



**IBFNA**

May 2009  
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# **THE REVIEW**

Looking forward to seeing you at the 2009 IBFNA Family Conference

*For Such A Time As This*

**June 23-25  
Crown Plaza Hotel  
Pittsburgh International Airport  
1160 Thorn Run Road  
Coraopolis PA 15108  
412-262-2400  
www.crownplaza.com**

Registration begins on Tuesday morning, June 23, at 8 A.M. Make your reservation at the hotel as soon as possible, and be sure to tell them that you're with the IBFNA Conference to receive the discounted rate.

General sessions and workshops will run throughout the day, Tuesday and Thursday, but Wednesday afternoon will be open to enjoy the attractions in the area. Teens and grade school children have special programs just for them, and a nursery will be provided so that all our families can attend.

You can contact the Conference Committees listed below to get further information or volunteer to help:

**Host Committee Chairman: Mark Strangman**

**E-mail: strangmanmark@msn.com**

**(And the people of Swissvale Baptist Church, Pittsburgh PA)**

Music: **Phil Gingery**

Displays: **Clay Nuttall**

Transportation: **Mark Strangman**

Security/Ushers: **Charles Edwards**

Daily News Sheet: **Dave Reinhardt**

Sound: **Fran Carey**

Tours/Facilities: **Mark Strangman**

Teens: **Jim and Josh Swieringa**

Nursery: **Karen Swieringa**; \*nursery help is needed, Email: pastorJosh@faithbaptistmuskeon.com

Children's Programs: **Dennis Rew** (Assistant Pastor at Middletown Road Baptist Church, Pittsburgh PA)

& **Pete Fasciano** (Youth Leader at Swissvale Baptist Church, Pittsburgh PA)

# Gleanings from the Past... Looking to the Future

Dr. Charles L. Dear

In this pre-conference issue of *The Review*, we have taken the opportunity to interview those men who have served as Moderator of our Fellowship. The interview was conducted by sending a series of questions and follow-ups to each Moderator and asking for their response, either question by question or in a free-flowing essay that reflects upon our history and their years serving as Moderator. For the sake of simplicity, the questions are listed for reference below in numerical order and will not appear in any of their responses. Where some answered question by question, their numbering refers to the same number question asked. Some also took the opportunity to write further to help provide a more complete picture of how our Fellowship developed and where we need to be going.

1. When did you serve the Fellowship as Moderator? How long have you been a part of the IBFNA? Were you a part of the Regular Baptists for Revival movement that preceded the formation of the IBFNA? Were there other movements and activities that contributed to the founding of the IBFNA, in which you participated or observed closely?

2. How would you describe the state of the Fellowship at that time? What were some of the challenges you saw falling on the shoulders of your leadership during your term in office? What were some of the challenges already addressed or solved before you came to office?

3. Was there opportunity for you to develop some clear strategies and objectives while you were Moderator that you believed were necessary for the welfare of the IBFNA? What were those strategies and/or objectives and which ones were you able to implement during your term?

4. What were some of the challenges facing the Fellowship that you inherited? What challenges were passed on to your successors? What do you see as the most persistent problems for the IBFNA to tackle since your term in office? Do you see any serious threats to the well being or future of the Fellowship? What do you think will be necessary for their solution, either as steps in the right direction or being able to completely resolve them?

5. Speaking of challenges for the IBFNA, how were the finances during your term in office? Did you feel it necessary to address the financial needs with the members or did you make recommendations how to improve our financial condition? How would stronger financial support have helped you build the Fellowship? What things would you have done if there were enough to underwrite the expense?

6. How were the national Conferences during your term in office? Can you give some highlights of those conferences, things you thought made them a particular blessing to those who attended? What do you see as the

purpose for national conferences, what would you like attendees to take home with them as a result of being there? Do you think it is important for members to network together across the Fellowship, are there some specific benefits you see from getting to know brethren across the nation, or even from other parts of the world? What did you think of the concept of Regional Conferences? Do you see merit in promoting them at this stage of our Fellowship's progress? Do you have any specific recommendations about Regional Conferences, perhaps when and where to hold them, or how often between national conferences?

7. What about promotion of the IBFNA in local churches, state fellowships, colleges and seminaries? Do you think there is continuing resistance to the IBFNA in some institutions and do you see ways to overcome that resistance, without compromising our stand on the issues of our day?

8. Since this is being published in *The Review*, perhaps you could address the development of publications in our Fellowship, from books written by our members, to Moderator's letters, as well as *The Review* itself? What do you see as important information and content that members need to receive from the Fellowship, perhaps information not readily available elsewhere? Are there other publications you feel our members need to read to be properly informed?

9. Would you compare the impact of the IBFNA on you and your ministry, first as a member and then as you became Moderator? Just as a member, has your participation in the IBFNA influenced your ministry? Then as Moderator, how has the role of leadership changed or affected your ministry? Would you say that your participation in the IBFNA made a difference to those under your ministry? Could you describe how its influence filtered down to the people under your ministry?

10. What do you see for the future of the IBFNA? What do you see necessary for its future development and growth? What counsel would you offer to future Moderators and officers of the Fellowship that you believe would make it better, bigger or extend its impact for the cause of Christ?

## Dr. Robert J. Payne



1. I am the present Moderator, and have also served as Secretary/Clerk. I pastored a GARBC church back in 1990, and at that time I was becoming quite concerned with the doctrinal slide of the GARBC. I recall reading some of the publications from the Regular Baptists for Revival. I so appreciated their strong stand on biblical separation. A few years later, as I was pastoring another GARBC church, the things that I had learned from these publications encouraged me to pull that church out of the GARBC (which I did). The old *Regular Baptist Review* (published by the Regular Baptists for Revival) can still be found on the IBFNA website.

2. Aside from remaining doctrinally strong and standing firm as separatists, one of the great concerns that I have for the IBFNA is that we minister to all ages. So many young people are falling into compromising churches and “Reformed Theology.” My goal is to continue to improve our yearly family conferences, keep them as inexpensive as we possibly can, and structure them so that they are appealing to both young and old. The future of Fundamentalism is our young families. We need to make sure that we include them each year in our conferences and gear some of our sessions to their needs as young fundamentalists. I think the foundation for all of this was set before I became Moderator. We had already begun the push for family conferences, and we had already established the Young Preachers’ Scholarship.

4. There were two great challenges facing me as a became Moderator at the 2008 conference. First, was the change over of the IBFNA mail center, including the layout and printing of *The Review*. Both Sandy Ellis and Julie Davidson have made that task so much easier.

Second was the challenge that I just mentioned of appealing to younger families. This year, at the conference, I am seeking to move closer to that goal through expanded practical workshop topics.

One other challenge that we are facing as a fellowship is the state of our economy in the United States. How will it affect our conference in years to come? How will we have to adapt in order to continue to minister to and strengthen fundamentalists? Perhaps the future might include several different regional conferences (in lieu of the national of other conference) in order to hold down costs, but I think it is a bit too early to consider that right now.

Concerning threats to our fellowship, we will always have to “earnestly contend for the faith” if we are going to remain a strong fellowship. Fundamentalism is growing increasingly soft in doctrine and biblical separation. Our conference preaching, *Review* articles, and conference resolutions must be kept on target biblically.

5. Right now our finances are doing fine, but I do have concerns about the future. Numerical growth of the fellowship will help here. I think each member needs to make it his goal to introduce the IBFNA to at least one other person this next year, and encourage him to bring his family to the conference. This would go a long way to helping the IBFNA grow both numerically and financially

6. Let me just speak to the issue of the importance of our national conferences and of the fellowship itself. In 1994, at the age of 29, I attended my first Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America conference near Chicago. So began my affiliation with the IBFNA. As I think back over the past decade, I can’t begin to tell you how invaluable the fellowship has been to me and my ministry. As a young preacher, my ministry was shaped and molded by the relationships that I developed at the conferences. Through the IBFNA my convictions as a fledgling pastor were strengthened and sharpened. Although I could list many good benefits that are available to those who participate in the IBFNA, I have listed only a handful of ones that have been most meaningful to me.

*Mentoring:* This is particularly important for younger men. Paul wrote to Timothy: “And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also” (2 Tim. 2:2). How important it is for younger people to have older people as mentors who have been through “the school of hard knocks.”

I recall my first pastorate. The deacons asked me to come a bit late to my very first deacons’ meeting so that they could plan my installation service. When I arrived at the meeting, two of my deacons were arguing about a particular doctrinal subject. As I sat down, one of the deacons asked me “what I thought.” I was, in my very first deacons’ meeting, forced to “take sides.” My answer, although biblical and right, was not very palatable to the other side. This began a downward slide in my ministry at the church that led to my resignation some months afterward. I don’t know how I could have made it that year if God had not made available to me the wisdom of older godly pastors.

This scenario has been played out many times throughout my ministry. There have been many times when I have sought out my seasoned mentors for encouragement, admonition and advice.

(Dr. Robert J. Payne Continued from pg 3)

Through the IBFNA both younger preachers and church members have an opportunity to be mentored by those who are older.

*Fellowship:* Although necessary for everyone, this part of the IBFNA is particularly important for pastors and missionaries. It is unfortunate that many young preachers get so involved in ministry that they neglect building relationships with other preachers. This is a grave error. Although the pastor, evangelist, missionary and their wives need to build intimate relationships with those to whom they minister, there are limits to those relationships. At times there are topics and situations which cannot be discussed with those under a man's ministry. A preacher, whether young or old, needs other preachers with whom he can freely communicate and fellowship. The IBFNA can fill a real fellowship void in a preacher's ministry.

*Prayer:* Paul was a man who coveted the prayers of others: "Now I beseech you, brethren, for the Lord Jesus Christ's sake, and for the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in *your* prayers to God for me...." I have often appreciated the prayers of other brethren in the IBFNA. They are walking, or have walked exactly the same path that I am. Because of that, they are able to pray for me with great insight and precision.

*Accountability:* If we are not vigilant we are all prone to "slip" spiritually and doctrinally. For this reason Paul tells the Corinthians to "watch ye [stay alert]," and to "stand fast in the faith" (1 Cor. 16:13). The fellowship, accountability and rebuke of other brothers and sisters helps to keep us "straight." I praise the Lord for those wise older men in the IBFNA, who have for years kept me straight both theologically and spiritually.

*Recommendation:* Again, this is particularly applicable to younger preachers. It is both helpful and necessary for young pastors to have friendships with older, more established pastors when it comes to finding a place of ministry. Not only can an older man commend a younger man to a congregation that

may be looking for a pastor, but he can also help a younger man to avoid churches that might not be suitable for him.

7. Yes, I do see a continued resistance. I'm not sure that there are any easy answers to overcoming this resistance. We need to continue to be strong in our stand, loving in our approach and make our materials available to those institutions.

8. I think that information on theological trends and issues of the day is something that is very important for members to receive. Some of these theological perversions can sneak up on an unsuspecting and uninformed believer. If Christians are going to avoid error they need to have a basic understanding of the issues of the day and why they are scripturally inaccurate. Although other organizations do provide this information, I believe that the IBFNA has a unique perspective that is unlike anyone else's.

I think that along with this type of knowledge that the IBFNA needs to provide information to form a basis for looking at the scriptures accurately. A continued emphasis on a consistently literal/normal interpretation of the Bible, as well as the resultant dispensational approach to the Word of God is desperately needed in modern Fundamentalism. If the IBFNA continues to emphasize this *consistent* approach to the scriptures it will definitely find itself to be part of a quickly shrinking minority in Fundamentalism.

So how would this information be disseminated to the fellowship? Our three major avenues of communication at this time are *The Review*, the Moderator's letters, and the conference preaching and workshops. Although we are already actively promoting these things through these three avenues, I think something like a regular book review section in *The Review* might go a long way to helping believers gain an in-depth knowledge of what is going on around them.

10. My advice to future Moderators and officers would be to continue to push to reach families. We are not a preachers' fellowship. We are a fellowship for all fundamental Baptists who stand with us.



*Dr. Richard A. Harris*

Looking back over a period of about 18 years is not very long as far as organizations go, but it does

give you a little perspective. My involvement with the IBFNA goes back to its second year of existence. I was not at the forming meeting in Oshkosh, nor at the first annual meeting in Philadelphia. Since then, however, I have not missed one. In the early years, I was elected Moderator and then filled two terms from 2004 to 2008.

God gave us the privilege of pastoring a church family that had an extensive concern for the overall health of the Lord's church; and, as a result, the church helped to finance a large part of the preceding activities

(Dr. Richard A. Harris Continued from pg 4)

of the Regular Baptists for Revival. We published and mailed three years of the original newsletters called *The Review* and sent it free of charge to every GARBC church in America. Sadly, those in leadership positions were able to convince a slim majority of the Fellowship that we were seeking power rather than calling for a genuine revival of the GARBC's original purpose. We were disappointed in this, but that is in God's hands.

Though I did not take part in the founding of the IBFNA, we felt compelled very soon to be a part of it and did so. In the early days, when we were asked to be Moderator, it was soon evident that the desire of some to have a loose fellowship left it so loose that nothing could be done. It was obvious that we had to put enough authority in the hands of leadership to be able to exert some leadership or nothing would be accomplished. Changes were made, and it is better now. We can all understand that organizations must constantly walk a narrow path between seeing to it that men voluntarily join in the fellowship to help one another, rather than the opposite motive of developing political competition to reward people. At the same time, in order to be an encouragement and help to others, we must have the ability to exert leadership and direction.

When I was again asked to be Moderator in 2004, things were a little more organized, and it was easier to accomplish things. The conferences fell together very well, and God blessed us with some good men of character and leadership qualities that helped a great deal. We have been pleased, and I think numbers of pastors and lay people have been blessed and encouraged by the time together. *The Review* has been a tool to keep us focused on some issues, and I am thankful for that also.

Two years ago we put together some incentives to help people reach out to others. We purposefully reached out to some of our church members and some have responded. We also put together an incentive package so that new pastors who had never been to the annual IBFNA conference could be helped by paying their registration for the conference and their first night's accommodations in the host hotel. We challenged men to bring new pastors with them. Very sadly, I must report, that in two years we have not given out a single dollar for that purpose. Why this is, I am not sure. I cannot help but be impressed, however, with the lack of overall concern among pastors and laymen alike for the welfare of the general Body of Christ in America.

Perhaps, I cannot see the forest for the trees, but I have always felt a sense of general malaise among God's people about the spiritual welfare of other churches, Christian schools, colleges, etc. It is as if

the question of God to Cain does not apply to us, "Where is Abel, thy brother?" We all know Cain's answer, "Am I my brother's keeper?" We are all saddened when we hear of a sister church that begins down the road of compromise, and we should be. Our hearts are burdened when we see fellow pastors drift away from the place of obedience and strong Bible teaching to follow the ways of the world's formula for "success." But I wonder if we have made sufficient effort to reach out and show concern for them.

All my pastoral life, I have been involved in fellowships and organizations that help to strengthen pastors and churches, such as the IBFNA, PARBC, KCEA, AACS, and ACCC. It was not that I had lots of time to kill but felt that I had an obligation to encourage others by my presence and to be strengthened, myself, by attending, and I have been. God enabled me many times to get the answers to pressing problems in the church and school that I pastored just by attending these conferences and fellowshiping with men of like precious faith. I have felt that God has rewarded me for caring about my place in the larger picture of the Body of Christ and His worldwide ministry. The Lord willing, if I am physically able to do so, I will be at the IBFNA conference in Pittsburgh.

Forgive me if I seem to be a little over critical. I don't mean to be, but somehow I feel that we need to pray for a Heaven-sent revival of caring about others. I know I need it; and I think if we would be honest with ourselves, we all need a spiritual shot in the arm from the Spirit of God in these horrible days of apathy, immorality and lack of concern for others. The corruption in the political and economic world in which we live is dragging us all down with it. In a few weeks, I will be 75, and my wife and I are trying to help a small church that recently came out of the American Baptist Convention. I'm looking for help to take it over before I have to leave it or before the world squelches its testimony. There's probably a little church near you that also needs some help. By the way, it's still fun.

I'm not really concerned that the IBFNA grow to some impressive size so that the world takes notice. I could care less about the world's estimation of us. I am concerned, however, about the "fire in our bones" that Jeremiah spoke of in his challenging book in a day of destruction. I really think that if we will allow the Lord to revive us again and become more concerned about the work of Christ beyond my home, and my church, and my community, God will grant us His blessing.

*"Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay" Jeremiah 20:9.*



*Rev. Jeffrey R. Bailey*

1. I served the IBFNA as Moderator from June 2002-June 2004. I attended the first Conference in Philadelphia in 1991 and joined prior to that. Before becoming Moderator, I served the fellowship for two terms as Treasurer and two terms as Clerk. I also served as the Conference Coordinator for the Fellowship. All in all I served the fellowship in one capacity or another for 11 consecutive years. I was involved in the Regular Baptist for Revival, but, due to my youth, I was mostly on the periphery of that group.

2. During my tenure as Moderator, the fellowship was at rest. Under the two previous Moderators, the fellowship grappled with a number of difficult issues; and, as a result, some of the men who had been prominent in the fellowship did not feel they could continue their identification with us. I was serving as an officer during this time, and I fully supported the decisions we made and still do. I saw my role as Moderator as one of allowing the fellowship "to catch its breath." I did not feel that it was my prerogative to position the fellowship in any area in which the membership had not spoken. Therefore, I refrained from making any public statements regarding issues unless I was certain the fellowship would heartily endorse my views. This approach was not appreciated in many quarters, but I am still convinced that it was the right one.

3. I did not go into the office with an agenda. My only goal was to build the fellowship through personal fellowship and contact. Most of my "IBFNA" time was spent on personal outreach. I utilized the telephone to speak with as many members as possible and to pray with and for them. I believed and remain convinced that only the fellowship has a right to enter into a crusade. The moderator should exercise great caution in addressing issues on which the fellowship has not spoken.

4. I do not believe that I inherited any challenges that were a result of previous administrations. There is no question that occupants of the Moderator position have approached the office with different perspectives over the years. I believe the fellowship still faces the same challenges that it

has faced since its founding, namely, attracting a new generation of fundamental, separatist, Baptist leaders and church members.

The Old GARBC was an association of numerous small groups of people (mostly Pastors) who developed friendships and alliances during their college years. If the casual observer doubts this, a simple perusal of old BBS of Johnson City yearbooks and a comparison with the make-up of the Councils of 18 in the 1960's and 1970's should clear up any doubts about the matter. The IBFNA is a fellowship of older Christians whose provenance is of more eclectic proportions, but it was in the heat of battle that we found common cause and though those battles were lost, what emerged was a strong loyalty while forged in the crucible of conflict, found its peace in the joyful communion of comrades in arms. We who love the Fellowship and cherish our heritage sometimes find it hard to understand why younger pastors do not flock to our standard. Yet it is not that difficult to understand. The young pastors of today were children when we fought the battles in the GARBC. They identify with the position we take and will fight for it if need be, but have no personal connection to us or any felt need to identify with us. Most young pastors have developed their closest network of friendships while still in Bible college in much the same way as did previous generations. Furthermore, most of our fundamental Christian colleges hold their own Bible conferences every year. One can hardly blame them in this. The cultivation of the alumni is vital to the future success of any college or seminary. For the younger pastor these conferences provide a double bonus of good preaching and a chance to fellowship with their network of friends. The result is that very few of us in the IBFNA even know any pastors who are significantly younger unless they are directly or indirectly products of our own ministries. Combine this with the fact that new, and increasingly smaller, Bible colleges are beginning every year in local churches across the country; and the task of the IBFNA, driven as it is by our annual conferences and personal contacts, is daunting indeed. My personal belief is that the future success of the fellowship will be predicated less on the attendance at our national conferences than on the weekly Monday morning breakfast at the local diner with other like-minded local pastors.

5. Trends in Fundamentalism will also impact us in the future. For the last 100 years the Church has been institutionally driven (mission boards, colleges and seminaries, publishing houses, and social agencies). This is rapidly changing, and the acceleration of that change will continue unabated.

Many churches are starting Bible colleges and mission boards under whom they send their own missionaries to the field. The colleges and seminaries are prudently developing distance learning options. I believe that fundamental colleges and seminaries will continue to develop strategic partnerships with each other that will allow them to offer more without consuming any additional resources. Online courses, Web streaming, video conferencing, Webinars, and modules in multiple locations around the world will become a significant component to our understanding of the nature and scope of Christian education and ministry preparation. I believe the major battle on the horizon in our churches concerns the State and the education of our children. *Wirthlin v. Lexington*, also known as the Parker decision, has settled the issue of who controls the education of students in the public school; hint: it is not the parents. The Massachusetts

homosexual marriage law has turned the Massachusetts public schools into indoctrination centers of perversion. Earlier this year the Attleboro Public High School held a mandatory assembly with two homosexuals, a transsexual, and a bisexual speaking to the students about their sexual life experiences. Thanks to *Wirthlin*, the parents do not even have the right to be informed, let alone object. Next up is the home-school community. I personally believe that the State's requiring home-school students to attend sensitivity training on sexual matters is not long in coming. When the Supreme Court overturns all anti-homosexual marriage legislation and state constitutional amendments (and notice I said *when* not *if*), what is happening in Massachusetts will happen everywhere compliments of the NEA and ACLU. The IBFNA will have to find its place in this battle over our future.

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## Dr. Clay L. Nuttall



1. I have served three terms as moderator of IBFNA and have been a part of the movement from almost the beginning. The RBR (Regular Baptists for Revival) was a good idea, and I supported it as a way to bring about a reformation of the denomination that I was raised in. Having served in the guiding council of that group for several years, I was a first hand observer in the doctrine downgrade that has been documented and, based on those theological problems, led the church I pastored to withdraw.

2. In the creation of our fellowship we were reacting to the negative things that we had experienced. Some of these required correction. This was addressed by former moderators. We are still working through many of these.

3. During my tenure we were able to address some of the thorny problems. The version issue was one of those that seemed to have been put to rest. We tried to deal with conference attendance and program issues as practical challenges.

4. The issue of our organizational structure remains a challenge. We did not want a controlling elite so the officers were extremely limited. That hindered their ability to find practical answers to daily

function. We did not want employees and this means that leaders were always torn between two lives with the fellowship coming out on the short end.

5. The finances have not been our major problem; but, if we were to become aggressive in our development, we would need to find a way to bolster this.

6. The conference programs, attendance, displays, etc. have always been on a roller coaster. This needs to be discussed in the fellowship. It would seem obvious that we are sinking slowly, and we need to decide if we are going make changes to reverse this. There have been some good additions to the conference in recent years. One of them is the morning Bible series and a lighter schedule. As leaders we tend not to ask who should come, why should they come and what can we do to encourage families to attend. Regional meetings are good, and we need other creative approaches.

7. Promotion in the schools and churches is needed but we have found that volunteer help in this area is extremely limited. There is resistance in some of the schools who view IBFNA as a step sister. This could be overcome by networking with people in those institutions who think kindly of us.

8. *The Review* has been very helpful to the fellowship. It needs to be published regularly with meaningful material. Some of this needs to address the current theological crisis in our circles and the drift toward Reformed theology. I read several other help if their publications would be advertised.

(Dr. Clay L. Nuttall Continued from pg 7)

9. The fellowship has been a great blessing to me personally. Many other members have experienced the same support and encouragement I received when I was targeted by denominational leaders for retribution because we had spoken up about the doctrinal downgrade. The fellowship has provided deep friendships and growing support for the unique ministry that God has given to us in the Middle East, and I am thankful. Every ministry affects the lives of those who are reached, and this fellowship's impact extends to the lives of hundreds of Arabic-speaking peoples.

10. I personally would like to see an aggressive planning group appointed to begin work at once with the present moderator to turn the whole fellowship around. Growth with stability is possible but leaders need to be free to move forward.

11. Almost all other fellowships are centered on an institution or organization. Most of them include churches as members rather than individuals. The problem is that when members die or leave a church, there is no continuation of support and participation. That attrition has brought us to this point, and someone has to address this issue.

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### Dr. L. Duane Brown



It was my privilege to serve as Moderator for two terms in the 1990's. The largest conference was held in Lancaster, PA with around 500 attending. The IBFNA obviously was growing and changing to meet the needs of those interested in uniting for fellowship. The fact that we came out of the GARBC because of their "drift" and convention-like tactics framed our original intentions.

I had attended the first planning session of the Regular Baptists for Revival movement at Dr. Richard Harris' invitation. I was still President of Denver Baptist Bible College and Seminary but had been State Representative for our churches in New York state and Pennsylvania. Our motive was entirely positive, which was to reform the GARBC and bring back the original reasons for its formation. I had served several terms on the Council of 18 so knew well the "drift" which had invaded the movement. A number of us had spoken out in the Council meetings warning of this "drift." In the meantime, the Lord led me to pastor Parsippany Baptist Church, and the church hosted the first public meeting of the RBR movement. Our intent was not to leave the GARBC.

Most folks do not know the resistance, even hostility, many of the leadership of the GARBC had toward us. I received a personal letter from the chairman and vice-chairman of the Council of 18 (Balyo and Pickering) insisting that I cancel the meeting. Dr. Paul Tassell, National Representative, phoned me pleading with me to cancel it. He said it would be divisive. I assured him that was not our purpose, and he should attend it. He did not but

promised to attend the next one (scheduled for West Chester). It was well attended by great speakers and multitudes of burdened Baptists who shared their views and joined in prayer for God's will.

In the early days of the IBFNA we had to determine how much central authority we wanted. So the office of a moderator was established, rather than president or chairman. I suggested we should also have a regional council (elected) or an advisory committee (appointed), but these were voted down. Soon it was evident a one-year term was insufficient for any moderator to function well, so we changed to a two-year term and he could be elected for another term. This has worked well for a while, but now we learn that if a moderator does not function appropriately, the IBFNA will not either.

I suggested at one of our business meetings that there be an obligation placed on the moderator to send out regular "information letters" and be responsible for planning and promoting the IBFNA. These were voted in effect by the Fellowship. The Moderator can make or break us.

Not all wanted to expand the IBFNA into a working organization but to remain in its original simple format which only provided an annual Bible conference. I am sorry some left us when we expanded. Some left us when we declined to become a platform for their personal convictions, such as the King James Version Only philosophy. We do not want to get diverted from our stated constitutional mandate.

It seems to me that the IBFNA needs to expand its leadership by broadening it so we do not depend so much on the one moderator. The officers are handicapped if the moderator fails to lead, so they are not the solution.

In the early years, we received a \$1,000 gift from some precious saint who named the IBFNA in his will! The timing was perfect. We do need special



(Dr. L. Duane Brown Continued from pg 8)

We do need special gifts and more members! It is quite amazing how much we accomplish with so small a budget.

Here are my recommendations for its future:

a. Make the annual meeting more attractive for lay people. This means solid Bible messages. Use some younger, newer pastors but mostly use proven, able, older men. The pulpit is our best attraction. Mix in some pertinent workshops on technical subjects which have information not available anywhere else. I am concerned at the number of messages in our conferences seems to be reduced. Each conference should have several designated subjects such as “the annual doctrinal message (our old Baptist organization did this)” and an annual historical message (we have a great heritage). These give a uniform format within the conference theme.

b. Reorganize the responsibilities of the moderator to protect the members.

c. Consider holding regional rallies. These fail because they are not planned before the annual meeting where they must be promoted to succeed. Speakers need to be approved ahead of time by the moderator.

d. Keep *The Review* fresh and unique with variety. Add maybe a teen or a ladies' column. Ralph's

articles are tops. Information is more important than interpretation! (Brother Dear does it well.)

e. How about introducing a fund raising project.

f. Select cities, locations, and hotels with great care. It takes lots of research and leg work.

g. Consider regional spokesmen to enlarge promotion and invite new people.

h. Consider calling a part-time and/or retired man to be a representative to circulate among our churches and to visit friendly churches and pastors.

i. Assist younger pastors and pastors of smaller churches to come. We commend the new program of paying one night hotel expense but need to extend it to needy pastors.

Conclusion: We need to thank the Lord for the IBFNA which meets the needs of those of us who are members and participate. Do we participate only because we enjoy its fellowship and benefits? We all need to recognize the Biblical truth that Christ's church is His body and His bride. We are NOT islands by ourselves but members of His church, both universal and local; and we do have obligations outside of ourselves and beyond our own local church.

My life is enriched by having been Moderator and member of the IBFNA. The messages over the years have impacted my thinking and enlarged my vision for Christ. The promises of God are still in Scripture, and our future depends on them.



***Dr. Charles L. Dear***

My role as the first Moderator of our Fellowship began rather awkwardly. When it became clear that we could no longer continue in the Fellowship of which our church had been a part for more than 40 years, a meeting was convened in the hotel where their national conference was held. The Regular Baptists for Revival movement had already been underway for some time; and while its rallies and its publications had refreshed the spirits of many, it was now clear that a new fellowship had become necessary if there would be a standard bearer for Separation into the future.

After the discussion in that meeting showed a consensus toward the formation of a new fellowship, steps were taken to assemble a leadership for its formation; and I was chosen to serve as the Moderator at that meeting, although I was never sure why. The daunting task of developing a structure for leadership that would be acceptable to all was only eclipsed by the demanding process of writing a constitution and articles of faith for the new fellowship. Understand that at the time circumstances were tense, many were emotional about leaving the former group and others sought to impose some narrower points of view as requirements for membership such as to cause a miscarriage before the fellowship was ever born. We had the issues of Bible versions, Calvinism, dual affiliation with both fellowships, etcetera, all being debated informally toward finding a niche in our Constitution or Articles of Faith as tests of fellowship. The emotions ranged from a strong backlash against the former fellowship to hopes of reconciliation with

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it in the near future by others. Others debated whether we should be a year-round fellowship or just an annual preaching conference without any greater agenda than a promise to meet once a year.

Perhaps one of the best things we did to develop our Constitution and Articles of Faith was to draw men from opposite sides of the issues regarding different subjects of our doctrinal statement. The hope was that if they, as a committee, could arrive at agreeable terms and language, then the task of finalizing the Constitution and Articles of faith would be easier when presented before the whole body. For the most part, it succeeded; but we were sad to lose some good men because the common ground found among most of us fell short of the expectations of others who could not agree or endorse what was presented. The one strongest agreement/concession made back then was the required use of the KJV for preaching at all our conferences. The men who might choose otherwise in their own ministries were gracious in yielding to their brethren on that subject.

The IBFNA struggled in many ways to come into existence. At our first national organizational meeting in Oshkosh WI, we learned that there were men present who would have rather seen the whole plan collapse in failure. However, the Lord led us to continue, and in 1991, at the first official national conference in Philadelphia, thankfully, we were able to hammer out our Constitution and Articles of Faith. The openness of the meeting and the spirit of those who participated was a welcome breath of fresh air, and the camaraderie long lost in the struggles with the former fellowship began to flourish once more. Since the official organization of the IBFNA in Philadelphia, I was invited to serve two more terms as Moderator. With the limits set by our Constitution, to keep anyone from accruing too much power, other good men have since come to lead the IBFNA, which speaks well for the caliber of our membership and the recognition that a fellowship like ours was a necessity for such a time as this.

Over the years the IBFNA has been in existence, much of the backlash and reactionary feelings and words have subsided. The pendulum swung the other way where members no longer wanted to hear what was wrong with other fellowships but wanted to focus on building ours better. At the same time, we extended a welcome to others of like precious faith who were never part of any fellowship and encouraged them to stand together with us. The people who had been hurt in the power struggles of the past were now determined that constitutionally the IBFNA would never permit any individual, group or organization to seize enduring power over the Fellowship. There were some who came to observe the constitutional process in Philadelphia who never

returned when it became clear there were no positions of power to fulfill any political aspirations. After this many years, however, the willing and able pool of leadership has not expanded as we hoped, and we may need to “recycle” leaders more often than we had previously anticipated.

Part of the genius of the IBFNA, however, was its militancy against “big government.” In the earliest days, the Executive Committee actually held too little power to provide the leadership necessary to get things done. Some thought that was best and sought a very loose fellowship that barely existed from conference to conference. Over the years, however, the Moderator and other officers were able to take care of more business between conferences and the Fellowship developed a year-round identity; but the semi-annual changing of the guard kept power in the hands of the members and protected the reputations of those whose served in leadership. It is the low power profile of the IBFNA that truly sets it apart and above all other fellowships, including other Separatist organizations.

Our greatest challenge continues to be the growth of the IBFNA. The regional conferences were a major step towards recruitment of like-minded brethren, who may want to take a closer-to-home look at us before they consider joining. Regionals also helped us to form friendships and find mutual encouragement closer to home, and we would do well to continue them in addition to our national conference, especially in these economic times. The other serious challenge to our Fellowship is the recruitment of younger men who will stand with us on the issues of Separation. We have a twofold problem of young men who do not know, nor care to learn, the threats to the cause of Christ that have in the past and can today still rise from within our own circle of ministries. Not only is such a perspective unscriptural, but it has also persuaded them to follow many evangelical gurus and fads that have destroyed too many churches and ministries over the last ten years.

If the IBFNA were more welcome in more Bible colleges and seminaries, we would do well to have representation wherever and whenever possible. I am reminded of the complaint of a University president on the difficulty in getting good chapel speakers, to which reply was made that there were several good speakers from the IBFNA that would be glad to help. Few, however, have been invited there over the years. In the earlier days of our Fellowship, I remember Duane Brown’s recommending that the Fellowship have a National Representative, but it was not yet the time because we were still smarting from previous bad experiences. A National Representative could yet be possible from among our men who are now retired and may have the desire as well as the opportunity to engage in such a ministry. Short of a Representative, however, it would still be good if those

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nearer the colleges and seminaries that have not compromised could bring the message of our Fellowship to those preparing for the Lord's service. Somewhere, beyond the blogosphere, we have to find times and places where we can engage in discussion and debate with younger people who are pressured to push the envelope toward more worldly methodologies to do the Lord's work. While much of this discussion and debate should already be going on between these students and their pastors, we need as a Fellowship to challenge younger hearts and minds in a forum conducive to critical thinking in the light of Scripture. Our invitations and scholarships to younger men to attend our national conferences was a step in the right direction; but, like holding regional meetings, we might do even better on their turf than on ours. Our exposure remains more passive than active, and we continue to be unknown to many, even though we have existed now for 18 years.

In the earliest days of the IBFNA we considered what it would take to have our own schools, Bible colleges and seminaries, so that we would have good men to succeed our grayer heads as necessary. We were not really prepared to take the necessary steps at that time, but there were some good ideas on distance learning that predated what has become common place in higher education today. While finances have improved over the years, we are not yet prepared for such an undertaking and, frankly, I'm not sure if we have enough young men who would pursue higher education with us. We have several gifted teachers among us, whose experience and expertise would bring great blessings, but there must be sufficient demand to drive its creation. The local church Bible Institute model is returning in popularity, and we have had at least one throughout our existence with Mike McCubbins in California and more recently in Pennsylvania with Mike Ascher. There may be others, but the connection with a good local church is something every Bible college and seminary has struggled with over the years to no perfect solution.

Having been to every national conference since Oshkosh, I must say that over the years they have constantly improved. Our speakers have always been a blessing, but the extension into youth ministries and open door to families participating has been an exciting development. In the beginning, when we were still deciding who we were and what we would do, there was always good fellowship and preaching. We came to know men like ourselves from all over and formed friendships that otherwise never would have existed. Those were priceless blessings, especially during a time when men thought they might have to go it alone where they were. One of the things I am most thankful for while I was Moderator was to have a conference coordinator. Jeff Bailey was the negotiator/haggler par

excellence over my years and helped bring national conferences within the reach of all the people. In more recent years, host committees and the Executive Committee have taken up the huge responsibility and done well, but it is a demanding task in and of itself.

The blessings of a national conference pay dividends in our churches that should motivate us to get our people, as well as ourselves, to our conferences. As pastors, we need to be challenged and informed to better shepherd our flocks, and that takes exposure to information not readily available to us, even from the internet. The majority of online advice comes from a much broader spectrum of men and ministries that may sound good but require considerable discernment, lest we bring to our people something for which we must apologize later. Rick Warren comes to mind as an example of what can happen when we are taken in by what at first seems good but reveals its true colors later, to the embarrassment of many. Likewise, it is good for our church members to come with us to our conferences. The principle of equality of brethren has been a hallmark of our Fellowship since the beginning, and what may have been first born out of backlash has become a worthwhile standard practice for our meetings. If we are not able to draw leaders and staff from existing schools and churches because of compromise, we will need to draw from the families within our Fellowship to help us in the future. I have also found over the years that the members of my church who attend better understand the issues we face in our churches and preach from our pulpits. As a result, they have been strong supporters of our participation in the IBFNA over all these years and help uphold our standards in our church. It has always been better for our people to come and see for themselves to better understand our cause and the need to stand together both in our own ministries as well as together with others across the nation and world. The need for us to stand together across our nation has never been a clearer necessity than today, as our liberties shrink in our nation's plunge towards Socialism.

Above all else, may we pray that God would use our Fellowship as both a watchman and an encourager to those who serve the Lord here and around the world. The Biblical principles that brought God's blessing upon the work of the Lord over the centuries must be passed on to those who follow us. The leaven of pragmatism has sapped the supernatural vitality of the Church, and the world is turning away from the perversion of Christianity because there is little difference between its message and the message of the world. The compromised cannot speak for us; we must speak for ourselves. Much like the politics of our times, they have willingly broken faith with history to carve out a form of godliness, after their own image, that lacks God's power. If there is a reason for our Fellowship's existence and a reason for our part in its testimony, may it be because we understand the times in which we live and know what we must do to be found faithful to Christ.

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