

The Case For Independent Baptist Churches

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Introduction

Who are independent Baptists? What is an independent Baptist church? When did they begin? What is the difference between an independent Baptist church and other Baptist churches? These are all valid questions and deserve an answer, and that is the purpose of this book. All churches of the New Testament were Baptist churches and each was an independent Baptist church. Also, true New Testament churches have continued from New Testament times down to the present, and remained independent Baptist churches until comparatively recent times when organizations began to be formed called Associations, Conventions and Fellowships. Along with these super-church organizations were formed Mission Boards and Committees with Mission Directors and Secretaries, and other such mission agencies, all of which are extra-Scriptural and not to be found in the Bible. [For a full in-depth study of this subject, read my book "The Bible, The Baptists, and The Board System" available from The Challenge Press, P. O. Box 5567, Little Rock, AR 72215.]

In spite of the historical and Biblical evidence that New Testament churches were all independent Baptist churches and remained such for centuries, the advocates of the various organizations either claim or insinuate that independent Baptists are of recent origin. One organization, the World Baptist Fellowship, not only claims that they are composed of independent Baptist churches, but that their founder, Dr. J. Frank Norris, actually began *all* independent Baptist churches. Dr. Earl K. Oldham, editor of the Arlington Baptist College Media writes in the November 18, 1977 issue:

“I was privileged to sit at the feet of Dr. Norris as a student. I heard him preach some of the greatest messages that mortal man could preach anointed by the Holy Spirit. Fundamentalists must admit that *had it not been for Dr. Norris, humanly speaking, there would not be such a thing as independent Baptist*. He was the only one who seemed to have nerve enough to stand up against the powers that be. *He stood, and as a result others came out and independent Baptists became a reality. All of us who are independent Baptists,*

regardless of what fellowship we are in, owe our very existence to Dr. Norris, humanly speaking. We are what we are, and we have what we have because he dared to stand, and having done all to stand, he stood therefore.”

If Dr. Oldham were to mean that Dr. Norris was the founder of the World Baptist Fellowship and the Baptist Bible Fellowship [since the BBF is a split out of the WBF] there would be no argument, for it is true that Dr. Norris is the founder of the World Baptist Fellowship, but the statement “had it not been for Dr. Norris, there would not be such a thing as independent Baptist,” is completely false. There have been independent Baptists and independent Baptist churches long before Dr. Norris came on the scene, and to make such a statement is completely dishonest.

In the reading of this book, our readers will see that independent Baptists are Baptists who have remained faithful, true and loyal to the New Testament pattern of church truth by remaining independent of all earthly entanglements, alliances, and organizations, and that Baptist churches that have either joined or affiliated with the various organizations, are the ones who have departed from the principles for New Testament churches laid down in the New Testament.

Little Rock, Arkansas

M. L. Moser, Jr.

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Chapter 1—Christ’s Church

By Rosco Brong, Dean

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“And I say also unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it“

(Matthew 16:18)

Christ’s church was built upon Himself. *“That Rock was Christ”* (1 Cor. 10:4). “In the Lord Jehovah is the Rock of ages” (Isa. 26:4, margin). *“Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ”* (1 Cor. 3:11). “Now therefore ye are no more strangers

and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Eph. 2:19-20).

Built Upon Christ

The word Peter means a stone. *It means a little stone, not a big rock.* The Catholic church, which did not exist until hundreds of years after Peter’s death, falsely claims to be built upon Peter, *and by that very claim denies it is Christ’s church,* because the Bible teaches that Christ’s church is built upon Himself.

Peter never suggested that God’s people or God’s churches were built upon Peter. He preached that men should turn to Christ. He knew that Christ was not only the foundation but also the corner stone of His church:

“As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby: if so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious, ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, *Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.* Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, *the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, and a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence,* even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed” (1 Pet. 2:2-8).

Built On Christ

Christ’s church was built upon Christ as the foundation Rock; and it is built on Christ as the chief corner stone: “*Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;* in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord” (Eph. 2:20-21).

No organization is Christ’s church, no matter what it calls itself, if it depends upon or owes its existence to the life, work, and teachings of any mere human being or any number of human beings. Christ’s church was built upon Christ Himself; not upon popes, or Luther, or King Henry VIII, or Calvin, or Wesley, or Campbell, or Smith or Russell, or any other men who thought they could do a better job of teaching and organizing than the Son of God.

Built By Christ

Christ's church was built by Himself. "I will build my church." False churches teach that the church was not organized until Pentecost, but there is no such teaching in the Bible. On the contrary, in Acts 1:15 we are told that before Pentecost "the number of names together were about an hundred and twenty." This plainly means that the church had 120 members. *Christ built His church during His earthly ministry in the flesh, before His crucifixion.* In Matthew 18:17 we read, "If he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." It is ridiculous to suppose that Christ was talking about a church that didn't exist. He was plainly teaching His disciples that if they could not settle the matter of trespasses against one another as individuals, they should take their trouble to the church. What church? The church of which they were members, of course. Christ promised to build His church, and here we find it in existence before He was crucified. Why call Him a liar by saying the church was not organized until Pentecost?

Christ's church was built by Christ Himself, before His crucifixion. No *organization is Christ's church, no matter what it calls itself, if its origin is more recent than the personal ministry of Christ on earth.* Christ's church in the world today is the same in organization, in doctrine, and in practice as it was 1900 years ago.

His One And Only Church

Christ built only one kind of church: "I will build MY Church." It is His church because He created the members (Col. 1:16). It is His church because He purchased it with His own blood (Acts 20:28). It is His church because He is its Head and it is His body (Eph. 1:22-23). It is His church because He is its Bridegroom and it is His bride (Eph. 5:22-32).

"There is one body" (Eph. 4:4). "God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints" (1 Cor. 14:33). Christ built only one kind of church; *He has only one body, and that is the "local" church*, the church that has a definite membership, a definite time and place of meeting, a definite organization with elected officers (bishops, elders, or pastors, and sometimes deacons), and a definite program of *carrying on the Lord's work*—*"the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth"* (1 Tim. 3:15).

No "Invisible" Church

The devil has persuaded many people that the church is some kind of an “invisible” thing that all Christians belong to, and if he could make enough people believe this he would soon destroy Christ’s church. But Christians who get their doctrines from the Bible instead of from the devil will not be misled. *The Bible does not say one word about an “invisible” or “universal” church. There isn’t any such thing.*

In Matthew 16:18, in Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, in Colossians 1:18, 24; 1 Timothy 3:5, 15; Hebrews 12:23; James 5:14, and possibly a few other passages, the word “church” is used *abstractly*, as I have frequently used it above, not referring to any particular organization at any definite place, but to *the church as an institution*. When we make a concrete application of the word we must have in mind *a particular organization of baptized disciples* that meet somewhere and is engaged in the Lord’s work, *because this is the only kind of church that the Bible tells us anything about.*

Abstract And Concrete

To illustrate what is meant by the abstract and concrete uses of words, I might say, “the horse is a useful animal.” I have here used the word “horse” abstractly. I have no particular horse in mind. Now, if I were to use the word concretely, I might say, “farmer Brown’s horse is a good puller,” or, “The horse on this side seems balky.” I am talking about particular horses. But if *I knew as little about horses as some religious teachers seem to know about churches, I might try to make you believe that there is only one horse in the world, a big invisible horse—and a lot of work you would get out of it!*

Again, I might say, abstractly, “the public school is a great democratic institution.” No *sane* person would suppose I meant that there is only one public school in the world—a kind of invisible something without any form of organization, without any responsibility or authority, a school to which all students the world over belong, but without any official teachers or classrooms, a school that nobody needs to attend—boy, what a school!

People generally are not quite foolish enough to entertain such ideas about horses or schools, but when we come to religion many persons seem to forsake all reason and are *ready to believe the silliest nonsense if it will give them an excuse for laziness or sin.*

His Church Still Here

Finally, Christ's church is still in the world. *It is not here again, it is here YET—and will be here until Christ comes for His bride. His promise is "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." All Protestant churches are built upon the assumption that Christ lied, that His promise failed, that His church perished, and that it was necessary for man to bring success out of God's failure. Only Baptists and Catholics claim to trace their history to the time of Christ. But the Catholics, by their own testimony, are built not upon Christ but upon their popes, and they are further from the truth than any other so-called Christian church. Moreover, many so-called Baptist churches are not Christ's; more and more of them, in these latter days, are forsaking unpopular truths. We need to know more than the name of a church to know whether it is Christ's; only those churches are His which believe and teach His word.*

Christ gave to His church "the keys of the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 16:19), with the promise that "whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 18:18). *Christ's church is "the pillar and ground of the truth"* (1 Tim. 3:15). Others have selected portions of truth to mix with their errors, but the faithful ministers of Christ's true churches "have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God" (Acts 20:27).

Church Membership

Unsaved sinners ought not to belong to any church. If you have been saved by God's grace, then you ought to follow Paul's example (Acts 9:26) and join yourself to that church nearest your present, temporary home which shows evidence that it is of Christ's building, *a church whose only Head is Christ whose only message is His word.*

Chapter 2—Why The Name "Baptist"

By The Late S. E. Anderson

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The name "Baptist" is a Scriptural name. It is found first of all in Matthew 3:1 which, like all Bible verses, is given by inspiration of God. John the Baptist is referred to immediately after "the beginning of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the Son of God" (Mark 1:1). In Luke his story begins with

verse five and in John with verse six. Thus the Baptist stands at the very threshold of the New Testament.

The name of Christ's great forerunner is found no less than fourteen times in the New Testament. The more honored name "Christian" is found only three times, and two of these are apparently used with scorn. Strange as it may seem, the name Baptist is always used with evident respect.

John the Baptist won a great many converts to Christ. These were soundly converted, baptized and trained, even before Christ began His own brief ministry on earth. Thus when Christ called for disciples He found them already prepared for Him (Matthew 4:18-22; 9:9). We do not *read* that John's converts were called Baptists, for there were no denominations in those days, but they must have been Baptist, for they believed what John the Baptist preached; they accepted the Baptist's baptism, and they in turn won converts and baptized them. Moreover, Jesus Himself was baptized by John the Baptist and endorsed him with lavish praise.

Again, the name Baptist is a Christ-centered name. John baptized in order "to make Christ manifest" (John 1:31). Since Christ's greatest work on earth was His death, burial and resurrection on our behalf, John's baptism—immersion—pointed clearly to the Atonement. John pointed to Christ as the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world. John always pointed to Christ, saying, "He must increase, but I must decrease." When we do likewise we are Christ-centered.

John the Baptist came to prepare the way of the Lord, and to make His paths straight (Matt. 3:3). When we prepare the way for our children, and Sunday School pupils, and those who listen to our witness—all for our Lord—then we are doing what the Baptist did. And when our paths are straight by Christian standards, then they will lead our followers directly to Christ.

The name Baptist is also a descriptive name. Since baptism symbolizes our death to all sinful ways, our burial of all bad habits, and our rising to walk in newness of life, then baptism symbolizes our conversion as well as our entire Christian life. Perhaps that is why the word "baptized" is used in several places to describe the entire work of John the Baptist (John 1:28, 31, 33; 3:23; 10:40) and of Christ Himself (John 3:22, 26; 4:1, 2).

Logically, then, each Baptist is one who has "killed" all sinful ways, buried them in the baptistery, and ever since lives as one who is "risen with Christ" (Col. 3:1), who has "put off the old man" and has "put on the new man" (Col. 3:8-14). Thus it seems that Baptists have a deeper obligation to live a consistent Christian life than non-immersed Christians! But do we?

Further, the name Baptist is an ideal name. It is the name the Lord gave to the first preacher of the Christian Gospel, the one who baptized the Son of God, the one in whom the Holy Spirit dwelt from his infancy, the one who was “great in the sight of the Lord” (Luke 1:15), the one whom Christ praised so profusely, the one whom “all men” counted as a prophet indeed, and the one who had the honor of being the first martyr for Christ. Notice that everything John did and said brought honor to Christ. His name was not an object of praise or glory; rather, it was a signboard pointing to his Lord. Would that all modern Baptists were faithful signboards, not seekers for glory.

Again, the name Baptist could be what it was at first, non-sectarian. John, the first Baptist, was not a narrow denominationalist; he was all out for his Lord. If every Christian now could forget all divisive influence, all divisive teachers or leaders, and go back to the original source of the Christian Gospel in the New Testament, he would take his stand with the Lord Jesus and His apostles, all of them endorsed John the Baptist (Acts 1:22). This endorsement would magnify Christ as Lord and Savior, not any lesser cult or leader.

Then the name Baptist could be a unifying name. “One Lord, one faith, one baptism” (Eph. 4:5) is our ideal. If we all had one faith we would have only one baptism. Conversely, if all Christians held to one baptism—the one Christ approved—that baptism would point to only one faith, the faith symbolized and portrayed by the original baptism. Then if all had that one faith, we would all have one Lord and only one. We would declare our independence of all popes, bishops, priests, traditions, superstitions, and extra-Biblical customs which now confuse multitudes of people.

How did Christians ever become so divided, especially on baptism? Within a century of Christ’s resurrection, some influential leaders got the idea that baptism was necessary for salvation. This heresy led to baptizing babies, and sick people, thus making sprinkling seem to be more convenient. After a few more centuries, the majority of Christendom held to sprinkling babies, making the Roman hierarchy the arbiter of disputes. However, God had preserved for Himself a remnant through the ages, those who never yielded to Rome or to infant baptism. They were called various names, and since 1644 the name Baptist has gained increasing respect.

Every Baptist has the great privilege of witnessing for his Lord by means of explaining the meaning of his baptism and of his name Baptist. For when baptism is explained, the Gospel of Christ is explained. Baptists, then, should be both bold and courteous in explaining their name, and thereby glorifying their Lord.

Chapter 3—What Is An Independent Baptist Church?

By M. L. Moser, Jr., Pastor

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To many an independent Baptist church is a strange phenomenon. Being accustomed to the various Baptist groups such as Southern Baptist Convention, the Associations, or one of the organized Fellowships (Baptist Bible Fellowship or World Baptist Fellowship) and others, they cannot comprehend the nature of a church that is not affiliated with any of these. For that reason an independent Baptist church is looked upon with some suspicion. Surely a church that stands “all by itself” must be very queer.

Actually independent Baptist churches have existed since apostolic times. Long before the Protestant Reformation began there were independent Baptist churches in both Europe and Asia. An independent Baptist church, therefore, is nothing new or novel. It has an ancient and glorious heritage. Though in various periods of church history members of independent Baptist churches have been persecuted and even slain for the faith, such churches continue until the present day. There are many thousands of independent Baptist churches in all parts of the world.

“What are the distinctives of an independent Baptist church?” you may ask, They could concisely be set forth under four major headings.

I. A Church That Is Self-Governing

The churches established by the Apostles of Christ were all independent churches, that is, they were free from any outside control or membership in any kind of an organization. The New Testament does not reveal the existence of any synod, conference, association, convention, organized fellowship, or other form of human organization *exercising control* over the local congregation *or even existing* apart from a local independent church. Each local church was viewed as a self-governing body.

An aggregation of local churches was never looked upon organizationally as a “church,” but always as “churches,” emphasizing the individual prerogatives of each congregation (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 11:16). Each local church chose its own officers (Acts 6:1-6). Each exercised its own discipline (1 Cor. 5 :13). Churches were not responsible to any higher ecclesiastical body (since

there were none), but were subject only to God (Rev. 2:4-5). Internal problems were handled by the individual congregation (1 Cor. 6:1-5). The maintenance of pure doctrine was the responsibility of the local assembly (1 Tim. 3:15; Rev. 2:14-16).

The Holy Spirit directs each local group of believers (Acts 13:1-2). Such a church cannot be politically pressured because it owns its own property (in contrast to many denominational churches whose property is owned or in some measure controlled by the denomination).

In the important matter of calling a pastor an independent Baptist church is cast upon the Lord for guidance. While they may seek counsel from neighboring pastors or Christian schools, no one can force them to accept a man they do not want. The congregation must prayerfully consider the merits of a candidate and decide whether or not he is God's man for them.

Another important characteristic is the liberty enjoyed in the matter of missionary support. While pressure is exerted upon organized Baptist churches to support their own denominational missions, independent Baptist churches may seek the will and direction of God regarding this. And independent Baptist churches have a wide variety of Baptist missionaries to support, as there are independent Baptist missionaries scattered all over the world and on all continents. Each of these missionaries is sent out directly by a local independent Baptist church and are not affiliated with any of the various Mission Boards or missionary agencies, proving that missionaries can get on foreign fields without the necessity of being under a Mission Board or other missionary agency as is often charged by those in support of the Mission Board system of Missions.

The position of independent Baptist churches may be summed up thus: they are absolutely free to obey God as they see His direction and are under no obligation to any other church or group of churches. In each phase of their service for the Lord they must exercise spiritual discernment.

Actually, therefore, the independence of a church simply enhances its dependence upon the Lord. This tends to develop prayer and faith and to cultivate spirituality among the members.

II. A Church That Is Sound In Doctrine

An independent Baptist church is one that stands for the historic, conservative Christian faith. Many churches in recent years have moved away from the original teachings of the early Christians. They have substituted human theories for Biblical authority. Independent Baptist

churches continue to uphold the Bible as the divinely-inspired authority for Christian faith and practice.

An independent Baptist church places proper importance upon correct Biblical doctrine. Among the doctrines emphasized are the following: the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible, the virgin birth, absolute deity, sinless life, atoning death, and bodily resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, His high-priestly work in Heaven, salvation by grace through faith, the reality of Satan and his work, the person and work of the Holy Spirit, the premillennial coming of Christ, a period of great tribulation on earth, the return of Christ to establish an earthly kingdom, the judgment and eternal doom of the lost, and the eternal reward of the saved. Independent Baptist churches stand as a protest to the religious unbelief (often called “modernism” or “liberalism”) that has engulfed so many of the large denominations and is now invading the ranks of Baptists. Men claiming to be ministers of Christ deny the verbal inspiration of Scripture, question the virgin birth of Christ, deny the necessity of faith in the shed blood of Christ for salvation, accept the theory of organic evolution, and in many other ways oppose the historic faith. Yet such men are accepted as ministers in good standing in some church groups. In obedience to the Word regarding false teachers (2 Tim. 3:5; Eph. 5:11, etc.) independent Baptist churches refuse to cooperate with denominations and councils of churches that condone the presence of such unbelieving religious leaders.

Independent Baptist churches stand firm for the doctrines as laid down in the New Testament that have separated them from other denominations. They adhere to the New Testament doctrine of the church, thus denying the modern doctrine of an invisible, universal church which is unknown to the Scripture, and holding fast to the Biblical doctrine of the church which identifies the church as a local visible body. They hold fast to the Bible doctrines of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper (the ordinances of the church) meaning that independent Baptist churches reject “alien immersion” and receive only scriptural baptism, and practice the Bible doctrine of close communion. Nor do they maintain these doctrines simply to be “different” or to hold themselves “aloof” from others, but because they sincerely believe the Bible teaches these doctrines and that, as a church of the Lord Jesus Christ, they are obligated to obey His commands in keeping (preserving or guarding) these ordinances as He has given them unto His churches (John 14:15).

III. A Church With A Bible-Centered Program

One of the first things many people notice about an independent Baptist church is the fact that almost everyone comes to church with their Bibles. Not only do they bring their Bibles, but they use them in the regular services of the church. The Bible is looked upon, not as an obscure religious textbook to be studied primarily by a priest or minister, but as the guide for every Christian and the source of instruction for his daily life.

Pastors of independent Baptist churches use the Bible in their pulpit ministry. He reads from it and his congregation follows him in searching out various passages. He is not endeavoring to foist upon the people some human observations concerning “religion” but rather he is seeking to unfold the exact revelation which God has given us in the Bible. Preaching in independent Baptist churches is not simply delivering some ethical or social precepts, but is an exposition of the written Word of God as found in the Bible.

The educational program of the church is likewise centered around the Bible. Every Sunday School teacher teaches from it. They do not study the International Sunday School Lessons as most churches do where quarterlies are studied rather than the Bible, but most study the Bible book-by-book, studying one chapter each Sunday until they complete the study of the book. This is much better than using the typical “hop, skip and jump” method of the quarterlies, and there is the value in studying God’s Word directly for yourself.

The same emphasis is seen in the missionary program of independent Baptist churches. Both home and foreign missionary efforts are geared to one purpose—the winning of the lost to Jesus Christ. All missionary work is simply a means to the end of bringing people to read, understand, and obey the Word of God. The primary aim of all missionary and evangelistic effort is not social betterment but spiritual regeneration—personal salvation.

IV. A Church With Distinctive Emphases

In addition to the things already mentioned there are several other important and Scriptural distinctives of independent Baptist churches.

1. A Regenerated Church Membership

Only those who have personally, consciously received Christ as their Lord and Savior have a right to church membership. Acts committed by a parent, priest, or minister for a child cannot and do not save the child. Children dying before they are old enough to be accountable to God go to heaven. Acts 2:47 clearly states that “the Lord added to the church daily such as were being

saved.” In other words, a personal experience of the new birth is a pre-requisite to church membership. For this reason, independent Baptist churches require evidence of a person’s salvation before they are received into the membership of the church.

2. Scriptural Giving

Many churches support their work by fund-raising schemes such as church suppers, raffles, and sales. Some assess each member a certain amount each year. All such practices are totally unscriptural. The church should be supported by the free-will offerings and tithes of saved persons, not by commercial or worldly appeals (Cf. 1 Cor. 16:1; 2 Cor. 9:6-8).

In recognition of the truth in all that has been written above, independent Baptist churches are caused to place loyalty to Christ and His Word above loyalty to an earthly organization. Everything is tested by the Word of God, not by its relation to a denominational program.

Independent Baptist churches are seeking, as enabled by God, to perpetuate New Testament churches, remembering that the church is the “pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15).

3. A Statement of Faith

We believe in the verbal inspiration of the 66 books of the Bible in its original writing and that it is without error and it is the sole authority in all matters of faith and practice. We further believe that the Bible reveals God, the fall of man, the way of salvation and God’s plan and purpose in the ages. We believe there is One and only One true and living God, existing in three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. These three are co-eternal and co-equal from all eternity, each with distinct personalities but with one nature.

We believe in the deity and virgin birth of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Son of God, coexistent with the Father and the Holy Spirit. He came to the world, born of a virgin, suffered, died, was buried and rose again bodily and ascended to the right hand of the Father.

We believe in the Person and work of the Holy Spirit which includes conviction of sin, regeneration of sinners, and indwelling of the believer.

We believe that salvation is “by grace,” plus nothing and minus nothing. The conditions to salvation are repentance and faith. We further believe that a soul is saved when Christ is received as personal Savior and Lord and the Holy Spirit imparts eternal life.

We believe in the perseverance of the saints and that it is the plan of God for such believers to walk after the Spirit and not fulfill the lusts of the flesh.

We believe in the immersion of the believer in water under the authority of a New Testament church to signify His death, burial, and resurrection and the believer's identification with Him. We do not believe that baptism saves. Baptism is an outward expression of an inward change. The Lord's Supper constitutes the other of the only two ordinances of the church.

We believe that a New Testament church is a local group of baptized believers, united for His purpose and knowledge and spread of the Word of God, including world-wide missions. We believe it to be completely independent with no other person, group, or body having any authority, right of intervention or control whatsoever over or within a local church.

We believe in the visible, personal and premillennial return of Jesus Christ, the bodily resurrection of the righteous dead at His coming. We further believe in the everlasting conscious blessedness of the saved and the everlasting conscious punishment of the lost.

Chapter 4—Are Baptist Churches Really Independent

**By M. L. Moser, Sr., Pastor Emeritus
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I came up in Convention Baptist churches. In fact until I was a grown man I did not know that there were any other kind of Baptist churches than Convention Baptist churches. I attended Convention schools and supported Convention programs. During all this time I did not question for one moment that the Convention program was God's program for this age. During most of that time, though I was a church member, I was unsaved. Having made a profession of faith when I was eight years of age, I considered myself a saved person.

In my early teens the question would occasionally arise "Am I really saved," but I would push it aside. After three years in World War 1, I became deeply concerned over my salvation. I listened to men rather than God and was told that all of my troubles and doubts were to be attributed to my lack of surrender and obedience. Consequently, I went through a form of reconsecration and then a surrender to the ministry.

It was while I was a student in the New Orleans Baptist Seminary that I found Christ as my own personal Savior. After my seminary training I went into fulltime work. I knew no other plan of work than Convention work, so I entered heartily into the support of the program.

Little by little I noticed some statements in the literature that I considered modernistic. I protested and found that it is rather the unpopular thing to do. I was advised by friends that nothing is perfect and that there was no need to create any problems by open protests concerning such modernism.

During all this time I believed the Bible to teach the Cooperative Program. My protest was not over the Program or method of work, but to the modernism of the Convention.

Associations

Some time after that, I was in conversation with a man who was connected with what is commonly called "Landmarkism." He began at once to tell me what was wrong with the Convention; that its basis of work was wrong; that its program was wrong; that its teachings were wrong. I saw at once what he was talking about and found myself in agreement with him.

He then began to tell me about the work of the Association (American Baptist Association) brethren as contrasted with the Convention brethren. The more he talked, the more confused I became. He bitterly assailed the Convention brethren and then appealed to the very same Scriptures as the Convention brethren for the Associational basis of work. He said that Associational churches were free and independent and that Convention churches were not free and independent. I knew Convention Baptists boasted that they were free and independent. In fact, I never knew a Convention Baptist who did not say he was free and independent.

I attended several Associational meetings, both local and national, but could not see that their basis of work was any different than the Convention is. True they did not have the modernism of the Convention, but also, their mission spirit was almost non-existent. They seemed more concerned with trying to get Convention churches to become "Landmark" than in winning the lost to Christ or to enter new fields.

Fellowships

Later some of the so-called Fundamentalist [organized Fellowships] brethren talked with me at length about their work. They told me that both Convention and Landmark churches were not

really free and independent; that the mission work of both was wrong. In order to prove that their work was scriptural, they appealed to the very same Scriptures that the Convention and Association churches appealed.

During all this time, I remained in the Convention. After much confusion in my own mind, I determined to do what I should have done in the first place, I went to the Word of God. Surely the Word of God would settle for me the question of how to do mission work and what the basis of work should be among churches. I never dreamed but that some such basis of work was the Bible plan.

Searching the Scriptures and examining the passages used by all organized groups as the basis for their work, I came to what was for me an astounding conclusion. The passages used by all three groups did not sustain the position of any one of the three groups in spite of the fact that all three claimed scriptural justification for their method of work. In fact, *the Scriptures relied upon by all the groups taught the exact opposite*. The Bible plan is of local church authority. I searched in vain for any Cooperative Program similar to any of the organized work today. There was not one scripture that taught either the Convention system of mission work, the Association system of work or the Fellowship system. They varied only in titles and names.

After months of study of the New Testament, I came to a definite conclusion: The Convention, the Association, the organized Fellowship method of work was basically wrong; that the New Testament taught that *all work* should be under the direct control and authority of a local Baptist church; that churches could and should cooperate with such work, but only on a cooperative basis; that the authority must be vested in a local church.

There are those who are under the impression that mission work would diminish under local church control, that fewer and fewer missionaries would be sent out and that as a result, the churches would be less mission minded. The exact opposite is true. Proportionately there are more independent Baptist missionaries on the foreign field today than Board missionaries. Independent Baptist churches, as a whole, give more proportionately than board churches.

If all Baptists would follow the Bible plan of missions instead of man-made plans, the number of missionaries sent out would increase many fold.

By R. Nelson Colyar, Retired Pastor
Mountain View Baptist Church, Denver, Colorado

Baptist independency has been a fly in the ecclesiastical ointment for more than nineteen hundred years. It had its beginnings in antiquity, when “a man was sent from God, whose name was John.”

This John was a Baptist. The Lord called him a Baptist. And by all the earmarks, he was a rock-ribbed orthodox Baptist. He took orders from Heaven only. He preached the gospel of the Kingdom, even Christ, without license, permit, authority, or delegation from the Jerusalem Sanhedrin. He held no degree from either of the seminaries in Jerusalem: the school of Hillel, representing the “theological theorists, self-seeking jurists”; or the school of Shammai, representing the “Nationalists.” Yet he was so theologically tough the deputation from the Sanhedrin, sent down to Jordan to investigate him, couldn’t shake him. He foiled the sentimentalists (the sawdust trail hitters and the traditionalists with his “direct” preaching. He knew his Master and obeyed Him; he knew his mission, and did it.

The answer to all this is, *He was an independent Baptist*. You may call this bigotry, if you wish, but you will butt your head against the Rock if you do—it is the rock—ribbed truth. His independency was inherent in the fact that, under God, Christ was his *only* Master. He had a divine right to be independent of all men in matters pertaining to his heavenly call and mission, because he was solely dependent upon his one master. He had no right to surrender that independence, while yet claiming to be the servant of Christ. His independent *action*, which was in no sense dependent upon the organized, apostate “Jews’ religion,” must be attributed directly to his unswerving *allegiance to his one and only master*, Christ. There you have the pattern and mold for true Baptist independency.

When Jesus came to His personal ministry, He called out His church from the disciples which John had made and baptized. That church was independent from the established order of that day, both in origin, faith, and function. It had one Lord, only, one faith, one baptism, and one mission. That church, being assembled in the upper room, received the one Spirit. Since that day, no one hundred percent New Testament Baptist church has been subject to the state, ecclesiastical orders, or denomination over-lordship. An independent Baptist church is a New Testament church. Being independent of all men in matters pertaining to its divine origin, faith, and mission, it is dependent solely upon its one Lord. Baptist independency in action must be attributed to its unswerving allegiance and devotion to its only authority and power, comfort

and wisdom, guide and master, the Lord Jesus Christ. When any organization of men presumes “to elicit, combine, and (or) direct the resources and activities of such churches” it goes beyond that which is written, overriding divine authority, overstepping divine wisdom, over-passing divine guidance. It is an unholy intrusion into the office of the Holy Spirit. Churches which yield to its claims, no matter on what grounds, begin anew the trek toward the Roman Papacy.

Our contention for Baptist independency is not a new thing. The struggle began very early in the Christian Era. It continued on, and still continues. Nor is our contention for Baptist independency an obstructionist program of a disgruntled minority group among Baptists. The champions of Baptist independency are made of more substantial stuff than is found in the warp and woof of chronic obstructionists and habitual kickers. They are the keepers of the liberties which others enjoy, and sometimes employ against them. True hearts, not great heads are the vanguards of Baptist independency.

Space forbids any attempt to trace the history of Baptist independency here. But I will quote from one of our Baptist historians of the Nineteenth Century, Dr. Thomas Armitage, one-time pastor of the Fifth Avenue Baptist Church, New York City. His title page reads: “A History of the Baptists; Traced by Their Vital Principles and Practices from the Time of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to the Year 1886.” Dr. Armitage says: “(But) often, a true heart takes men farther Christ-ward than even a true head; and so Bible truth is ever proving its divinity by doing this great saving work. But still, wherever a human standard is set up in place of the Scriptures, it is always more jealously preserved than the teachings of revelation. A fanatic who corrupts the word of God is more heartily fellowshiped by many modern churches, than he who opposes human decrees and inventions against the Scripture; while he who insists upon obedience to their authority, excites the greatest possible odium, because, to do this wounds the pride of men. *Men pay a great price for saying, that the right to legislate for Christian Churches belongs to Christ alone* (Emphasis mine—RNC). Yet He has given His law in the Bible and every form of church life that is not in accordance with that law, directly sets it aside. So, then, in a very important sense, it partakes of disloyalty to say that Christ has not made sufficient provision for His churches in the Scriptures, in every thing that affects their well-being” (p. 116).

Baptist independency inheres in the divine right of each individual servant of God and every individual, local church to obey the Truth on the sole authority of the Holy Scriptures. Quoting Dr. Armitage again, he says: “(Thus,) tradition nullifies the law of Christ, by making it a dream, a sentiment and finally a mockery. The very reverse of this was the law in the Apostolic churches. In the hands of this human, mystical and sacramental principle (i.e., tradition versus the Law of

Christ), sacraments become the expression of great truths in human language, and the doctrine is fostered that material phenomena become the instrument of communicating unseen things, to which the mind of man is unequal; as if water could purge away the pollutions of sin, or bread and wine could give eternal life . . . The inevitable consequence is, a Church armed with awfully mysterious sacraments and rights as channels of saving grace, and with a narrow religious teaching founded on the will of the Church, as she chooses to define it from time to time. After that, of course, the Rule of Faith is found in the Catholic teaching of the early centuries—in the decrees of councils—and sanctioned usages. At this point, the right of private judgment is cut off . . . That right once yielded, the Church claims to judge infallibly for all men on all religious questions; and it must be obeyed without a word. Independency of mind being thus destroyed, paralysis of the intellect follows, the courage of the soul dies with its liberty, discussion becomes dangerous; and so, all must submit and be silent, as it is safe to yield to absolute authority where one dare not dissent. The final consequence is, that it becomes a crime to claim the personal right to obey the truth which rests on the sole authority of the Inspired Word” (p. 117).

In the above quotations you have an eloquent, old-fashioned plea for Baptist independency by an able contender for the “faith once delivered unto the saints.” Was this great pastor and scholar a crank? a kicker? a “non-cooperate” Baptist? a chronic obstructionist? Or is it not evident that he was a sober, loyal, sincere champion of our Baptist independency on the ground that it is a divine right? The answer is obvious: the author is an independent Baptist, boldly contending for the truth.

One other word from his powerful pen: “This fact is perfectly clear, namely: That the New Testament contains all that entered into the faith and practice of the Apostolic Churches. Whether it contains little or much, it covers all that they had, and all that we have, which has any claim on the Churches of Christ . . . Its authority stands out alone, and will allow no parallel or supplementary authority whatever, however venerable. The most revered antiquity stands on purely human ground, without any thing in common with the New Testament, when that antiquity is not in the Holy Book.” Away goes human expedients, human inventions, denominational traditionalism and institutionalism, smashed to smithereens upon the Rock of divine Truth.

Baptist independency, like every other precious heritage, can be preserved only by the most vigilant guard against the subtle, destructive forces of evil. The vanguards of liberty have always sounded the warning of approaching conflict before it breaks into the violence of polemical warfare and religious persecutions. Now we see Baptist independency once more a sufferer. Its

wounds are painful. They would heal, and its life will be saved only if Baptists themselves are loyal to Christ. Its deepest wounds are received at the hands of its friends.

A startling development is now in progress. Baptists are yielding their independency over to centralized control of Baptist machines. That fact poses a mighty problem for them that would remain free and independent. Will true independents meekly submit? There are enough of them yet, when properly informed and unified in action, to wage a first rate war on the enemies of Baptist independence. Will they rally to the trumpet call for battle? Or will they passively yield up their divine right of independence? Appeasers in the army of God are traitors to the cause of Christ. If the Lord tarries yet a while, time will tell.

I said that a startling development is now in progress. With permission, I am quoting a few passages from Dr. William Wright Barnes' book on "*The Southern Baptist Convention, A Study in the Development of Ecclesiology*" (1934). In his introduction he says:

"In the following pages the effort has been made to show that there has been an ecclesiological development in Southern Baptist life comparable to the development that took place in the first centuries of Christian history—a development that laid the foundation of the medieval Catholic Church, out of which came the Roman Catholic Church of modern times. It is a far cry from the council in Jerusalem (Acts 15) about A. D. 50, to the council in the Vatican, A. D. 1870, but during those eighteen centuries a development took place that completely changed the character and form of the outward manifestation of Christianity.

"When a Southern Baptist of the twentieth century says *convention* or *denomination*, he means just about what a second century Christian meant when he said *catholic church*, that is, *universal church*. There has developed a thinking in terms of a corporate consciousness comparable to that which pervades the Christian literature of the second and third centuries. The term *Southern Baptist Church* is not quite orthodox, but within another generation or two it may attain wide popularity and perfect ecclesiastical respectability. The Fathers of 1845 would not recognize the convention of 1934, but, as will be seen, they themselves in the method adopted made a change in previous convention procedure and constitutional theory that constituted the first step in the current tendency. The record of the development in the early centuries helps to understand what is taking place in our midst and before our very eyes" (Pg. 1).

These words were written twenty-nine [now 43] years ago, and we note no improvement in the situation in favor of Baptist independency, except that the independents themselves may be a bit more awake to the true facts in the matter.

Was Dr. Barnes a habitual kicker? a chronic obstructionist? a fanatical “independent” crank—because he warns of this ominous trend in one of the major groups of Baptists? Not a bit of it. It is only fair to say that when he published the above named book, he had been professor of Church History in Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas for many years, later was elected Professor Emeritus on his retirement, and was commissioned by the Southern Baptist Convention to write the most comprehensive history ever made of the Southern Baptist Convention. Will his colleagues heed the warning and turn their course to parallel New Testament faith and practice? We most earnestly pray they may.

He tells us this, however: “The conception of a Southern Baptist Church, composed of the local churches, calls for a representation of and from these constituent units that shall form the supreme authority” (p.27). He declares: “The convention seems to consider itself authorized to speak upon any subject—doctrinal, missionary, political, social, scientific, etc. —with equal authority in the name of churches.” Then he poses this question: “What manner of war or controversy or upheaval will bring to birth a constitutionally recognized Southern Baptist Church from which any group of Baptists may not secede?” (p. 31). On page 73, he says, “There is now almost a Southern Baptist Church composed of churches.” And in his conclusion he observes: “It may be that the present emphasis upon mechanism and unification is the cause of lessened missionary zeal; it may be that it is the result. *But in either case, a Church is developing*“ (Pg. 78).

Baptist independency is like unto gold: it is not destroyed but refined by the fires of opposition and persecution. The Refiner’s fire is beginning to glow again. No Baptist group can “secede” from any Baptist machine now, no matter by what name it is known, without suffering painful opposition. As Baptist machinery matures this Baptist “Church which is developing” by its increasing tendency toward “supreme authority,” the gold will come to be more and more in evidence among Baptists who are loyal to Christ: for they will not yield the divine right of Baptist independency to human authority.

Chapter 6—Baptist Independency, What We Mean By It

By A. J. Kirkland, Former Pastor

White Oak Baptist Church, Longview, Texas

Baptists have always been identified by certain characteristics of independence. Even back in the dark ages, and in the rise of the Roman Papacy, they suffered for their independence. It was because they refused to recognize the rights of Rome to interfere with their worship and faith that they were branded as heretics and accounted worthy to die. And because they refused to recognize the rights of Roman Catholicism to baptize and to execute the great commission for them that they got the name Ana-Baptists. And because of their refusal to recognize any authority of state over them they were hated and stigmatized from one end of the world to the other. Today, no other people are given credit for complete separation of church and state in America as Baptists.

Some of the characteristics still obtain among most Baptists so far as we know. Indeed, most Baptist Conventions and Associations still safeguard their interest against government interference. This has been manifested recently in the condemnation of the government N. Y. A. program and with reference to social security, although we regret to say that some schools sustained by Baptists have accepted money from the government in the N. Y. A. program.

But we wonder today if when we talk about Baptist independence we have not come to think only in terms of separation of church and state. Some Baptists are becoming entangled with the so-called Federal [National] Council of the Churches of Christ of America and kindred organizations, and this within itself is significant. We wonder if we have not unconsciously come to think of independence as a mere denominational right for Baptists as a whole without regard to the local pulpit and the church unit. We believe that these things are true.

It is true that among many Baptist groups or bodies the idea or doctrine of independence still prevails, but in fact it is not true. It exists in preachment but is not manifested in practice. During a recent meeting of the General Baptist Convention of Texas in Houston, there appeared an editorial in the Houston Chronicle which would do credit to any Baptist people on Baptist independency. The editorial declared that here was a meeting of people who had majored on the independency of the local congregation. That in fact every body representing in this great Convention was an independent self-governing community, a kingdom within itself, and was in no way organically connected with anything outside of its local organization. The Chronicle stated the true Baptist position and theoretically told the truth. But how different are the actual workings of the Convention system from these preachments. However, it is not our purpose to deal at length with these things.

Associations Unscriptural

If we are to understand the real meaning of Baptist independency as a principle taught and commanded by Christ, there is one thing that we must positively fix in our minds and hearts from the beginning. In fact, the learning or fixing of this one truth in our minds, and the doing of it with definite immovable convictions, will just about settle everything else. That truth is this: *The Holy Scriptures positively know nothing whatsoever of any kind of a general body such as associations, conventions, or any kind of organized movement of Christianity other than a local congregation known as a church.* It is mighty hard for modern day Baptists with all their traditional and denominational pride to accept and recognize this fact, but it is the truth nevertheless. Every organization, assembly, convention, association and other movements regardless of their nature outside or in addition to the local church body is of recent origin and is the product of human wisdom.

Now, if we accept the above stated truth, and, if we are honest with ourselves and our Bibles, we must accept it, it follows without gainsaying that every teaching and principle found in the word relative to the sovereignty and independence of the people of God must pertain to a local church body and cannot in any sense be rightfully applied to a Baptist denomination. To apply them to an association or convention is but to wrest the Scripture from its true meaning and change the word of God into a lie. If these statements seem hard and harsh let the reader appeal the issue to the word of God and be judged thereby. Baptist tradition is one thing; the word of God is another.

Now, with reference to Baptist independency, we lay down three scriptural principles taught and commanded by our Lord, the which, if obeyed, would establish the independency of every church and there could never be any question as to what real Baptist independence is. They are to-wit

1. *Jesus declared Himself to be the Lord, or Master of the church and emphatically excluded all others* (Matthew 23:1-12). Let the reader turn and prayerfully study the whole passage. We quote verse 8, which is the key verse, “And be ye not called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ and all ye are brethren.”

2. *Jesus denounced any method or plan of government or operation which might be imposed upon His church that would in any sense interfere with His Lordship or their independence under Him* (Matthew 20:25-26). “And Jesus called them unto Him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. *But it shall not be so among you.*”

3. *Jesus gave the Great Commission to the church body and sent the Holy Spirit to comfort, teach and guide it in the carrying out of the same* (Matthew 28:19-20). “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world, Amen” (John 16:7-15); “Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you. And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment: Of sin, because they believe not on me; Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more; Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged. I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now. Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come. He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew it unto you. All things that the Father hath are mine: therefore said I, that he shall take of mine, and shall shew it unto you”; and Acts 1:4-8 “And, being assembled together with them, commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.” We ask our readers to carefully and prayerfully study these scripture references. We are convinced that if these truths take hold upon our hearts we shall behold the glory of our Lord and His church as never before.

In the language of another, “Now of the things I have written, this is the sum.” Christ is the Lord of His church. As head, He and He alone must command it or make its program. No man, set of men, denomination, association, convention or board dare presume to interfere with the divinely appointed program of the church under her Lord. And again, in whatsoever means or method the church may adopt in the carrying out of our Lord’s commands, it must do so without surrendering its independence under Christ and in no sense can it come under the commands or orders of any human rulership. “*It shall not be so among you.*” And finally, the church must look to the Holy Spirit and to Him only as the one to lead it in its mission and ministry in the world. To violate any one of these principles is to denounce the Lordship of Christ and to set up

a human Lord with a program instigated by human wisdom with the Holy Spirit's leadership rejected for that of human wisdom.

But some may ask, cannot churches scripturally and rightly work together in the carrying out of our Lord's program? Yes, to be sure they can. What glorious fellowship the churches of the New Testament had in the labor of the gospel. But they did not violate these principles in doing so. When the church at Jerusalem heard of the great revival at Samaria, they sent Peter and John up there (Acts 8:14). The independence of no church was sacrificed. When the news came to Jerusalem about the Antioch revival, the church sent Barnabas there (Acts 11:22). Again it was the same. The Holy Spirit led the church at Antioch to send out Barnabas and Paul (Acts 13:1-4). Other churches later had fellowship in their ministry. But in no case was the Lordship of Christ, the sovereignty of the churches, nor the leadership of the Holy Spirit interfered with.

Is it not wonderful that in this simple way the gospel sound went out unto "all the earth." For fifteen hundred years all that the churches had was the command of the Lord and the leadership of the Spirit and yet they "turned the world upside-down." What more do we need now? Denominationalism has brought institutionalism and the glories of denominational pride. It has also brought the denominational program with its system of promotion for its pastors and preachers and cooperation with the denominational program is the basis of fellowship in Baptist life. The "needs" of the various boards have priorities over the commands of Jesus Christ and the leadership of the Superintendent of missions or field workers displaces the leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 7—Brain-Washed Baptists

**By Davis W. Huckabee, Pastor
Immanuel Baptist Church, Wellington, Kansas**

Webster's New World Dictionary gives the meaning of "brainwashed" as: "to indoctrinate so intensively and thoroughly as to effect a radical transformation of beliefs and mental attitudes." This describes exactly what has taken place with many of the Baptists of our day. And, as in the case of brainwashing by Communists, this transformation has been decidedly for the worse. Paul, in his address to the Ephesian elders said, "For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them" (Acts 20:29-30). This first

class of deceivers Baptists have contended with for almost two thousand years and have overcome them, even when persecuted unto death by them. But this latter group is seemingly triumphing daily, and this, for the simple reason that Baptists have allowed themselves to be brainwashed.

Perhaps some will object to the application of “brainwashing” to the religious realm, yet, it is in no way less insidious because of its usage to change men’s minds from spiritual truth than it is when used to corrupt political ideologies. Yea, it is admittedly more devilish to do so. Any departure from Biblical truth, however insignificant or unimportant it may seem, is devil inspired and can never be pleasing to God.

It is Satan’s way to work cunningly to deceive men’s minds and to lead them from the truth. Who would be deceived and led into error were the devil to appear as he is commonly pictured- in bright red array with horns and a tail-and to say “I’m going to lead you into error and thereby damn your soul and the souls of those that you influence?” None, of course! Hence Paul writes “For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:13-15). We might well expect the world to be deceived by Satan because “The whole world Beth in the evil one” (1 John 5:19), literal rendering. “Wickedness” in the KJV translates the same two words rendered “the evil one” in verse 18, and is not in reference to evil in general, but to a specific evil, as the definite article shows. But how is it that saved people and Baptists especially, are so deceived? Is it not because they have been brainwashed? There is no other explanation! Baptists have been brainwashed in several important areas with the result that they have, in many instances, been led to compromise Bible, and so, historic Baptist, principles. May we note some of these areas.

I. BAPTISTS HAVE BEEN BRAINWASHED ABOUT MISSION WORK.

This becomes especially obvious when we consider the departure of many Baptists from the scriptural plan of missions, and their vain attempts to justify their actions by declaring that they have found a better way, or that the Bible plan won’t work today, or that it isn’t important how mission work is done so long as it is done.

Of course, what it all boils down to is that those in places of leadership have replaced the wisdom of God with the inventions of man, and the average Baptist church member has been brainwashed into believing whatever they are told in the matter. But it was not always so. In fact, until recent times-until a little over two hundred years ago-there was no such thing as a

board, fellowship, society, etc., which claimed authority to send out missionaries. It was all done by local churches according to the apostolic example as most obviously set forth in Acts 13:1-3, and so it should be done today, and would be so done by most Baptists had they not been brainwashed.

Acts 13 declares that: (1) The Holy Spirit calls to mission work. He first calls the men themselves (v. 2f), “whereunto I have called them,” then He calls a church to send them out (v. 2). “Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them.” (2) The church should feel a definite concern in this matter (v. 3): “fasted and prayed. . .” (3) The church is to officially recognize the call, V3: “laid their hands on them.” (4) The church is to send them out in obedience to the Spirit’s call (v. 3-4). (5) The missionaries are under the authority of the church sending them out, and are to report back to this church concerning the work they have done. “And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles” (Acts 14:26-27).

If there be those who object that not one church in a hundred could support a missionary, we might ask, Can one church support a missionary board any easier? Yet, Scripture no where teaches that a single church must support a missionary all by itself, but it encourages churches to mutually support missionaries. Yet this in no way necessitates a human organization to do so. Paul commended the Philippian church for helping him financially while he did mission work (Phil. 4:15-18). He apologized to the Corinthian church for not asking help of them while he labored among them as a missionary (2 Cor. 11:7-9; 12:13). He also commended individual church members who had helped him in his work, as, for example, Phebe, the deaconess of Cenchrean church (Rom. 16:1-2), Priscilla and Aquila and the church in their house (Rom. 16:3-5), the household of Stephanas (1 Cor. 16:15-17), and others.

The objection falls to the ground when one considers that all of the so-called cooperative programs are based on this very idea of each church helping as they are able. Where then is the difference? The difference, and the exceptional thing, is that they are misdirected. They place a man-made organization between the church and the mission field. They take the glory that is due to God “in the church” (Eph. 3:21), and they put it in human institutions and programs. The authority to send out missionaries is taken from the church (something that Scripture nowhere authorizes) and is invested in mere human organizations. Funds that are designated for mission work are thereby channeled aside for the maintenance of a superfluous body. When our Lord

said, "All authority is given unto me" (Matthew 28:18) (Greek), he clearly designated Himself as the sole agent with authority to commission work in His name. When He said, "Go ye, therefore," He manifestly delegates His church to do the work, but He does not authorize it to redelegate that work to someone else. Delegated authority is not redelegatable. Therefore, those who set up and support outside organizations to do missionary work, depart from the Divine plan of mission work, usurp the authority that belongs only to the churches, and exalt the inventions of man above the wisdom of God. It is to be feared that in many instances this is nothing less than a matter of laziness and unconcern on their parts. "I know that we have a duty to do mission work, but I don't want to be bothered with it. Therefore, let's palm it off on someone else, and pay them to do what we should do," is the underlying attitude in many cases.

Some are willingly ignorant of God's plan of mission work. Others, and they are perhaps in the majority, have simply been brainwashed in the matter, and probably know no better. Brethren, it is time that we all got back to the Christ-honoring, church-centered and Scriptural way of mission work. "Wherefore we labor, that, whether present or absent, we may be accepted of him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad" (2 Cor. 5:9-10). In the day of judgment for rewards, do you want to be rebuked for stealing God's glory and giving it to a man-made institution?

II. BAPTISTS HAVE BEEN BRAINWASHED ABOUT FELLOWSHIP.

Too often it is the policy of preachers to be cliquish, and this attitude, sadly enough, is passed on to the churches. What is sometimes nothing more than a clash of personalities between two preachers can easily be the means whereby a rift develops between churches, ruining their fellowship with one another. Nor is this restricted to inter-church squabbles. It can, and often does, occur within a church as it did in the Corinthian church, where there were schisms, each group claiming that the person it was following was more spiritual, or more wise, or more qualified to lead than the others. But Paul rightly denominated such strife when he said, "For while one with, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal?" (1 Cor. 3:4).

But where many church members would be quick to add their vote of condemnation to such inter-church strife, they think nothing of alike strife between churches.

The fault for this often lies with pastors who brainwash their people into believing that only those who belong to their own little clique are sound. Or who make it a test of fellowship whether a person is in this or that board, fellowship or convention.

It is indeed sad when Baptists are brainwashed into believing that adherence to this or that human organization is a test of Christian fellowship. Yet, this writer is not alone in having been ostracized by other Baptists for the simple reason that he does not support unscriptural mission programs. To some it matters not that a man believes and practices all the historic Baptist principles that he does. The test is “Do you support our program?” if one does not, he will probably find himself quickly shunned, no matter how sound in the faith he may be. If the disciples’ attitude of forbidding one “because he followed not us” (Mark 9:38-41), was deserving of the Lord’s rebuke, how much more those who declare non-fellowship simply because a man desires to adhere to the Scriptural plan of mission work?

It is a common thing today for Baptists to lambaste the Southern Baptist Convention for their unscriptural programs, and certainly there is no excuse for such departures from the truth, yet many of these same ones have pulled out of the Convention only to build another similar organization, paint it a different color, give it a different name, and then think that they are Scriptural. But every organization that is put between the local church and the mission field is headed down the same road as the Southern Baptist Convention, and will ultimately arrive at the same place it has, no matter what name it may bear. To make the support of such a program a test of fellowship between Baptists is unscriptural and foolish to say the least.

It is the normal thing for pastors that are associated with such organizations to keep the church members in ignorance about independent, unaffiliated Baptists, or else to stigmatize them as a small minority of disgruntled, misguided malcontents who are little better than heretics. Yet, only one hundred and fifty years ago, there were very few who were anything other than independent, unaffiliated, missionary Baptists. And the study of church history shows that independent, church centered and directed mission work has been a cardinal belief and general practice among Baptists from the time the Lord called out and constituted His church during His earthly ministry until very recent times. It is the church sent missionaries who are supported by funds sent directly to them by churches, who exemplify the true, Scriptural “cooperative program,” and not those who support man-made organizations.

But the question is, Should unscriptural mission programs be made a test of fellowship? Certainly no one should ever condone error in any form, yet, sometimes we are prone to get our gnats and camels mixed up. Some unaffiliated Baptists, who would be sorely shocked if anyone were to suggest that they should fellowship with those who do mission work through boards, have no qualms whatsoever about fellowship with those practicing alien immersion and open communion. But which is the more dangerous to church constitution and polity? Unscriptural

mission programs, though not to be condoned, have no corrupting influence upon church constitution, but the practice of alien immersion and open communion operate directly upon the constitution of a church, corrupting it. The unscriptural practice of the ordinances will cause a church to lose its identity as a true church in God's sight almost as quickly as accepting unregenerate persons into its membership.

There are definitely some practices among Baptists today that need to be the test of fellowship, but there is also too much non-fellowship declared because of personalities, party-spirit, incidentals and just plain ignorance. It is time Baptists stopped to consider whether they have been brainwashed into accepting unscriptural teaching and contracting unscriptural alliances, and whether their non-fellowship of the brethren is scriptural. When this is done, the old time Baptist (without any sectarian or party spirit names tacked on to modify it) fellowship will be restored.

III. BAPTISTS ARE BEING BRAINWASHED ABOUT CHURCH UNITY.

Probably no one subject in the religious world occupies as much attention today as does the subject of church unity. It is prominent in almost every religious newspaper, radio and television news broadcast, and every religious discussion. Yet in point of fact, it is not so much church unity that is striven for as it is church union—the endeavor to bring all denominations into an organic religious union with one another.

The talk about “church unity” sounds good to the religious but carnal mind, but no born-again person who is up on Scripture teaching and church history will dare to align himself with this present day movement. This is because, first of all, it would be a compromise upon Bible principles. Those that cite our Lord's prayer “That they all may be one” (John 17:21), forget that Jesus restricted this when He said, “As thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee.” There can be no spiritual unity, which is the professed desire of those in this movement, unless there is doctrinal and devotional unity as well. “Can two walk together, except they be agreed?” (Amos 3:3), is the question that disqualifies most from ever attaining a Biblical unity.

Second, this would mean only that all churches would have to come back home to “Mother Rome.” Indeed, this is the central idea in Rome's invitations to Protestants to sit in on Ecumenical Councils, so called. Protestants may well flock back to Rome, for that is home to them, but what are Baptist representatives doing there? Baptists axe NOT PROTESTANTS AND NEVER HAVE BEEN, for they antedated Catholicism by hundreds of years, and they have no business dilly-dallying with such a corrupt system. This idea of a world wide, state-supported

and enforced, universal church which Rome has so long promoted, is nothing more than the devil's pipe-dream. And it is hard to understand how any student of the Bible can be gullible enough to try to fellowship with that which Scripture has declared to be "MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH" (Rev. 17:5).

It is at this point that some gullible but unbelieving soul will no doubt say, "O, the Book of Revelation is too mysterious to use as a proof-test for such a belief." But let us notice that the inspiring Spirit of the Lord gives His own interpretation of Revelation 17. (1) The woman is a great city (v. 18). (2) She is a great city that rules over the kings of the earth (v. 18). No city has ever exerted such rule as has Rome. (3) She rules over many peoples and multitudes and nations and tongues (v. 15). Again, what system has ever had a rule over so many diverse kinds of people as has Catholicism. (4) Her geographical location is clearly given (v. 9). The seven heads are not seven kings, as some would interpret it, but they "are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." Men may try to make a symbol represent another symbol, but the Lord here interprets the symbol by declaring the substance that it symbolizes. What city is the most renowned city that sits on seven hills? Historically, Rome has been known as the "City of the Seven Hills" for more than two millennia of time. (5) This woman is drunken with the blood of the saints (v. 6). Again may we ask, Whose whole history has been one of bloody persecution of all that dissented from her wicked pretensions? (6) She is noted for her abominations and filthiness (v. 4). "Abomination" in Scripture is often associated with idolatry, as "filthiness" is with immorality. No denomination of professed Christians has had a longer or more extensive history of pride, false doctrine, idolization of saints and angels, and moral impurity than the one that is now inviting all of her Protestant daughters to come home. (7) She is also characterized by her wealth, ornate ritual, pomp and ceremony (v. 4), which again fits no religion so well as it does Roman Catholicism.

Thirdly, prophecy foretells that the Antichrist will not only head up a great world-wide empire, but that he will also be aided in his evil domination of the earth by this "Mystery Babylon" that rides upon the beast that represents the Antichrist's empire of evil (Rev. 17:3). This symbolizes a church-state relationship, which is again one of Rome's most common characteristics throughout the last sixteen hundred years and more. Beginning in 325 A. D. Catholicism has continually ridden and been supported by the State in every nation that she could dominate. The first beast in Revelation 13:1-10 is the Antichrist, but the second beast in Revelation 13:11ff, is the Antichrist's associate, who will probably be a Pope of Rome. The modern "church unity" movement is fitted and directed to fulfill this coming evil. What truly saved person, or sound

church could possibly desire to be a part of, or have fellowship with, such a system that is so clearly under the Lord's curse?

Yet, in spite of these Scriptural warnings, some Baptists are rushing to kiss the Papa's toe. How gullible can one get? Rome isn't home for Baptists and never has been. It is time that nominal Baptists woke up! The action of some Baptists would seem to indicate that their brains have been washed, but not their souls.

In the fourth place, there is no Scriptural ground for supposing that the Lord ever intended that His church was to be a single, world wide institution in this dispensation. It is only "in the dispensation of the fullness of times" that He will "gather in one all things in Christ" (Eph. 1:10). Today, there are only local assemblies that bear Christ's name, but carnal man does not like small, insignificant things. He must have everything big, and so constituted that it caters to his pride. And belief in a universal church of some sort is necessary to the modern drive for a union of all churches.

Every passage that is interpreted to teach a universal church in the present time is misinterpreted in one of the following ways. (1) An abstract or generic usage of the Greek word *ekklesia* (church) is interpreted to mean all churches in the aggregate, or, a universal church. But in the New Testament, when the abstract becomes concrete, it always takes the form of a local assembly. (2) The institutional usage of *ekklesia* is sometimes pressed into service to prove a present universal church, as for example in Matthew 16:18. In this passage, the church is viewed as an institution built upon Christ without reference to a given locality, nor to all localities, and without reference to a given assembly or to all assemblies. The principle idea in the institutional usage is that it will continue throughout this age, always having at least one such local assembly at every moment of time.

When men try to make this refer to ALL CHURCHES in the aggregate, they misinterpret it, and so, make this verse to be untrue. For if this is viewed as an aggregate of all churches in all time, it could not be true that "the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. The gates of Hades have triumphed over some churches when they were destroyed by persecution, or internal sin and strife caused them to pass out of existence. But viewed simply in an institutional sense, the gates of Hades have not prevailed over the Lord's church as an institution. There has been a continual chain of them in every day of every year of every century since the time that the Lord gave this promise to His churches. The literal rendering of Matthew 28:20, where one such promise was

given, is “Behold, I myself am with you all the days to the consummation of the age.” This is the word of Him that cannot lie, and we can depend upon it.

(3) Usage of the phrase “the church” is often applied to the supposed universal church which unionists are trying so hard to bring about by their unionizing. But in actuality the epistle from which it is taken limits it to a given church; for example, “the church” (in Ephesus, in Philippi, in Colosse, etc.) If the usage of “the church” in Ephesians 5 proves a universal church, then is not the usage of the phrases “the husband,” and “the wife” (Eph. 5:23), likewise a proof of a universal husband and a universal wife? But who will be absurd enough to maintain that? Even if a reference to “the church” could not be applicable to a specified church, it would still mean no more than that it applied to a church in a generic sense, which is the sense in which “the husband” and “the wife” is used in this same place. It is dealing with a genus of beings, not with a specific case.

(4) Passages thought to teach a world wide church comprised of local assemblies are often the result of poor translations. For example (Eph. 2:21), which the A. V. translates “in whom all the building fitly framed together groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord,” when rightly rendered according to the Greek, teaches the very opposite, viz., “in whom each individual building fitly framed together,” etc.

(5) Passages that are definitely future in fulfillment are sometime used as proof texts of a present universal church, as in Hebrews 12:23.

We have dealt with this matter extensively simply because universal churchism is at the very heart and soul of the present trend toward church unionism, yet this is always based upon a misinterpretation of Scripture. The tendency in this desire however is not toward true “Christian unity,” but is rather toward antichristian union. Its end, which prophecy foretells will ultimately come about, will be a universal world church giving its allegiance and worship to the Antichrist, and serving him.

State churches, which demand to be the universal and exclusive church in a nation, have historically been the bloodiest persecutors of Baptists since 325 A. D. when Emperor Constantine first made Catholicism the state church of the Roman Empire. And this is to come about again just as soon as false religionists have brainwashed enough of the world to accomplish their ends. Nominal Baptists, because they are unsaved, will rejoice be a part of this hellish conspiracy, for they have been brainwashed concerning it. True Baptists need to wake up,

and to shake themselves out of their lethargy. God's word to His people is "Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues" (Rev. 18:4).

The Lord will soon return to manifest that the present endeavor toward a world church union is nothing more than the foolish reasoning of carnal, deceived mankind, who want world wide union without submission to Christ, nor to His laws. There can be no true unity until there is unity of doctrine and devotion to Christ. True unity must begin within the local assembly, in individuals, and between members. When each and every professing Christian has submitted his will to Christ and to His Word, and has been reconciled to every other brother, then will there be true unity, and this without the necessity of organic bonds.

Many Baptists have been brainwashed into believing that any mission plan is all right. Many have been deceived into breaking fellowship with other Christians and churches simply because they did not follow man-made mission programs, or some other unscriptural plan. Many are being deceived by the oratory of man into believing that Baptists should answer to Rome's beck and call. These things can only lead to headache, heartache and backache.

Baptists awake! For you have been lulled into a dangerous sleep by brainwashers. "Now is our salvation nearer than when we believed" (Rom. 13:11). "Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the master of the house cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockcrowing, or in the morning; Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch" (Mark 13:35-37).

The signs of Christ's coming multiply daily. Now is the time for a clean heart, clean hands, and a clear head, not a brain that is washed of Scripture sense. "Give diligence to approve thyself unto God, a workman unashamed, rightly handling the Word of the Truth" (2 Tim. 2:15), literal rendering.

Chapter 8—Conventionism And Associationism Analyzed

By the Late W. Lee Rector

First Orthodox Baptist Church, Ardmore, Oklahoma

A Convention body assumes that it is made up of messengers; that these messengers bear redelegated authority from the churches; that this redelegated authority may be, and is,

transmitted to its boards; that it lives on and on in its boards during the interim of annual meetings; and that its actions are binding upon the churches. It really assumes that it is an extra integrated creation of cooperating churches carrying in itself the authority of the churches. Now, a Convention body does not err when it assumes that it is a body made up of messengers—that is simply what it is. It does, however, greatly err when it assumes that it lives on and on as a Convention in its boards during the interim of annual meetings; and it greatly errs when it assumes that its actions are binding upon the cooperating churches. These last assumptions are actually unscriptural, being supported by not one scintilla of Bible evidence. Actually, there is just as much scriptural sanction for the Pope being Christ's vice-gerent on earth as there is for a Convention being the spokesman of Christ to His churches. The scriptures are dismally silent on Christ delegating authority to the Pope to speak for Him among men, and they are ominously silent on Christ delegating messenger bodies to speak for Him to His churches.

Associations

An Association body assumes that it is made up of churches associated in the work of the Lord; that its messengers bear to Associational meetings redelegated church authority; that this redelegated authority may be, and is, transmitted to its committees; and that the will of the churches associated together is officially represented in its committees during the interim of its annual meetings.

Now, an Association body errs when it assumes that it is made up of churches. *A local church cannot be a member of anything.* Membership implies partness of a whole. *A sovereign body can't be a part of anything without losing part of its sovereignty.* The moment a church becomes a member of anything it becomes a part of a larger whole. Then, as touching missionary and benevolent labors, it fuses its will with the wills of other churches making up the larger unit. There is just as much scriptural authority for the unification program of the National Council of Churches as there is for an Association being made up of a body of churches—both enslave churches. Both are extra scriptural matters.

Redelegated authority in Associationism is straight-out Conventionism. Such is human and unscriptural. The burden of proof for the redelegation of church authority to messengers is on the shoulders of them who practice such.

But someone argues that an Association is not a body. If it is not a body, then what is it? It cannot be an assembly of churches—yet, there is an assembly, and this assembly is a group of messengers who act like an organized body. These messengers transact business—not for the

churches but for themselves. They elect a moderator or a president, and they elect clerks and missionaries, etc. Since they exercise the function of an organized body, then why should anyone assume that such is not an organized body, then why should anyone assume that such is not an organization. The assumption that an Association is made up of churches and exercises re-delegated authority from churches cannot be sustained by the scriptures.

Then you say, “What can churches do scripturally?” They can find fellowship in the work of the Lord. The churches of Asia Minor found fellowship in service by sending out messengers—not messengers to a general meeting but to churches and communities to preach the gospel and to raise funds for the poor. The only assemblies disclosed in the New Testament are local church assemblies. Denominations, Associations, and Conventions are human creations without any expressed divine sanction. The messengers of the 8th chapter of 2 Corinthians were not messengers to a messenger assembly from local churches, but they were messengers chosen by local churches and sent out to witness, just like Paul and Barnabas were sent out from the church at Antioch (Acts 13:1-4). So far as we can see, there is no harm in brethren from churches coming together for a meeting to find fellowship in the Lord and the study of His Word. But to go beyond that, dangers are clearly involved.

Now, brethren, to write these things as I now do means that I have made a great adjustment in my thinking. I once believed in the red legation of church authority and that missionary and benevolent endeavors could be scripturally projected by a body of messengers assembled from churches. I have been compelled to surrender these beliefs. I have yielded them because I have found that the scriptures do not sanction them.

But, another brother says, “I grant you that there is no expressed scriptural sanction for such assumptions, but there is nothing said against them. So what is wrong with using our wits in order to get cooperation?” Now we offer the following reasons for not doing so.

1. To do so, would compel us to apply *expediency* as a rule of procedure when we know that expediency is a carnal principle and that carnality is against God (Rom. 8:7).
2. To do so, would compel us to ignore the Holy Spirit of the churches who stands in them in the stead of the Lord Jesus (John 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-13; Acts 2:1-47). While Christ was in the church in person, He exercised absolute control of its work and we must assume that the Holy Spirit exercises the same responsibility today. To butt in on His responsibility is little short of blasphemy, if any.

3. To do so, would compel us to ignore the pattern of missionary endeavor set for the churches by the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:1-47; 13:1-4). He shows us the method of missionary endeavor by personal example.

4. To do so, would compel us to assume that divine principles are not intended to control the practice of the saints in church life. All doings of a church must be in harmony with Deity. The Lord is God and we must not dicker with that truth. As sovereign, God says today, even as yesterday, “This is the way, walk ye in it” (Isa. 30-21).

5. Finally, a wrong method will in the end destroy a right message. Satan devises false methods in the name of expediency knowing that each false one will in the end sacrifice truth divine. Accordingly, we need to heed the Holy Spirit’s injunction by Paul (1 Cor. 16:13), “Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.” Our challenge today is “Back to the Bible and to the churches.”

What We Should Do

1. We should look to the Holy Spirit for our message and our method.
2. We should leave our churches free to turn to the Holy Spirit for evangelistic, missionary, and benevolent endeavors.
3. We should indoctrinate our churches on church truth.

Chapter 9—Conventionism Or Independency?

By M. L. Moser, Jr., Pastor

Central Baptist Church, Little Rock, Arkansas

Today there seems to be much confusion concerning what is an independent Baptist church. For years an independent Baptist church was considered to be a church that was not affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, or any of the other organized movements among Baptist churches.

However, in more recent years several “fellowships” of Baptists have organized and have begun to use the word *independent* as regarding their organization, showing that there is a clear

misunderstanding of the meaning of the word *independent*. How can one be independent and yet organized into an organization? The very word independent itself means that one is not affiliated, associated, or organized into any body, large or small. As soon as the organization is set up, composed of churches, delegates from churches, or messengers from churches, it is an organization and the churches are not independent, as they are being represented in an organization no matter what it is called.

In fact, the Baptist Bible Fellowship, which declares that it is not a Convention, Association, or organization, argues on the one hand that they are all independent, yet have their different organizations similar to the Conventions, Associations, etc. showing that they are not independent. In fact, many times they make an effort to speak out of both sides of the mouth. While using newspapers to advertise that they are *independent* Baptist churches, and condemning the Southern Baptist Convention and other organized bodies, they themselves will condemn those Baptist churches that are really independent and themselves admit that they are not independent. Note the following article from the *Baptist Bible Tribune*, magazine of the Baptist Bible Fellowship, Friday March 22, 1957. The editor, Noel Smith in an editorial wrote the following:

“So far as I am concerned, I never have been, am not now, never will be, an ‘independent.’ I have contempt for the boasting strutting ‘independent.’ . . . I am not an ‘independent.’

“It is true that when the Baptist Bible Fellowship was established, a great many ‘independents’ came around to look us over; and, in many cases, to praise us. But when they began to realize that we did not mean to diffuse our energies in negations, that we meant to discipline ourselves and to do the hard labor required to create a responsible substitute for what a great many of us regarded, and still regard, as fundamentally wrong, most of the ‘independents’ were called into more independent vineyards. They don’t like us any more than they like the Southern Baptist Convention. They have never remained but a few months with any group that took Christianity seriously. Their religion is eating chicken, loud singing, and lamenting and deploring. A good many of them, now that they are getting old and looking back and reflecting on the barren paths their undisciplined emotions have led them, deeply wish they had remained with some group that meant business.”

As to whether this group is independent or not is clearly answered by their missions committee. Usually the Baptist Bible Fellowship will argue that their missionaries are “independent” missionaries sent out by the individual churches and that the Missions Committee only serves as

a clearing-house for the forwarding of the money from the churches. This is proven to be wrong by F. S. Donnelson, former head of their Missions Committee, which corresponds to the mission boards of the Conventions, differing only in name, performing the same functions. In an article in the *Baptist Bible Tribune*, June 8, 1956, Bro. Donnelson states:

“Thus the Fellowship assumes responsibility for *its missionaries, owning them as their own, interesting themselves in the missionaries affairs, inviting them to individual churches.*”

In other words, according to their own admissions, they are not independent Baptist churches, but are organized into an organization that differs little from the Southern Baptist Convention or other human organizations.

Another organized Fellowship that prides itself on the use of the word *independent* is the World Baptist Fellowship. Again, the churches of this organization claim to be independent, but have no use for Baptist churches that maintain their independency, and have no just claim to the word *independent* as a description of their churches. As evidence of this, note the following.

In the paper *Western Voice* dated September 19, 1952, with the issue of the paper entitled “World Baptist Fellowship Issue” and the lead article headed “Business Session of World Baptist Fellowship, Thursday, September 2, 1952, 1:00 P.M.”—Dr. Harvey Springer, Presiding, there is listed the Articles of Faith or Constitution of the World Baptist Fellowship. Notice the following words in the preamble:

“ . . . Whereas, we believe that *the times demand* the formation of a fellowship of New Testament Baptist Churches, for fellowship and cooperation on the part of such *member churches*, and individual believers, for the proclamation and defense of the Gospel, to establish and operate schools, Bible schools, *churches*, children’s homes, radio stations, book and supply stores, to broadcast radio programs, to publish books, religious papers, and other literature to propagate the spreading of the Gospel at home and abroad through missionary stations, and otherwise, and in general to do *everything* necessary to *the full and complete execution of any and all purposes herein mentioned*, or that may *in any way* pertain to the business and interests of this fellowship.”

Here in the preamble to the Articles of Faith of the World Baptist Fellowship is clearly stated that they are not independent but “*member churches.*” Members of what? The World Baptist Fellowship, and if a member of an organization, *they are not independent.*

What is necessary for one to become a “*member church*“ of the World Baptist Fellowship? In Article III, under title of Membership is stated: “Membership in the World Baptist Fellowship shall be by confirmation of the doctrinal statement and financial support to its missionary causes.” In other words, churches who contribute money through the agencies of the World Baptist Fellowship, either to its work at home or through their mission agencies to foreign missionaries are “*member churches*“ of the World Baptist Fellowship, according to this article of their Constitution. *These churches have no right to the use of the word independent as regards their churches as they are members of an organization and are not independent Baptist churches.*

Two other organizations have fallen right along into this same error of conventionism although opposing the word convention. Both the American Baptist Association and the Baptist Missionary Association are very much opposed to the term convention, and apparently the Southern Baptist Convention, but they have formed an organization called an “Association” which is nothing more than a Convention with a different label. In fact, they have practically duplicated every organization that the Southern Baptist Convention has, only changing the names.

Churches from these two organizations will claim that they are “independent” or “I am just as independent as you are,” but a manual published by their publishing house, the Baptist Sunday School Committee and used by their churches, points out that the American Baptist Association and the Baptist Missionary Association *are not* independent Baptist churches, in spite of their claims. In *A New Manual for Baptist Churches* written by J. E. Cobb, and published in 1941 when the American Baptist Association and the Baptist Missionary Association were one in their organization, we find the following statement which shows that doctrinally, the Associational brethren have gone even further into ecclesiasticism or conventionism than the churches of the Southern Baptist Convention. On page 196 of this manual, under the chapter heading, “The Association of Churches” are the following words:

“A Scriptural association is not composed of messengers who are elected by the churches and sent to the meeting of the messengers, *but it is composed of churches.*”

This is a doctrine even worse than that of the Southern Baptist Convention, in that the churches of the Convention still pretend that their Convention is not composed of the churches, but only messengers of the churches. These Associations then are composed of the churches themselves,

and if these churches are members of the Association, *then they are not independent Baptist churches* regardless of their claims.

Again, there needs to be a return to the true meaning of the word “independent” as to what it means and Baptist churches need to return to the Scriptural practice of the New Testament by withdrawing themselves from all human or man-made organizations.

To a great many Baptists of today, the greatest danger to the independency of Baptist churches is not a particular Convention, Association, or organized Fellowship, but *Conventionism* as such. It is this whole idea of “organizing,” as inevitably it will result in a hierarchy or Convention which soon will fall into the hands of men who are unethical in their practices, unscriptural in their doctrines, liberal in their theology, and more concerned for the well-being of the organization than in doctrinal soundness or the sovereignty of the individual churches. This has been true in every case in past years.

The greatest danger today is *Conventionism* itself; the associating, affiliating, or fellowshiping of churches into an organization. Without fail, these organizations will fall into the hands of corrupt men who will cause the organizations to assert their authority over the churches. This is even admitted.

Of course, many churches today will offer the excuse of expediency as sufficient reason to form an organization. This is clearly stated in the preamble to the Articles of Faith and Constitution of the World Baptist Fellowship. Again quoting from the *Western Voice*, September 19, 1952 entitled “World Baptist Fellowship Issue”: “Whereas, we believe *that the times demand the* formation of a fellowship of New Testament Churches . . .”

Baptist churches are never to be governed by “the times” but by the New Testament. Have Baptist churches reached the point to where they believe that the Lord Jesus Christ failed to provide sufficient instructions, sufficient power within His churches, to operate in the 20th century according to the pattern and plan that He laid down in the New Testament? Do we have to *improve* on His plan today? Will His plan not meet today’s modern conditions? What Scripture tells us that we are to be determined by “the times” or expediency?

In other words, the men who helped to form the World Baptist Fellowship were concerned about the modernism that was prevalent in the Southern Baptist Convention, but they failed to see that it is Conventionism itself that always provides a place for the leaven of modernism to hide, completely out of reach of the churches where it can permeate every facet of the organization,

protected by many of the leaders of the organization, and for the most part, completely unknown by the vast majority of the churches until it has completely swallowed up the entire organization. Conventionism itself is the body which furnishes the “home” for the cancer of modernism to spread unmolested, until it engulfs the entire body or organization, but by the time it reaches the surface, it is beyond control. But how few there are today who recognize the dangers of conventionism itself.

Conventionism itself always begins small in little matters, seemingly inconsequential, but they have a tendency to mushroom, and the men who are instrumental in the organizing have no intentions of the organization growing to the extent that it soon controls the churches. That is true of the founders of the Southern Baptist Convention, and each of these other organizations. In relating part of the history of the World Baptist Fellowship, Bro. Harvey H. Springer relates in the same issue of the *Western Voice* as cited above:

“Now, here is one thing I want to tell you: Dr. Norris had no idea, when he called the first Fundamental Bible School on April 13, 1917, that he was going to start a Fellowship as we have it today. The only purpose he had in mind was to inspire young men and preachers in this section and the world over to contend for the faith and stand for the things of God.

“Now by 1935 we were known as the Premillennial Baptist Missionary Fellowship. We emphasized the premillennial coming of Christ.

“If I were to ask some of you boys this afternoon, ‘Why aren’t you in the Southern Baptist Convention?’ your answer would be, ‘I don’t know why.’ You never were in it. You haven’t been in the early fight that some of the rest of us have had. You have not had the first hard blows. *We didn’t leave the Southern Baptist Convention because it was a convention. We left the Southern Baptist Convention because of the corruption that’s in the convention, and its self-perpetuating hierarchy.*

“*So we didn’t leave the Southern Baptist Convention because it was a Convention.* George Norris told me yesterday, ‘If you can win more souls in the Southern Baptist Convention, then you better get in it.’ (Amen).

“I am over where I am because it gives me liberty. It gives me something that I believe in accord to the Word of God. Brethren, I have some convictions. That’s all. I couldn’t be a Southern Baptist. And if I were I would be ashamed of myself (Amen). Not because it is a convention, but

because of the corruption and self-appointed hierarchy. If you think I am going to stand on a platform with a fellow like this fellow Newton, then you have another whistle coming . . .

“The thing I am talking about is this: What was this Fellowship? How did it start? We came down here to these Bible Schools, and I don’t think Dr. Norris dreamed of it at the time he started it. The thing began to grow.

“Then Dr. Norris saw a greater vision, and he said, ‘We’ll build a great school’ . . . Now you know the rest of the history. But instead of being what it started out to be it surpassed even Dr. Norris’ greatest expectations. It started out to be a Bible School once or twice a year. It ended up being a Fellowship to promote a Seminary for training young preachers, giving them a degree, putting them out in the field and just scattering them all over the world (Amen).

“We didn’t start out to be a missionary agency, but now we find ourselves a missionary agency to the honor and glory of God. That’s how the thing has grown.”

This machine called the World Baptist Fellowship has grown all right, and has grown to the extent that it has patterned the Southern Baptist Convention in too many respects. Whereas the Southern Baptist Convention was organized with the avowed purpose of “eliciting, combining, and directing the energies of the denomination” according to the preamble of their Constitution, the preamble for the World Baptist Fellowship says it was organized “in general to do *everything necessary to the full and complete execution of any and all purposes herein mentioned, or that may in any way pertain to the business and interests of this fellowship.*” The Southern Baptist Convention uses the words “directing,” the World Baptist Fellowship says “full and complete execution” and one is just as bad as the other.

In other words, it is *conventionism* itself that is wrong and any organization that is formed will fall by the wayside into conventionism. If it has not yet arrived, it soon will. The late Noel Smith, editor of the *Baptist Bible Tribune*, magazine of the Baptist Bible Fellowship acknowledges that this movement has already been felt within the ranks of the Baptist Bible Fellowship and admits that this movement is destined to gain sway even in their own organization. He writes:

“Every objective-minded student of history, especially of church history, knows that the same ecclesiasticism that has withered the spiritual life of the churches and enslaved them from Thyatira to North Carolina, is *now slyly* prowling around on the periphery of the Baptist Bible Fellowship—and of every other *general Baptist organization* (they admit they are an organization—Mlmj). This ecclesiasticism will *develop* and do its evil work soon enough

without being given the encouragement of such a law as that of North Carolina” *Baptist Bible Tribune*, March 22, 1957.

The truth was never stated plainer. Ecclesiasticism or lordship over the churches will *develop* in *every case* when an organization is formed among the churches, therefore it is the movement of Conventionism itself that is the big evil of our day. Modernism would never invade the churches if it did not have the cloak of conventionism to hide its labors. Baptists need to get their eyes open to the truth and to separate themselves from these human organizations that will soon dominate their churches, if not in their ministry, in the ministry of a pastor who succeeds them.

One more evidence of this misunderstanding as to what it means to be independent and a failure to see the dangers of conventionism itself is the following letter that I received. On the envelope is printed the word “independent” as if they were independent, but the letter clarifies that matter:

Dear Brother:

We want to commend you upon the format, plan, and organization as well as the general idea represented in your *Baptist Doctrine In One Year*, a review copy of which you sent.

We have not published a review because it is contrary to our policy to write adversely of any publication that is largely to be approved, or of any that is produced by people whose principal aims seems identical with ours.

We recognize that you have a constant problem with the Southern Baptist Convention. We have suffered through the years at the hands of the Northern or American Convention, and fully understand your feeling. However, we believe God wants Christian fellowship among individuals and churches. We believe our Baptist people should cooperate as much as possible in undertaking Gospel work. *We therefore do not condemn conventionism as such, but only as conducted in many places.* We do not believe it right to help destroy a service organization simply because many organizations of similar type have been captured by bureaucrats. Unfortunately, your manual seems to reveal something of a shoulder chip in you on this subject, which we believe you can easily see disqualifies the book for our recommendation.

May God richly bless you,

/s/

P.S. To clarify: We are against, and have no fellowship with ABC or SBC. We fellowship with the Conservative Baptist Association. *However, we are a Convention.*

At the bottom of the letter, the writer draws an arrow pointing to the statement printed on the stationary, “*Conservative Baptist News in Minnesota*, published monthly by Minnesota Baptist Convention.”

Here is a clear case of those who see the evils of modernism and bureaucracy in the American and Southern Baptist Conventions, and yet fails to see that it is the system of conventionism that inevitably leads to such destruction of the independency and sovereignty of Baptist churches. The best advice for anyone who has been deceived by the system of conventionism has already been given by Charles Haddon Spurgeon:

“I have taken a deep interest in the struggles of the orthodox brethren, but I have never advised those struggles, nor entertained the slightest hope of their success. My course has been of another kind.

“As soon as I saw, or thought I saw, that error had become firmly established, I did not deliberate, but quitted the body at once. Since then my counsel has been ‘come out from among them.’ I have felt that no protest could be equal to that of distinct separation.”

Chapter 10—Baptist Bible Fellowship Preaches One Thing and Practices Another

By M. L. Moser, Jr., Pastor

Central Baptist Church, Little Rock, Arkansas

This article is based largely upon an article written by the late L. S. Ballard exposing the unscripturalness of the Conventions and the Associations. Since the Baptist Bible Fellowship and the World Baptist Fellowship are very new, [neither was in existence when he wrote the article] they were not included, but the same Scriptures and logic that he used against the Associations and Conventions apply equally to the organized Fellowships. You see, the Baptist Bible Fellowship is no different from Conventions and Associations for the Baptist Bible Fellowship vehemently and vociferously contend that the commission to evangelize was given to

New Testament churches and to none other, as do also the Conventions and Associations. If that is true then we should teach Baptist churches, including Baptist Bible Fellowship churches, to *practice what they preach*. If we preach one thing and practice another, our position is made precarious in the minds of thinking people.

First, let us look at the practice of the Baptist Bible Fellowship, International as compared with their preaching. People are judged by what they do and not by what they say. The Baptist Bible Fellowship, International is a body made up of un-elected pastors. The Directors of the Baptist Bible Fellowship, elected in their national meetings by these same un-elected pastors, hold within their grasp today the authority to send out missionaries. They approve and appoint the missionaries, designate the number that should go, set their salaries and lay out their fields, make Mission Policies, rules and regulations to which the missionaries must subscribe before being approved, and then appoint Bishops (called Mission Directors) to control them. The only way the churches are known in it is through their pastors who form these Fellowships, and these Fellowships transact all the business, without church approval, and then call upon the churches to pay for it.

By whose or what authority does the Baptist Bible Fellowship act? By what authority do the Mission Directors operate? Not by the authority of Jesus, because He gave the commission to act in this capacity to New Testament churches (Matthew 28:19-20). Not by the authority of the Holy Spirit, because His position is confined to New Testament churches to direct them in carrying out the commission of Jesus (John 14:15-17; Acts 13:1-4). We are told that these Mission Directors and the Baptist Bible Fellowship get their authority from the pastors that make up the Baptist Bible Fellowship. Even these pastors themselves deny that the churches have given them any authority, for they two years ago excluded all churches from membership in the Fellowship, and the pastors have not been authorized by the churches to form the Fellowship. *They have simply assumed this right*. But where in the Bible do the churches or the pastors have the right to commission the Baptist Bible Fellowship or the Mission Directors to act for the churches? There were no such bodies in Bible times and since God sees the ages through, if such a human set-up had been necessary for the churches to carry out the great commission, it stands to reason that He would have told us so. Therefore all such bodies act without the authority of God, without the commission of Jesus Christ, and without the direction of the Holy Spirit.

But it is argued that the pastors have a right by agreement to form the Baptist Bible Fellowship and meet in annual Fellowship meetings, to elect missionaries (they call it “approve” missionaries), establish Mission Policies to govern these missionaries, set up a Board of

Missions called Mission Directors to enforce the rules contained in the Mission Policies, and to carry on the work for these pastors who have organized the Baptist Bible Fellowship. But where in the Bible do the pastors have the authority for such procedure? Is the Bible the rule and standard of our faith and practice, or do we have a right to make our own rules and set up our own standards? Until I am thoroughly convinced that men have the right to make laws to govern their practices, I am going to contend that the Word of God is the perfect rule by which all of our practice should be squared.

Again, if New Testament churches were commissioned by Jesus Christ to evangelize the world, by whom or what was the Baptist Bible Fellowship, its Fellowship Directors, and its Mission Directors clothed with such authority? There is but one answer and it is just as unscriptural as it is preposterous. Either the churches have the God-given right to re-commit their authority to other agencies, or the pastors have the right to take over and assume the responsibilities of the churches. Here then is the battle ground. Most Fellowship pastors deny this doctrine in word but in practice utter it in thunder tones.

Second, let us examine the unscripturalness of this doctrine for a moment, keeping in mind that there were no such organizations as Conventions, Associations, organized Fellowships, or Mission Directors in New Testament days; that as to creation, *they are human in origin*; as to authority, *they are Episcopal in nature*; and as to practice, *they are without divine appointment*. They do not claim divine origin, but they do claim divine authority re-committed to them by the churches through their pastors. They do not claim ecclesiastical powers, claiming each church is independent and sovereign, but they usurp authority over the churches by circumscribing their practices to certain rules and stipulations written in their Constitutions and By-laws.

I know that I am committing a sin next to the sin against the Holy Spirit when I charge those bodies with being Episcopal in nature. But let us look the facts square in the face. The Methodist Bishop lays out all the work for the Methodist Societies. In so doing he acts according to certain prescribed laws of the Methodist Conference or Church. The Baptist Bible Fellowship lays out and carries forward the evangelistic work of the churches, particularly in the area of education, foreign and home missions, according to certain prescribed laws of the Fellowship written in the Constitution and By-laws. The only difference is, the Methodist Conference elects a Board of Bishops to direct the work of the Societies and gives them full authority to act, whereas the pastors of Baptist Bible Fellowship elect a Board called Mission Directors and gives it full authority to act for the churches. *There is just as much Scripture for a Methodist Bishop*

as there is for a Baptist Director. And there is just as much Scripture for a Methodist Conference to transact business for Methodist Societies as there is for the Baptist Bible Fellowship to transact business for Baptist churches. There is as much Scripture for a Methodist Conference to re-commit its authority to the Bishops as there is for Baptist Churches to re-commit their authority to the Baptist Bible Fellowship, the Directors of the Baptist Bible Fellowship and the Mission Directors, or for the pastors simply to assume the authority.

The Southern Baptist Convention and the Associations justify their boards and mission organizations on the ground that they are creatures of the churches. They are hard pressed to find Scriptures they can pervert to justify their organizations, but the Fellowship organizations are just as bad off when it comes to finding Scripture for their practices. *There is as much Scripture for the Southern Baptist Convention's Foreign Mission Board electing missionaries as there is for the Baptist Bible Fellowship electing them.* Since neither is found in the Holy Bible, neither has a right to assume the Scriptural obligations of the churches. If the commission was given to the New Testament churches then none but New Testament churches have a Scriptural right to send and approve missionaries.

Mission Directors of the Baptist Bible Fellowship are not creatures of the churches; they are a part of the set up of the Baptist Bible Fellowship which is composed of pastors. But if it could be established that they are creatures of the churches, where in the Scriptures do the churches get the authority to promote such organizations? Church authority extends no further than New Testament sanction. And since the New Testament nowhere authorizes such organizations, for churches to create them would be to ignore the perfect system of evangelization set forth by the Word of God and establish a system all their own. This is what Israel did when they turned away from the worship of God to follow after Baal the Phoenician sun god.

But they tell us that these Boards and Mission Directors are justified by the law of expediency. It is too bad that Paul didn't know the Law of expediency when he was on the mission field, for had he known it, he no doubt would have advised the churches to quit sending missionaries as Barnabas was sent from the church at Jerusalem (Acts 11:22), and as he and Barnabas were sent from the church at Antioch (Acts 13:1-4), and send them under the authority of Mission Directors or a body of pastors similar to the Baptist Bible Fellowship. Yes, sir, if Paul had known that precious law he never would have gone out directly from the church at Antioch, but would have organized a Fellowship of pastors, elected some Mission Directors and turned the work of evangelization and sending out of missionaries over to them.

Then, too, it is strange that God did not reveal the law of expediency to Paul when he was writing his many letters and epistles to the churches. And again it is marvelously strange that Baptists did not discover this law for over sixteen hundred years after Paul was dead. My! My! Almost seventeen hundred years lost on the mission fields of the world because Baptists didn't know the law of expediency. Yet they preached the gospel all over the known world before there was ever a Baptist Bible Fellowship with their Mission Directors, or a Convention, Association, Mission Society or Mission Board known among them. But just think what they could have done if they had known the law of expediency and had not followed the letter of God's word so closely during those years. Well, you know the old saying, "We live and learn." According to the way some Baptists, as well as others preach, we would have been better off if we had known of the book of the Law of expediency instead of the Word of God.

We are told that we have Scripture for such bodies as Associations, Conventions, Organized Fellowships and such, and 2 Corinthians 8:23 is the Scripture. But the messengers of the churches in this verse were ministers sent out from the churches to preach the gospel and not to make boards, elect Mission Directors or other substitutes to take the place of the churches. We should like to know when and where this so-called messenger body met and what missionaries were elected or endorsed, and what other business they transacted in addition to what had already been done by the churches.

Chapter 11—Let's Pull The Trigger

**By Norman H. Wells, Pastor
Central Baptist Church, Cincinnati, Ohio**

The late Dr. Noel Smith was the able editor of the "Baptist Bible Tribune." This paper is published weekly by the Baptist Bible Fellowship with headquarters at Springfield, Missouri. Dr. Noel Smith has written a book called, "Jews, Gentiles, and the Church." This book comes closer to putting the finger on the basic problem of this age than any I have read. I highly recommend it to all our readers.

In this book Dr. Smith has some things to say about independent Baptists.

On page 99 Dr. Smith says, "*I believe in associations, in conventions, in fellowships.*"

On pages 106-107 Dr. Smith says: “*The fact that I believe in the New Testament independence of New Testament churches does not mean that I am an ecclesiastical anarchist. In this lunatic world today everybody has got to go from one fool extreme to the other – exactly what the Devil wants. With apologies to Horace Greely, it is good to know that a lot of independents are self-made men: ‘it relieves God Almighty of a lot of responsibility.’*”

“*There is no such thing in this world as unqualified independence.*”

On page 106 Dr. Smith says, “*The New Testament churches not only had fellowship, they had method. They had ‘machinery’ if you please. In spite of all the hollering and whooping and stomping by the lathered ‘independents,’ nobody has ever done anything in this world without method, without machinery.*”

This is rather a severe indictment of independent Baptists. According to Dr. Smith an independent Baptist is an “*ecclesiastical anarchist.*” Dr. Smith hopes that God is not held responsible for independent Baptists. He pictures independent Baptists as “*hollering and whooping and stomping.*” He pictures independent Baptists as “*lathered independents.*”

I AM AN INDEPENDENT BAPTIST. I pastor an independent Baptist Church. In this capacity I would like to look at Dr. Smith’s book.

The first chapter is called, “The Three Classes: As They Are.” Attention is drawn to the fact that there are three distinct classes of people on the earth: Jews, Gentiles, and the church. The failure to recognize the Bible’s classification, distinctions, and implications of these three is given as the basic cause of the religious, social, economic and political chaos that exists today. It is pointed out that the world does not recognize these three classes but instead insists on, “*Everything becoming one!*” (Page 12).

In this first chapter Dr. Smith looks at the Jews as they are today. He sees the Jews so hopelessly divided that it has become impossible for them to even agree as to a definition of a Jew. They are at war with the whole world, and at war with themselves.

Dr. Smith looks at the Gentiles. He traces the history of the Gentiles from Cain, Nimrod, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, the Dark Ages, etc. to this present generation. From the time that Nimrod, “*gathered the Gentiles to Babel and tried to create a universal state*” (Page 17),

the Gentiles have lived in the open rebellion and defiance of God that is described in Romans 1:21-32.

In chapter 2 Dr. Smith points out that the Jews, as a nation, were chosen of God by love and grace to be a miracle nation, a separated nation, a peculiar nation, a nation with a land, a nation with a language, and a nation to endure forever.

The nation of the Jews was chosen to teach the Gentile nations of the true God; to write down, preserve and transmit the revelation of God; to save the world from moral putrefaction: to give the world a prophet and King-Priest.

Dr. Smith points out that the Jews turned from the Scriptures and their mission but that God in His sovereignty will accomplish His purpose in the Jews.

Dr. Smith begins with the origin of the Gentile nations and shows that their desire has always been to make all nations into one nation. This has always been contrary to the plan of God and has brought chaos.

What happened to the Jew and Gentiles? What went wrong? I believe that Dr. Smith comes to an accurate diagnosis. They left God out! They departed from God's plan and method! Judgment and chaos has resulted. *INSTEAD OF FOLLOWING GOD'S PRESCRIBED COURSE AND PLAN THEY TRIED TO BUILD SOMETHING BIGGER AND BETTER AND GRANDER!*

The entire 3rd chapter (a third of the entire book) is devoted to the church.

Dr. Smith has done an outstanding job. Not only if we are to have revival but if we are going to have survival we are going to have to recognize the truths that are presented in this chapter.

Better and with greater clarity than any other writer Dr. Smith establishes that the original word that is translated "*church*" in our English Bible means "*assembly*."

Dr. Smith establishes that the church of the New Testament was a local, material, visible, corporate entity. **THIS WAS THE ONLY KIND OF CHURCH ESTABLISHED.** There is not one single indication in the entire New Testament of any other meaning for church.

Now, I would like to look at some quotations from Dr. Smith's book that strike a particular response from my own heart and to which I could not possibly more heartily endorse.

“The teaching of the New Testament is eternally at war with your ecumenical church and all your centralized ecclesiastical systems“ (Page 100).

“The New Testament churches were completely independent of all external human authority“ (Page 101).

“The autonomy and independence of the New Testament church is a corollary of its nature“ (Page 101).

“Genuine New Testament churches always have been autonomous and independent of external ecclesiastical authority. Genuine New Testament churches today are autonomous and independent of external ecclesiastical authority. Genuine New Testament churches always will be autonomous and independent of external ecclesiastical authority“ (Page 103).

“A wife packing up her glad rags and leaving her husband for another man is not one whit guiltier of adultery than the local church which turns from the authority of Christ to the authority of ecclesiasticism“ (Page 104).

“THERE IS NOT A LINE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT THAT GIVES THE LOCAL CHURCH THE AUTHORITY TO DELEGATE ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO ANYBODY“ AMEN, AMEN AND AMEN. [Capitalization and Amens are mine NHWJ Page 104.

What happened to the Jews, Gentiles, and the church? Listen again to Dr. Smith. *“The ancient Jews tired of God as their king and demanded that He abdicate the throne and turn it over to Saul.”* The Jews rejected God and tried to build something bigger and better and grander.

The Gentiles left the nations that God established and have been trying to build *“one world“* ever since.

The Christian world has left the idea of the independent, local church and are trying to build a *“one-world church”*

DR. SMITH HAS THE PROPER DIAGNOSIS!

DR. SMITH HAS THE PROPER REMEDY!

THE TRAGEDY IS THAT DR. SMITH WILL NOT APPLY THE REMEDY!

He tells us how to load the gun but he won't shoot. I *WILL!* *I'll pull* the trigger and fire his own ammunition.

WHEN THE TEACHINGS OF DR. SMITH IN THE BOOK "JEWS, GENTILES, AND THE CHURCH" ARE

APPLIED THEY CONSTITUTE AN INDICTMENT OF THE BAPTIST BIBLE FELLOWSHIP OF WHICH DR. SMITH IS A PART.

Let us look again at Dr. Smith's words as already quoted.

"The teaching of the New Testament is eternally at war with your ecumenical church and all your centralized ecclesiastical systems."

Let's pull the trigger!

THE BAPTIST BIBLE FELLOWSHIP IS A "CENTRALIZED ECCLESIASTICAL SYSTEM." It is an organization with which Baptist churches identify themselves and through which they do their work. The Fellowship has a constitution. It has officers. It owns property. Through the Fellowship the churches centralize the training of preachers, their missionary work, etc.

Dr. Smith says the teaching of the New Testament is at war with this kind of thing. We agree!

"The New Testament churches were completely independent of all external human authority" (Page 101).

Let's pull the trigger!

THE CHURCHES OF THE BAPTIST BIBLE FELLOWSHIP ARE NOT FREE FROM EXTERNAL HUMAN AUTHORITY. The churches have a vote but are required to submit to the majority rule of the Fellowship or keep quiet . . . or get out. To remain an identified part of the Fellowship regards accepting the Fellowship's decisions. This is human authority.

"Genuine New Testament churches always have been autonomous . . . today are autonomous . . . always will be autonomous" (Page 103).

THE CHURCHES OF THE BAPTIST BIBLE FELLOWSHIP ARE NOT

AUTONOMOUS! To be autonomous means to be completely self-governing. It means to have self-determination without outside control. When a centralized ecclesiastical system such as the Baptist Bible Fellowship uses its centralized schools, papers, youth camps, etc. to indoctrinate the members of the local churches with a greater loyalty to the central organization than to the church then the church is no longer autonomous.

“There is not a line in the New Testament that gives the local church the authority to delegate its responsibility to anybody“ (Page 104).

Let's pull the trigger!

THE CHURCHES OF THE BAPTIST BIBLE FELLOWSHIP DO DELEGATE THEIR RESPONSIBILITY TO THE CENTRAL ORGANIZATION. The Lord gave the church and the church only, the authority to send out missionaries. The churches of the Baptist Bible Fellowship delegate this authority to their Mission Board.

AN ORGANIZATION SUCH AS THE BAPTIST BIBLE FELLOWSHIP IS UNSCRIPTURAL.

The only organization established and commissioned in the New Testament is the local church. *There is not one mention nor hint of any other organization.*

Search the Bible! A Baptist is supposed to believe and abide by a “thus saith the Lord.” By what authority are organizations such as the Baptist Bible Fellowship organized? *One thing is sure . . . it is not Bible authority!*

MAN-MADE ORGANIZATIONS SUCH AS THE BAPTIST BIBLE FELLOWSHIP HAVE ALWAYS PRODUCED COMPROMISE. The proclamation of the great Baptist truths have to be softened and finally stilled in order to maintain unity in the central organization. *THE BAPTIST BIBLE FELLOWSHIP IS CALLED BAPTIST . . . BUT CANNOT EVEN IDENTIFY A BAPTIST!* Does a Baptist church accept “alien immersion” as scriptural Baptism? Does a Baptist church practice open or closed communion? Are openly interdenominational churches that call themselves Baptist to be accepted as such simply because they support the Fellowship financially?

May I be permitted to give one more quote from Dr. Smith's book? He tries to justify the existence of the Baptist Bible Fellowship in the following quote.

"I believe in associations, in conventions, in fellowships. We are told that in the New Testament we don't find any of them. No; and neither do we find the Sunday School or the Wednesday night prayer meeting" (Page 99).

Such things as Sunday Schools and the Wednesday night prayer meeting are in the individual church and controlled by the individual church and do not violate the principles and mission of the church. Organizations such as the Baptist Bible Fellowship are outside of the church and are a violation of the principle and mission of the church.

THE BOOK, "JEWS, GENTILES, AND THE CHURCH," BY NOEL SMITH IS AN ANSWER TO PRAYER.

For years I have been trying to present the position of the independent Baptist. I have desired to be able to present this truth in such a way that Baptists would understand the tremendous importance of the return to the local church . . . God's way. Mine has been a feeble, faltering attempt. It has long been my prayer that one with the ability of Noel Smith would be presenting the position of the independent Baptist. God has answered that prayer. Dr. Smith accomplishes this in his book.

I WILL NOW BEGIN TO PRAY THAT THE BAPTIST BIBLE FELLOWSHIP, AND EACH CHURCH IDENTIFIED WITH SUCH, WILL HAVE THE COURAGE TO FOLLOW THEIR CONVICTIONS.

Chapter 12—Independent Baptist Foreign Missions

Roy F. Dearmore, M.D.

Formerly Missionary in the Congo, now in Brazil

This is a somewhat awkward subject for a missionary, perhaps, but our convictions and actions regarding scriptural mission work should go beyond personalities. Any comments made are intended to be constructive and not just critical for criticism's sake. Missionaries and churches need each other. A church cannot do scriptural mission work without God-called men who are

willing to go. God-called men cannot go without scriptural churches who are willing to send and support.

I. Why Should We Do Mission Work?

I think the answer should be apparent even without going to the Bible. Millions of souls have not heard the gospel in Africa, Asia, South America, Mexico and the islands of the sea. It has been asked “Why should we hear the gospel twice when others have not heard once?”

The most imperative reason for doing mission work is that it is clearly commanded not once, but many times in God’s Word.

Matthew 28:18-20 “And Jesus came and spake unto them saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world.”

Mark 16:15 “And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.”

Luke 24:47 “And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”

John 20:21 “Then said Jesus to th-em again, Peace be unto you: as my Father hath sent me, even so send I you.”

Acts 1:8 “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”

These scriptures are such a clear-cut command that they require no explanation.

In many instances where the command is given to carry the gospel into all the world, we are reminded that God has all power (in heaven and in earth) and that this power is available for carrying out the task given. There is no such thing as “can’t” if God has commanded us to do something. However, there is very frequently “won’t.”

I would to God that churches and missionaries alike would realize the urgency in carrying out this command now. Occasionally you will find someone who tries to read Acts 1:8 as saying

“first” at home and after you have won everybody at home then around the world. It says “both” at home and around the world at the same time.

God’s Word teaches by command and example. We know we should do mission work by Bible examples such as Christ, Paul, Barnabas and many others. Even in the Old Testament we find Jonah and other men who were sent to warn men of the wrath of God on sin. This was certainly missionary work.

For some people a command is not effective without a threat. In Ezekiel 33:7-9 we find, “So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.”

The prophet of God is told that he is a watchman to the house of Israel. The church is the watchman to the world today to warn of the wrath of God and the way of escape. I think the parallel certainly holds that the blood of those whom we fail to warn will be required at our hands.

Another reason for doing mission work is that reward is promised. The promise in Matthew 28:20 “and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world” is dependent on carrying out the command which preceded it. If a church does not carry out the great commission, I do not see how they can claim the Lord’s promise to be with them in strength and power to the end of the world.

Perhaps one of the most compelling reasons for doing mission work is because of the love and mercy of God, because of what He has done for us.

2 Corinthians 5:14 “For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead.”

Romans 12:1 “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.”

II. Biblical Method of Mission Work

Acts 13:1-4 “Now there were in the church that was at Antioch certain prophets and teachers; as Barnabas, and Simeon that was called Niger, and Lucius of Cyrene, and Manaen, which had been brought up with Herod the tetrarch, and Saul. As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them. And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away. So they, being sent forth by the Holy Ghost, departed unto Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus.”

God’s method of mission work is clearly set forth in these four verses. There are those who will say “Yes, but that was written 2,000 years ago and will not work today.” I say to you with the same logic that John 3:16 was written 2,000 years ago. Is it still valid? Of course, it is. God deals in eternal verities. Unless God Himself supercedes it we have no right to set it aside. In the case of the tabernacle worship and animal sacrifices, God Himself clearly changed this. Such is not the case with New Testament missions.

Note in verse one, it all started with a local church, the church at Antioch. I submit to you that without a local church you cannot have scriptural mission work.

Also, it involved God-called men. Without God-called men you will not have scriptural or successful (measured by God’s standards) mission work.

Not only were they God-called men, they were church-separated. The churches have been lax today in separating men and examining them morally and doctrinally as to their qualification for the work to which they are to be ordained.

Notice the church at Antioch fasted and prayed before ordaining Saul and Barnabas with the laying on of hands. Too many churches today hastily ordain novices. I watched a Baptist Church ordain a young man recently and not one question was asked as to his beliefs on the church, baptism, or the Lord’s Supper.

I might insert parenthetically here that since women cannot be ordained to the ministry of the gospel, women alone obviously cannot carry out scriptural mission work. Women can be wonderful missionary helpers in teaching women and children, nursing, clerical work, etc. To send a woman alone to a field where there is no ordained Baptist preacher is unscriptural and therefore, unbaptistic.

Not only were Saul and Barnabas separated and ordained by the church, but they were sent by the church (v. 3).

After they were sent by the church they were led by the Holy Spirit. Their home church having examined them, had confidence in them and trusted them to follow the leadership of the Holy Spirit. It is obvious that a church several thousand miles away cannot supervise the day by day carrying on of the work and this is not the Biblical pattern. The church can however, and should carefully separate and examine those it sends out and maintain a general surveillance of the work as to its doctrinal soundness.

The Bible also gives us a pattern of cooperation of churches in support of missions without organization.

Philippians 4:15-17 “Now ye Philippians know also, that in the beginning of the gospel, when I departed from Macedonia, no church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving, but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity. Not because I desire a gift; but I desire fruit that may abound to your account.”

We see in these verses that even though Paul was sent out by the church at Antioch, that the church at Philippi cooperated in his support.

In Acts 14 we see that Saul and Barnabas reported back to their home church.

Acts 14:26-27 “And thence sailed to Antioch, from whence they had been recommended to the grace of God for the work which they fulfilled. And when they were come, and had gathered the church together, they rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how he had opened the door of faith unto the Gentiles.”

To reiterate we see that the following eight things are important in the New Testament pattern of missions:

1. Started with a local church.
2. God-called men.
3. Church-separated men.
4. Church-ordained men.

5. Church-sent men.
6. Holy Spirit-led men.
7. Churches cooperated in their support without organization.
8. They reported back to their home church.

We have considered the New Testament method of mission work, now let us consider the message. The message is not just the gospel. The commission to the church is three-fold: (1) Evangelize, (2) Baptize and (3) Teach. If evangelism is pushed to the exclusion of the other two we are just carrying out one-third of the commission. In other words, churches must be founded on the mission field and grounded in the Word of God.

III. What's Wrong With Boards?

In the first place it's "tainted" doctrine. It just "taint" in the Bible. (Incidentally, calling a board a "committee" or "clearing house" doesn't change a thing.) Boards are not even hinted at in the Bible and no examples are given. It seems I hear someone saying, "Oh, but Sunday School is not in the Bible." The commission to teach is in the Bible and the Sunday School is a teaching ministry of the church. Christ and the apostles were always gathering groups of people together and teaching them.

Boards take away the autonomy of the local church and make it subservient to a man-made organization.

Ephesians 1:22-23 "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all."

Christ is the Head of the church and the church is the organization authorized by Christ to carry out His work here on earth. The church is not one of many organizations left here on earth to do God's work, but is *the only organization* mentioned in the New Testament as having authority to carry out the Lord's work.

Boards take away the glory of the church. Ephesians 3:21 "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end." Boards usurp the work of the Holy Spirit in the call, financing and leading of a missionary.

John 16:13 “Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth: for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, that shall he speak: and he will shew you things to come.”

The church should be led by the Holy Spirit in its foreign mission work and giving as in all its endeavors.

Boards misappropriate and waste money. Many boards were founded by sincere men, but you can be sincerely wrong and they were when they went outside the local church to do God’s work. It has been my observation that the older boards become, the more money they waste and misappropriate.

Boards are much more subject to doctrinal error than a local church. They are more prone to compromise doctrinally for financial expediency.

What are some of the advantages of boards? None, really, that I know of. Financial security is touted as a great advantage to boards. I believe my God is more dependable than a mission board. I find all the financial security I need in Philippians 4:19 “But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus.”

One supposed advantage of a mission board is ease of getting visas to enter a foreign country. Most boards promulgate the falsehood that you can’t get a visa to enter a foreign country without a board, but this is not true. If God has called you to a country He will make it possible for you to enter that country without resorting to unscriptural means.

IV. What’s Wrong With the Independent Baptist Way of Missions?

Nothing, except our practice of it. Doctrinal soundness is not a chair to sit on, it’s a foundation on which to build, it’s a base from which to work. Orthodoxy is not a substitute for action. Faith without works is dead.

James 2:20 “But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?”

Knowing the truth and failing to practice it increases our sin.

James 4:17 “Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.”

V. Faults in Our Practice of the Bible Way Both Real and Imagined

We have already touched on one fault, the failure of churches to separate and examine missionaries before ordaining them and sending them out. Churches sometimes send out uncalled, unqualified men.

Another problem is failure to trust the recommendation of sister churches concerning missionaries. We trust them in baptism and accept members from them. Why don't we trust them more concerning missionaries? Certainly the recommendation of a missionary's home church where he has lived and worked is worth more than that of a board which has talked with him a few minutes or hours or days.

Not all of the failures in the practice of the Bible plan of missions fall upon the churches. Many of them can be traced to the missionary. Outstanding among these is the failure to adequately prepare himself for the work. Certainly a truly called missionary will have a burden on his heart for the field and an eagerness to get there, but this should not preclude adequate preparation. God's work is the most important work in the world and deserves adequate preparation.

Of course, many people fail to answer God's call to become missionaries. God does not fail to call enough people to do His work.

A charge that is frequently leveled at scriptural mission work is lack of "financial control." This is not true. It is simply that the financial control is in the hands of the churches and the Holy Spirit and not in some board.

Sometimes a church that sends out a missionary fails to keep herself and sister churches properly informed about the mission work. This may be due to lack of interest on the part of the home church or failure of the missionary to keep his home church informed about the work.

One of the most obvious faults in our practice of the Bible plan of missions is failure to adequately support mission work. Pastors bear a large portion of this responsibility. A church will never be any more missionary than its pastor. A pastor who never preaches about missions is neglecting a large portion of the New Testament. The same can be said for a Sunday School that never teaches about the need for mission work.

How can we encourage missionary zeal in our church? Preach on it! Teach on it! Have mission conferences! Have missionaries speak at our church! Read missionary letters and reports to the church and put them on the bulletin board along with pictures. Pray for missionaries! Support missionaries regularly and faithfully. Don't make mission giving the first thing to go when

financial adversity hits the church. Just as an individual can't afford not to tithe, so a church cannot afford not to contribute regularly to the carrying out of the great commission.

Take special offerings for missions and make missions personal. Give people an opportunity to give specifically to missions. It has been proven time and again that this will not decrease your regular offerings, but will usually increase them.

Have a world-wide vision, not just the back yard.

Don't think in terms of saturation in mission giving, but always plan to expand it as the church grows.

Don't judge missionary work and results by United States standards. Don't judge one field by another. If you have questions or criticisms, write and make them known.

The last failure or fault in our practice of the Bible plan of missions that we would like to consider is that of supporting unscriptural mission work.

The word "missionary" is no magical guarantee of dedication or doctrinal soundness. A church is obligated in its use of the Lord's money to see that it is used to support scriptural work. Many sound independent Baptist Churches support unscriptural work. If we support unsound work, we become guilty also.

2 John 10-11 "If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: for he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds."

God has a way for His work to be done.

Psalm 18:30 "As for God, his way is perfect: the word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all those that trust in him."

Since we have God's perfect way recorded in His word, let's follow it more vigorously and diligently.

The Case For Independent Baptist Churches

Chapter 13—Every Bible-Believing Baptist Should Belong To An Independent Baptist Church

By Norman H. Wells, Pastor

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What is wrong with an organized Convention, Association or Fellowship of churches? *Such an organization is unscriptural! The only organization established and commissioned in the New Testament is the local church. There is not one mention nor hint of any other organization.* If God had intended for churches to organize themselves into bigger organizations surely He would have given some indication of this in the New Testament. *Search the Bible!* A Baptist is supposed to believe and abide by a “thus saith the Lord.” By what authority are Conventions, Associations, Fellowships, etc. organized? One thing is sure. . . **IT IS NOT BIBLE AUTHORITY.**

1. *Organizations such as conventions, associations, fellowships, etc. rob God of His glory.*

Man has never been satisfied with God’s way. Man has never been satisfied with God’s way of salvation because it emphasizes man’s helplessness and God’s greatness. *Man seeks to change God’s way of salvation so that it will glorify man.* This kind of effort robs God of His glory.

Man has never been satisfied with God’s church and has tried to build something bigger that would glorify man.

The Scripture says, “Unto him be *glory in the church* by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Eph. 3:21). This is *the way that God has chosen to be glorified. No other organization can assume this responsibility.* If other organizations are built to carry on the work of the Lord then God is robbed of His glory.

Man-made organizations glorify man. Take any organization of Baptist churches you please and give them an honest look. It will be seen that this statement is true.

2. *Man-made organizations produce compromise.*

Compromise! This is one of the great evils of man-made organizations of Baptist churches. *In order to keep unity in the organization each church has to practice compromise!* Churches within the organization that drift away from distinctive Baptist doctrines cannot be censored. Pastors cannot raise their voice in protest to laxity in Baptist principles and doctrines. Nothing must be done to bring any disruption to the organization. Finally . . . anything goes! Everything is tolerated for the sake of the organization. Sound Baptist churches find themselves identified with the worldliness, modernism, false doctrine, etc., that exists in other churches and *helpless to do anything about it!*

3. These groups strive to produce greater loyalty to the organization than to the local church.

A pastor that would challenge the organization can be belittled before his own people!! The organization is held up as the only hope of the world. The church is just a minor part. *People are indoctrinated to believe that they have a greater responsibility to the organization than to the church.* Organizational schools, youth camps, etc. are used to instill into the young a greater loyalty to the organization than to the church.

4. These organizations take the God-given responsibilities from the church and place them in man-made organizations.

The organization controls the indoctrinating of the young people. The organization controls the world-wide missionary responsibility. This responsibility is taken from the church and placed in the mission board of the organization. The ownership of schools, mission stations, papers, homes for aged, orphanages, etc. is placed in the organization. *The church, instead of being the sovereign, democratic, body that God intended, becomes merely one little voice in a bigger organization that God never authorized.*

5. These organizations have always failed!

The pages of religious history are littered with the wreckage of these man-made organizations. Every one of them follow the same path that step by step leads them to compromise. The amount of organization needed always increases. The bigger the organization the less important the churches. The end result is always the same, compromise, apostasy, formality, and finally oblivion! *These organizations always fail. . . only the churches live on! The promise of God is in the church.*

6. *Christians and churches learn to rely upon the organization rather than upon God.*

Actually, although surely not deliberately, the Christian and the Church are taught to put their trust in the organization rather than God. *This is not too difficult to do because to be a part of any such organization is to say that the way God has set down is not to be trusted.*

Generally, to be identified with one of these groups of organized Baptists leads to being identified with even larger groups; sometimes these are not even Baptist. The average layman is not kept informed as to the intricate movements and finances of the organizational machinery. Sometimes they are kept unaware that they are part of such an unscriptural, man-made group!

7. *These organizations will eventually stereotype their preachers and rob them of their individuality and initiative.*

One of the greatest evils of these organizations is the idea *that the end justifies the means*. Invariably they will point at their numbers and finances as justification for the unscriptural, man-made machinery.

Great crowds and large numbers can indicate a number of things. They could indicate a lack of preaching on sin, judgment and hell. They could indicate a lack of preaching on separation for Christians. They could indicate a substitution of some kind of easy decision for genuine repentance and faith. *They could indicate a compromising position on great Bible truths*. They could indicate that the church has a good program of entertainment that is attracting the carnal and lost. *Numbers can be an indication of success . . . but not always!*

Now let us look at the other side!

What Is An Independent Baptist Church?

An independent Baptist Church believes that the only organization given in the New Testament is the local church. They believe that God has given the church as the means of accomplishing His purpose in this age.

An independent Baptist Church, therefore, does not affiliate or identify themselves with any organized Convention, Association or Fellowship.

An independent Baptist Church sends forth its missionaries by the authority of the church and not through an unscriptural Mission Board. These missionaries are supported directly by the churches.

An independent Baptist Church cooperates with other Baptist Churches in missions, schools, etc. but does so on a voluntary basis and without any unscriptural organization binding the churches together.

An independent Baptist Church refuses to compromise the historical Baptist doctrines for the sake of popular appeal.

An independent Baptist Church has to rely upon God and give Him all the glory.

True Baptists love the church that Jesus loved and will not have this love and loyalty switched to some man-made organization.

An independent Baptist Church is not dictated to nor influenced by any head or headquarters except Jesus Christ.

Why is it important that every Bible-believing Baptist join an independent Baptist Church?

This would bring revival! It would be a return to God! It would bring honor and glory to the name of our God! It would be a return to God's Word and God's Way!

We will be yielding ourselves to God . . . following His message and His method.

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