WHAT ABOUT DIFFERENT BIBLE INTERPRETATIONS?

I.   Understand the HISTORY of the DENOMINATIONAL Theory

A.   Seeds planted by the REFORMERS, but not CULTIVATED by them

1.   LUTHER thought the outward forms of the CHURCH ought to give the Word of God FREE COURSE in the world

2.   CALVIN thought it was impossible to draw precise BOUNDARIES to the CHURCH

B.   New mindset hammered out by RADICAL PURITANS

1.   The MINORITY voice at the Westminster Assembly (1642-1649)

2.   Wanting to avoid "DIVIDING the godly PROTESTANT party," they strove to express UNITY when true Christians DISAGREED

C.   Articulated several FUNDAMENTAL truths (summarized)

1.   "Considering man's inability to see the truth CLEARLY, differences of OPINION about the outward form of the church are inevitable"

2.   "Even though these differences do not involve fundamentals of the faith, they are not matters of indifference. Every Christian is obligated to practice what he believes the BIBLE TEACHES."

3.   "Since no church has a FINAL and FULL grasp of divine truth, the true Church of Christ can NEVER be fully represented by any single ecclesiastical structure."

4. "The mere fact of SEPARATION does not itself constitute schism. It is possible to be DIVIDED at many points and still be UNITED in Christ."

D. Denominationalism is really the OPPOSITE of sectarianism

II. Recognize the ESSENTIAL CLARITY of Scripture

A. The Bible is clearly EXPRESSED and easily UNDERSTOOD

B. Most problems come from trying to FORCE the Bible to mean what one thinks it OUGHT TO SAY

III. Distinguish Between Two METHODS of Interpretation

A. The ALLEGORICAL Method

1. Attempts to find a "DEEPER, SPIRITUAL" message

2. Does not INTERPRET Scripture, but REDEFINES it

B. The "LITERAL" Method (better—"Grammatico-Historical")

1. Allows the passage to MEAN what it actually SAYS

2. Most of the Bible makes SENSE when interpreted LITARALLY

3. Scripture consistently interprets ITSELF LITERALLY

4. Allows for FIGURES of speech, SYMBOLS, ALLEGORIES and TYPES