A report and questions relative to feedback from our constituency since the annual minister's meetings held at Hutchinson, KS, April 4-6, 1995:

Introduction

As you recall, Bro. Elmer Gingerich, Mountain View, AR, gave us a glimpse of the youth fellowship meetings, begun in the early 50's and how they have been an important part of our denomination's annual fellowship provisions for the last nearly 4 decades.

Strengths and weaknesses were examined and presented. There was some discussion and a sense that while we don't want to move hastily, we, nevertheless, should not close our eyes to problems that have accompanied these meetings, especially in recent years.

One aspect of a look into the future of Y.F.M.'s is neither negative nor positive. It is their large size.

In the western district, only 5 communities are willing to undertake hosting them, due mainly to the large crowds. (Negative influences have also been cited as reasons for unwillingness to host them.)

We do not want to forget that size is a blessing, not a curse. Surely we want to welcome growth and to make provision for it.

Feedback

Several themes or interests surfaced in the dozen or so responses that came in since the April meetings:

1. That YFM's are much appreciated by young people who are serious about their commitment to the Lord.
2. That YFM's are treasured also as Bible school reunions, and as VS reunions.
3. That a segment of young people attending seem to be coming whose primary object is not Christian fellowship but carnal freedom.
4. That youth sponsors might appropriately attend with young people who are less than 18 years old.
5. That family-type participation would have more Scriptural support than a young-people's-only structure.
6. That a goal of reducing the size of the meetings seems necessary, somehow.
7. That smaller meetings would possibly improve the overall quality of the meetings.

Questions

In view of the challenges before us and the fact that the growth of the past has become quite overwhelming,

1. Could a representative group of ministers be assigned to this need for say 5-10 years?
2. Could this body of men then be authorized to make recommendations to the constituency regarding summer fellowship programs?
3. Could the fear of making too sudden moves or of proposing too drastic changes, be better dealt with in this way, than in letting things go on as they are and hoping for the best?