



THE REVIEW

Published by the Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America

FELLOWSHIPING IN THE FAITH

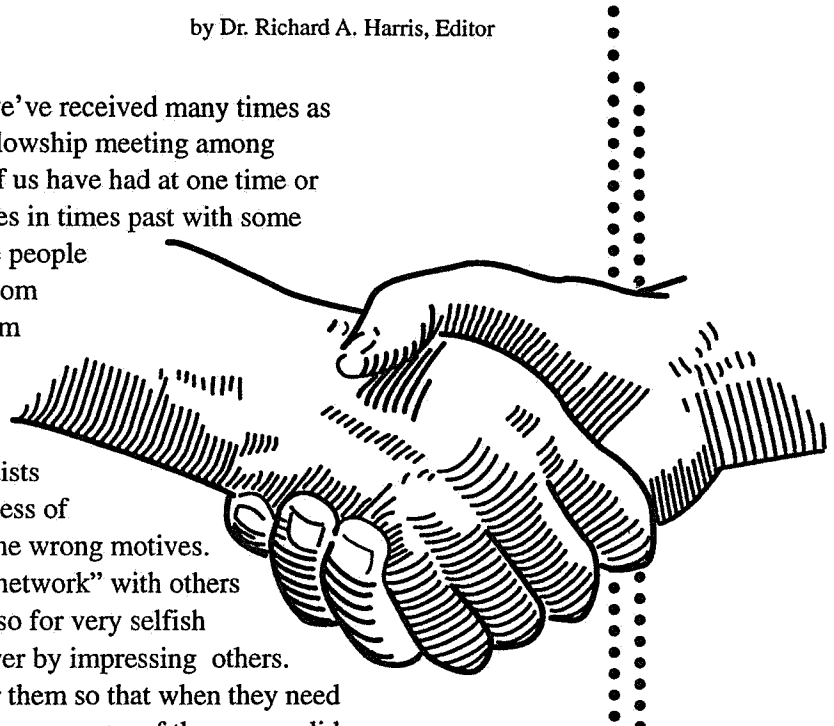
by Dr. Richard A. Harris, Editor

"Who needs it?" That's the response we've received many times as we have talked with pastors regarding a fellowship meeting among Independent Baptists. No doubt, as many of us have had at one time or another, they have had some bad experiences in times past with some "brethren in the Faith." Likewise, there are people all over the country who have withdrawn from local churches because of some past problem with a brother. None of us would agree, however, that this is excusable behavior.

Perhaps this is part of the reason for the fragmentation among Independent Baptists today. We seem to be going about the business of "fellowshipping" in the wrong way or for the wrong motives. There are all kinds of reasons that people "network" with others and some of them are not proper. Some do so for very selfish reasons. Some want to gain prestige or power by impressing others. Some want to develop a "safety net" under them so that when they need another church, they have connections. However, none of these are valid reasons because the Bible gives us many scriptural reasons for fellowship. We list a few of them here.

Christian fellowship with other brethren is mutually refreshing. The Apostle Paul told the church at Rome that "I will come by you into Spain and I am sure that when I come unto you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ...that I may come unto you with joy by the will of God, and may with you be refreshed" (Romans 15:28-29, 32). Apart from Bible study itself, probably nothing else I have done has been such a help in growing in the Lord as fellowshiping with men of "like-precious faith."

It is impossible to read everything and to keep up on all current trends. Often I have been greatly helped in the ministry by leaning on good brethren. I learn from others and have seldom been disappointed. Mutual encouragement is such an important part of fellowship and yet often we do not know what we are missing if we fail to take advantage of these opportunities.



NEW CHURCHES ARE BEING BORN IN THE GREAT PACIFIC NORTHWEST

by Dr. Thomas Nieman, Kent, Washington

Often those who try to practice biblical separation are accused of having "single-issue ministries." We have been told that if we try to practice separation as it has been practiced in the past, that our influence will be minimal and that our testimonies will eventually die out. We knew that there would be deep misunderstandings in separating from some with whom we

continued, page six

continued, page three

The Moderator Mentions

by Dr. L. Duane Brown



A romantic legend of unknown origin has persevered through many centuries. Referred to by Shakespeare, Coleridge, and Spenser, it says that every swan gives one glorious song just before its death.

So, as your outgoing Moderator whose term expires at the Annual Conference, June 18–20, I leave you this *Swan Song*. It is significant not only because of my completion of serving as Moderator (having served two terms), but also upon the occasion of the announcement to Parsippany Baptist Church, Parsippany, New Jersey, of my intended retirement at the end of the summer. I hope to spend time in writing, conference ministries, and traveling.

My *Swan Song* is directed in three ways. First, my praise is for my wonderful Lord for His grace in calling me into His service. With no church roots or knowledge of Scriptures, I was saved as a sixteen-year-old lad on a Pennsylvania farm. My first contact with the gospel occurred when my older brother Ken went off to college and his roommate was a witnessing Christian. Since then, Jesus Christ has meant so much to me! My wife Shirley and I have given our lives to follow and serve Him for nearly forty years.

Then I wish to thank the Lord for Parsippany Baptist Church. This June, I conclude ten years as their pastor. These have been blessed years with beautiful people who have loved me and allowed me, happily so, to be active in the ACCC, in missionary travels, in the GARBC (when we were in fellowship with it) and now

with the IBFNA. Every Lord's Day is an exciting adventure here at Parsippany; every deacons' meeting is an invigorating, encouraging occasion. As only the third pastor in its 31-year history, I rejoice over the forty young people who have been called into full-time service and twenty missionary families we presently support. In a strong Catholic and Jewish community, it is a battle for every family to win them and train them for Christ.

Finally, I sing my *Swan Song* with the IBFNA. What a privilege to be called upon to be your Moderator for these three years. I sincerely hope I have kept an even keel in our good ship of fellowship.

Special burdens have motivated me such as the balance between those who wish to crusade for the King James Version and those who do not. The key is our Articles of Faith which make this familiar version our "preference." Since it is part of our heritage as fundamentalists in this century, we should use the KJV but unyieldedly defend the original autographs. The IBFNA has taken its stand on preferring the KJV. There is no room for crusading views!

There are those who say we shoot our wounded or attack those within our ranks who differ on some doctrinal matters or methodology. I feel keenly that unethical and unwarranted attacks upon other members must not be allowed to stand. When one of our members holds a view or doctrine not stated in the Articles

continued, page eight

1995-1996 OFFICERS

MODERATOR

Dr. L. Duane Brown

SECRETARY

Rev. Jeffrey R. Bailey

TREASURER

Rev. Ralph Weer

EDITOR • *The REVIEW*

Dr. Richard A. Harris

The REVIEW is the only official publication of the Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America. It is written to review current events, to educate readers about the issues facing today's fundamental Bible-believers and to promote the Independent Baptist position. Published four times a year, subscriptions are \$5.00 for non-IBFNA members. Subscriptions are automatic with IBFNA membership. For more information, write or call:

Membership & Subscriptions
754 East Rockhill Road
Sellersville, PA 18960-1799
Phone (215) 536-9200
FAX (215) 536-2229

had formerly fellowshiped and served. We were prepared for a lonely path, yet there was burning in our souls because we truly wanted to please our Savior. God has honored those decisions. As a result of taking such steps, we have formed precious friendships while experiencing a growing and delightful fellowship.

Evangelism and church planting projects continue to be a great burden. It is so exciting to see numbers of growing ministries. Praise God for numerical growth, missions' program expansions, and the freedom to address pertinent issues.

Our hearts are thrilled as we see our youth going to strong separatist schools who are unashamed to identify their position and clarify their loyalty. We believe that we will have a growing number of trained men and women who will capably serve as pastors, missionaries and in other ministries.

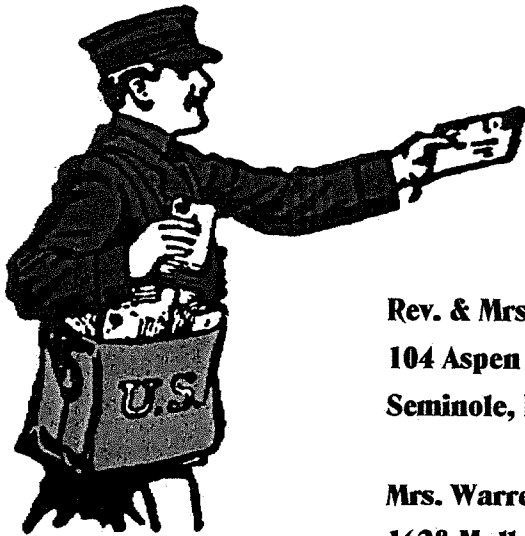
As an example, three years ago, the Galilee Baptist Church of Kent, Washington, had some members express a burden to commence a church at Rockport, Washington. They began a church at that time. Because the area was rural, the work would be very difficult. However, it was a very needy area. Then, a little over a year ago, one of our deacons moved to the Bonney Lake area,

and as a result began the Grace Baptist Church of Bonney Lake, Washington. Now, we have a new project underway in the Lynnwood, Washington area. A group of believers, including several Galilee members, met on Wednesday evenings and then began Sunday services early in 1996. The name of this new church is Heritage Baptist Church. At present, the Articles of Faith, the Constitution and the organizational matters are being developed and adopted. They already have 30-35 people, representing several families. We give God the glory for these blessings.

Your prayers are urgently requested for these new works. We are excited about that which God is doing in the Great Pacific Northwest. ▲

If you have friends or relatives in any of these areas that may help, please contact Galilee Baptist Church or me at:

P.O. Box 5219
Kent, Washington 98064-5219
Telephone: (206) 854-5828



ADDRESS CHANGES

Rev. & Mrs. Ralph M. Weer (effective July 10, 1996)
104 Aspen Circle
Seminole, FL 33777

Mrs. Warren (Lee) Birdsall
1628 Mulberry Street
Berwick, PA 18603
(717) 759-1142

Miss Daryl L. Birdsall
1628 Mulberry Street
Berwick, PA 18603
(717) 759-1142

Rev. & Mrs. Ronald A. Anderson
P.O. Box 387
Adrian, MO 64720

Rev. & Mrs. Jerry E. Howarth
110 West Second
Winifred, KS 66427

THE NEED FOR A BIBLICAL EPISTEMOLOGY

by Rev. Russ Young, P

Today older Christians are having difficulty understanding how younger Christians think. The irrational behavior of young Christians astounds and confuses older Christians. Those who were born and educated prior to 1960 do not realize what has happened inside the heads of those who were born and educated after 1960.

Before 1960, the way the average person reasoned was based upon the biblical view of reality. There were absolutes (right and wrong, good and evil, things always true, and things always false, etc.) and one was expected to think rationally and act responsibly based on this way of thinking, even in the unsaved world. With most people thinking this way, it made it easier for people to respond to the conviction (a rational convincing) of the Holy Spirit. Because of this way of thinking, the newly saved individual more easily moved into a biblical way of thinking. The facts upon which he based his actions changed, but only in minor ways did his way of thinking have to change. We thought there was no need to teach a biblical epistemology (how to know what we know is true) and methodology (how to think and reason with what we know is true) of thinking because everybody just thought that way naturally, or so we thought.

Then came the 1960s. Most Christians dismissed the college revolutionaries as "a bunch of crazy hippies." Unbeknownst to the average man struggling to put his children through college, they were being assaulted by a daily barrage of intellectual evangelists who were preaching a different epistemology of no absolutes, no right and wrong, only "cultural constructs" (society making arbitrary rules) of good and evil. People who believed in absolutes were simply ignorant bigots holding to outdated, unprovable and irrational beliefs. The unsaved, having no foundation for their formerly held epistemological views of right and wrong, saw these teachings as justification for "doing your own thing."

Christians at first saw these views were wrong, but most did not have the slightest clue as to why. They did not have a "reason (Greek apologia—a rational and reasonable defense) for the hope" that was in them, so they slowly gave in to this new way of thinking. The smoke screens of Christian liberty, each man standing or falling to his own master, being all things to all men, judge not that ye be not judged, letting the spirit lead you, the "I feel God would have me" and a host of other illusory reasonings seemed like biblical justification for this new enlightened-college-educated-non-Christian way of thinking. Mom and Dad felt if their children got through college without becoming flower children, sleeping with

their dates, taking drugs, burning the flag or their draft card, they had made it through unscathed. How wrong they were!

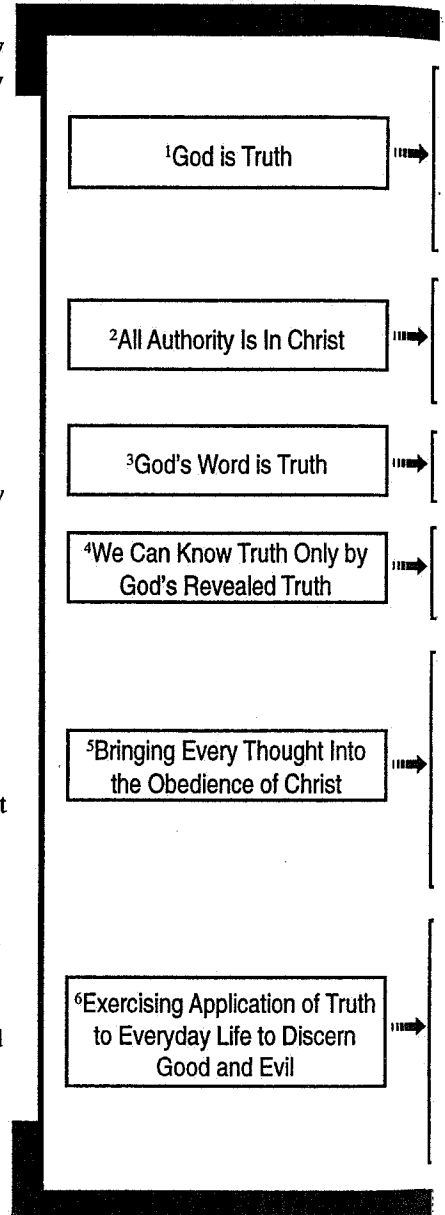
They said, "So what if the kids picked up a few worldly attitudes, they were basically good kids, they'll be all right." (Romanticism: unreasonable belief things always turn out all right.)

But things started not "turning out all right." The children got away from church, marriages started falling apart, children were getting into trouble, teen pregnancies began to rise, rebellious children were now more common, and no one seemed to be able to "get through to them." Sound familiar?

What happened was we had failed to teach in Bible-believing churches the biblical epistemology and methodology of thinking that the Bible calls the renewed mind. What God commands in Romans 12:2, "be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind," is not understood and practiced by Christians.

The Biblical Epistemology

Every epistemological system begins with presuppositions. Biblical epistemology gets its presuppositions from the Bible. Our foundational presupposition is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, who demonstrated His deity, in history, by His resurrection from the dead. He not only resurrected, but foretold He would do so. By this verifiable act in history (500 eye witnesses, 4 written witnesses: The Gospels) He was declared to be the Son of God with power. As the Son of God, He gave



LOGY AND METHODOLOGY OF THINKING

ennsauken, New Jersey

authority to the apostles to teach in His authority. (Romans 1:4; Matthew 28:19-20; II Timothy 3:15-17).

"...God is light, and in him is no darkness at all." I John 1:5
"Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."
John 14:8

"And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."
Matthew 28:18

"...thy Word is truth."
John 17:17b

"For with thee is the fountain of life: In thy light shall we see light."
Psalms 36:9

"Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ; And having in a readiness to revenge all disobedience, when your obedience is fulfilled."
II Corinthians 10:5-6

"For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil."
Hebrews 5:13,14

God reveals about the nature of man being sinful, depraved and corrupt, man can only have true knowledge by God revealing it to him. He cannot trust his intuition, feelings, independent reasoning, collective opinions, or education since all of these are corrupted by sin. Since God is the source of all life and truth, it is only in His light (truth, i.e., the Bible) that we can be enabled to understand and perceive truth.⁴

In the chart, the principles of biblical epistemology and methodology begin with God is Truth.¹ Light is a symbol of truth in the Bible. "God is light" means He is the source of all Truth. Jesus Christ states He was THE TRUTH. If we are going to know what is true, we must recognize and accept that God and Christ are the revealers and final arbiters of truth.

Second, as the Son of God He declares all authority (power) is in Him.² He is the source of all authority. He tells man what is true or false, what is good or evil, what is right and wrong by the authority derived from His proven Deity by the resurrected life.

Third, this resurrected Son of God declares that in the Word of God, the Bible, God has communicated His revealed truth to man.³ The Word of God is the ruler by which man can have certain knowledge of good and evil, truth and error, and we must measure everything by it.

Fourth, because of what

Biblical Methodology of Thinking Based on the Biblical Epistemology

Fifth, we now must make a choice. The modern worldview of knowledge begins with this epistemological presupposition: THERE ARE NO ABSOLUTES. (Unchanging Truth.) The great fallacy of this presupposition is that this statement is AN ABSOLUTE. Modern thinking begins from this arbitrary, unfounded, contradictory and irrational presupposition.

God's Word tells us we are to be "casting down imaginations (anything not true) and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of (belonging to) God, and to be bringing into captivity every thought (way of thinking to the obedience of Christ.⁵ Our way of thinking should be, "God of truth, whatever you say in your Word is true and I willingly submit my way of thinking to agree with your truth alone in obedience to your Son Jesus Christ." Jesus said, "He that loveth me keepeth my commandments." This is where the battle for our minds will be won or lost. It is not only a matter of reasonableness or logic, it is also a matter of a submissive humble heart that obeys its God and Savior. It is a matter of recognizing and submitting to Him who is the source of all truth and accepting who we are before Him: a created soul that must be subject to its creator.

Sixth, is the exercising of the application of God's truth to everyday life.⁶ Once the way of thinking is submissive to God's revealed truth, it now must be exercised by examining everything in the light of the truth, deciding what is good and doing the good or deciding what is evil and not doing the evil. This is God's way for Christians to think and then act in their daily lives. Such daily exercise brings discernment and wisdom that matures the child of God in Christ and His Word.

If God's biblical epistemology and methodology are the guiding truths in the minds and hearts of God's people, they will give a unity of mind to old and young believers alike. They give a rational basis for real communication to be able to take place. They give Christians "a lamp unto their feet and a light unto their path" and a real sense of security knowing they are in the will of God. They bring maturity because they bring our minds into the renewed way of thinking that God uses to conform us to the image of Christ, by letting "the same mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." ▲

We need to remember that one of Satan's favorite tactics is to isolate us from others before moving in for the slaughter. I have often met with men who apparently were totally uninformed and later I learned of their stumbling. It is hard to stand militantly for the truth of God today. We need the strength and encouragement that come from the fellowship of God's men to help us stand up for the Lord.

The churches and men of the New Testament were united in a common purpose. "But now I go unto Jerusalem to minister unto the saints" (Romans 15:25). "And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we should go unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision" (Galatians 2:9).

Whether it was ministering to the saints at Jerusalem or carrying the gospel to the Gentiles and Jews, there was a oneness of purpose among the churches of Paul's day. It is amazing how much more we can accomplish just by learning from others. The Devil's method is to divide and conquer; sadly, he often succeeds. The army that stands firmly shoulder to shoulder and protects one another from enemy attacks will succeed in the conflict.

Fellowship builds consideration for one another. Respect

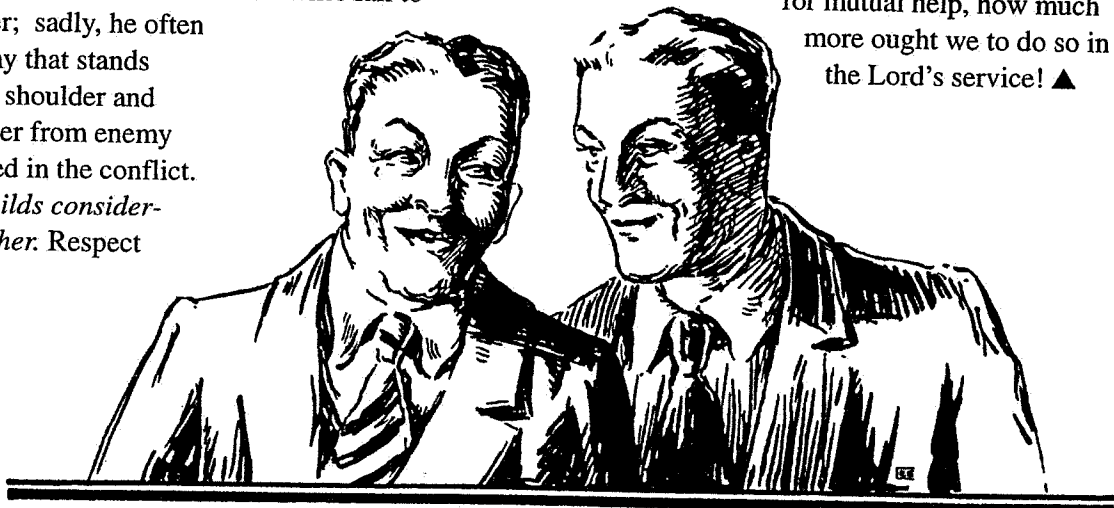
among churches was evident in New Testament times. Messengers from other churches are spoken of in Scripture and were entitled to respect. "Whether any do enquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellowhelper concerning you: or our brethren be enquired of, they are the messengers of the churches, and the glory of Christ" (II Corinthians 8:23).

Letters were sent from one church to another to recommend brethren and this principle was clearly taught and practiced in Scripture. "And when I come, whomsoever ye shall approve by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem" (I Corinthians 16:3). Too many times churches today display lack of respect for sister churches when no contacts or requests are made from one church to another when members move or transfer. It is as if no other church exists but "ours" and no other church can help me with anything. Far too often this practice encourages unscrupulous individuals to go from one church to another creating havoc for pastor after pastor. I have even seen churches fail to

seek a recommendation from other pastors when hiring one of their former employees only to have to suffer problems with them later because they did not.

We are really "interdependent" as well as "independent" and our participation in good fellowship in no way diminishes the independence and sovereignty of the local church. I Timothy 3:15 tells us that the "church of the living God is the pillar and ground of the truth." That's a strong verse for those who do not understand the importance of the local church. In this passage, Paul is talking about the qualifications of church leaders: pastors and deacons. He is certainly not talking about invisible pastors and deacons.

This means our task is of monumental proportions since we are to be "upholding the truth." The local church has a high and noble responsibility in this world. Simply stated, the local church is the center of truth in this error-filled world. We dare not minimize our position or calling. Being a vice president of IBM is nothing compared with being His servant. If corporations in secular service must meet together for mutual help, how much more ought we to do so in the Lord's service! ▲



PERSPECTIVES

Scrap the World Council of Churches

Anglican Bishop Michael Nazir-Ali of the British diocese of the Anglican Church urged the ecumenical community to abandon the World Council of Churches (WCC). However, he also wants the WCC replaced with a new international body to which the Roman Catholic Church could belong.

Nazir-Ali, speaking to the Council of Churches for Britain and Ireland, said the WCC could take a cue from the British council. The British council changed its structure in 1990 so that the Roman Catholic Church in Britain has agreed to become an associate member.

"Surely a similar move needs to be at the world level," the bishop maintained.

"Instead of reorganizing the WCC, we may need to start again from scratch, asking the Roman Catholic Church, in all humility, what structures would enable it to participate fully in the ecumenical movement at this global level. Roman Catholic absence hinders the work and witness as a whole."

The WCC has 324 Protestant and Orthodox members with a combined membership of 350 million and an annual income of \$90 million. Dr. Konrad Raiser, WCC's secretary general, also called on the council to look for ways to increase the Catholic church's participation.

The building of a one-world church continues and its climax is seen in this attempt to bring the WCC and Roman Catholic Church together in one organization. Revelation 17-19 reveals God's attitude toward this and His final action taken against this amalgamated church. The clear command of Scripture to God's own is, "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Revelation 18:4).

Mainline Protestant Churches Decline

Membership in a number of mainline Protestant denominations continues to decrease according to the National Council of Churches *1996 Yearbook of American and Canadian Churches*.

The largest decline since last year's edition was experienced by the Presbyterian church (USA) which lost 98,630 members, a 2.6% drop. The United Church of Christ lost 28,868 members (1.89%) and the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) lost 20,373 members (2.13%).

The real picture reveals that many of these liberal denominations rejected God's Word as the answer to life's deepest problems. Many churches offer pop-psychology, motivational talks and even comedy as a substitute for sound doctrine and biblical truth. How tragic it is to see instead of the Bread of Life, these apostate churches only giving a stone. (Matthew 7:9) ▲

PERSPECTIVES
is written by
Dr. Ralph G. Colas,



Executive Secretary,
American Council of Christian Churches
World Council of Biblical Churches

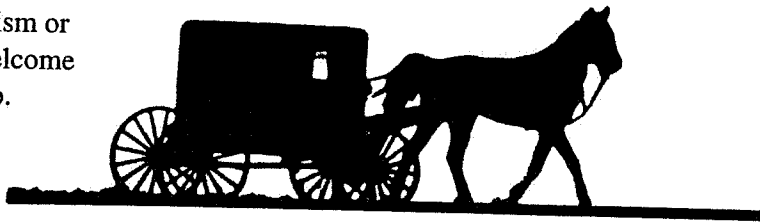
AMERICAN COUNCIL OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES
P.O. Box 19 • Wallingford, PA 19086
Phone (610) 566-8154

of Faith, he should never be called a heretic or worse. We must respect views that differ even if we disagree with them. Our Articles of Faith are designed to cover every significant area of doctrine; let us use it as the standard for fellowship and not individual doctrinal matters.

The IBFNA has grown to 385 members in the U.S.A. and 36 international members in seven other countries. The future is as bright as the promises of God (Adoniram Judson) so we need not rest in our accomplishments; rather, we need to reach out to other Baptist folks who are weary of isolationism or conventionism and welcome them to our fellowship. This past year we began reaching into the southeastern U.S.A. with

regionals in Florida and South Carolina. I hope the next Moderator (and officers) will aggressively seek to recruit pastors and people who want fellowship and an opportunity to learn, and will not hesitate to speak out on current issues.

Let us join together at Lancaster this June, expecting the Lord's blessing, and with thankful hearts, trusting Him for future blessings as the IBFNA expands and grows. As the Apostle Paul said, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" ▲



Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America
Membership & Subscriptions
754 East Rockhill Road
Sellersville, PA 18960-1799

Non-Profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Perkasie, PA
Permit No. 89