sustaining no organic connection with the churches; are not controlled by them, and cannot control them." He speaks of the individual sovereignty of local churches and Societies, which is not to be invaded. He also describes the then (1894) existing relationship

between Societies and churches. He does not state the Scriptural principle of the local church authority, nor is his reference to current Societies to be construed as setting this authority aside.

Those who live on Baptist milk should feed the Baptist cow, and the Baptist cow, in return, should give Baptist milk. When Baptist Agencies do not reinforce the separated, fundamental, doctrinal position of the local church, or when they diminish Baptist distinctives, or when they lessen local church authority, or when they use speakers of non-Baptistic persuasion, or when they have unwise associations, this is Baptist milk gone sour, or at best - **only buttermilk!** ■

A Statement From The Council Of Eighteen

1981 Sub-Committee Draft

The Council of Eighteen takes this opportunity to sincerely express our appreciation for the nine approved schools of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches.

We recognize that the training of our precious young people is a tremendous responsibility. We are very grateful for your investment in their lives.

It is the Council's task each year to review and to approve the agencies. We do not take this assignment lightly. Our Association looks to us in this responsibility and we must be ready to give an accounting to the churches in our Fellowship.

Our approved schools are the training ground for men and women to serve in the Regular Baptist movement. While it is true some graduates may choose to go in other directions, the majority ought to feel at home in the GARBC.

The General Association of Regular Baptist Churches is different from the Conservative Baptist Association, the Southern Baptist Convention, the Bible Baptist Fellowship,

the North American Baptist General Conference, the Baptist General Conference, and the American Baptist Churches. The distinctive that has identified the GARBC since its founding in 1932 was that of Biblical separation. We are *not* an inclusive group as most of the above are. In fact, if we are not different from such other Baptist groups, we have no right to exist!

While there may be some practical problems in the implementation of our position of Biblical separation, we cannot forsake our heritage, for it is based on Truth.

We therefore use this occasion to remind the leaders of our approved schools that you have no small part in influencing impressionable youth. Patterns are being established and principles adopted which can regulate the future ministries of these students.

While great care is necessary in selecting faculty members who teach in the classroom, an equal amount of caution and care needs to be used in choosing speakers and musicians

for chapel, Bible Conferences and other such functions.

When our approved schools use individuals whose association lies in the National Association of Evangelicals, the Conservative Baptist Association, the North American Baptist Conference, etc. a message is given to the students (and to our churches) that such groups are within the framework of our position of separation. It also gives a tacit approval of such individuals, who choose to move in circles that are broader than our Association has been or should be.

Another part of the breakdown we see is when musical groups from our approved schools minister in Southern Baptist, Nazarene, Baptist General Conference churches, etc. It reflects that we can work with such churches - but this has not been our stand down through the years of our

history. Great confusion is the result, which brings strong criticism upon the entire Association in general and the Council of Eighteen in particular, since we have the responsibility to grant or withhold approval.

When the walls of separation are broken down, the militancy is removed. Real soldiers for the battle must understand the issues faced in the religious world today. There are some speakers and musicians in evangelical circles whose lack of separation is obvious to discerning leaders. Why use them? Why hold them up as an example for our youth? Why grant them a platform?

It is a fact that some churches, in actuality a larger number than you may realize, have left or are leaving the GARBC because some of our approved schools fail to practice Biblical separation in these matters. Churches are withholding their

financial support and recommendations of these schools to their youth because of a breakdown in these principles.

We therefore call upon you to join with us in some definite resolutions:

1. That we will not associate with those who do not believe and obey the Word of God.
2. That we will not associate with those who associate with men and movements which do not believe and obey the Word of God.
3. That we will associate only with those who are of like faith and practice.

Separation from apostasy is Scripturally valid. Separation from believers who consort with apostasy is Scripturally valid. Either we are Separatists or we are not, and Fundamental Separatists separate from brethren who do not walk orderly.■

Approval System Survey

The previous articles have been published for your benefit. If we are going to continue as a strong, separatist Association and be used of God, we must be willing to analyze our problems and permit the searchlight of the Holy Spirit to focus us in on the solutions. That is not easy, but it is necessary. To deny the problems is self-destructive. To call someone disloyal because he wants to discuss them and solve them creates division. However, restoration comes when issues are addressed rather than avoided. The following is a survey to give you opportunity to express your viewpoint. The results will be published in the Spring issue. (ED.)

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

- ☐ Take all salaried agency men off the Council of Eighteen and permit only pastors or laymen of local churches to serve.
- ☐ 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.
- ☐ 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.
- ☐ Drop the approval system altogether, and let agencies stand on their own with the churches.
- ☐ Let the approval system remain as it is.

Please return to:
Regular Baptist Review
 754 E. Rockhill Road
 Sellersville, PA 18960



You may wish to send a copy of this completed survey and retain the original. Thank you.

Regular Baptists For Revival Conference

MAY 3 - 5, 1988

SCHEDULE:

Tuesday, May 3rd

- 2:00 p.m. - Dr. Richard A. Harris — "THE REVIVAL WE NEED"
Pastor, Bethel Baptist Church, Sellersville, PA
- 3:00 p.m. - Rev. Thomas L. Nieman - "FIT FOR THE MASTER'S USE"
Pastor, Galilee Baptist Church, Seattle, WA
- 4:00 p.m. - Rev. Peter A. Waud - "GOD'S PURPOSE IN SEPARATION"
Pastor, Calvary Baptist Church, Port Angeles, WA
- 7:00 p.m. - Dr. John A. Stormer - "THE ENEMY'S FLOOD AND THE HOLY SPIRIT'S STANDARD"
Former Pastor and Author, Florissant, MO

Wednesday, May 4th

- 9:00 a.m. - Bible Message
- 9:45 a.m. - Rev. Robert Houchin - "THE GOALS OF THE ENEMY"
Pastor, Stony Point Baptist Church, Kansas City, KS
- 11:15 a.m. - Rev. John M. Kain - "LOCAL CHURCH STANDARDS AND CHRISTIAN LIBERTY"
Pastor, Calvary Baptist Church, Bremerton, WA
- 1:30 p.m. - Dr. Myron J. Houghton - "THE PURPOSE OF AN ASSOCIATION LIKE OURS"
Chairman, Department of Systematic Theology
Faith Baptist Bible College and Theological Seminary, Ankeny, IA
- 3:30 p.m. - Symposium - "THE APPROVAL SYSTEM OF THE GARBC"
- 4:15 p.m. - Dr. Clayton L. Nuttall - "IS THERE NEW EVANGELICALISM IN THE GARBC?"
Pastor, Fruitport Bethel Baptist Church, Fruitport, MI
- 7:00 p.m. - Dr. Ralph G. Colas - "OUR LOST HERITAGE"
Pastor, Calvary Baptist Church, Meadville, PA
- 8:00 p.m. - Dr. Robert L. Domokos - "MEN OF GOD ARE MEN OF TRUTH"
President, Faith Baptist Bible College and Theological Seminary, Ankeny, IA

Thursday, May 5th

- 9:00 a.m. - Bible Message
- 9:45 a.m. - Workshops
- 11:00 a.m. - Dr. Bryce B. Augsburg - "GOD'S NEW THING"
Pastor, Bible Baptist Church, Romeoville, IL

BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH
1237 Paoli Pike
West Chester, PA 19380
(215) 692-4492

Regular Baptists For Revival

Our editorial committee has decided not to publish again the increasing list of pastors and laymen who desire to be identified with our organization. It was felt that this was not the best usage of limited space in a publication of this sort.

In addition, the printing of names tended to convey a wrong impression. Neither the "who" or the "how many" determine the righteousness of any cause. The crowd on Mt. Carmel was wrong, but Elijah alone was right. Each of you who indicated your desire to stand for revival are to be commended. The communiques about your views are definitely encouraged and appreciated.

If you believe there is worth, value, and benefit to what is being accomplished by the **Review**, you can help with financial gifts for our publication to offset the costs of printing and postage. (ED.) ■

If you appreciate the **REGULAR BAPTIST REVIEW**, may we suggest you send a love gift of \$5.00 or more to help cover costs of publication and postage. Send it to:

Regular Baptists for Revival
754 E. Rockhill Road
Sellersville, PA 18960

You are free to copy this issue or send for quantities at: 25 @ \$7.00; 100 @ \$25.00 plus shipping.

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