

ASHAMED OF THE NAME BAPTIST

By E. L. Bynum

There is a growing trend among Baptists, and that is to abandon the historic doctrines that Baptists have stood for down through the ages. Some of them are manifesting that desire, by dropping the name Baptist from their Church name. Others continue to use the name Baptist, but have retreated from Baptist doctrine. Frankly, I have more respect for those that drop the name, than those who keep the name and drop the doctrines. I have very little respect for either one.

The Cielo Vista Baptist Church, El Paso, Texas, has dropped "Baptist" from their name. Their excuse was that they could reach more people by doing this. (They are affiliated with the Baptist Bible Fellowship.)

Now the Southern Baptists of South Carolina have joined this liberal trend. The following article is quoted from our local newspaper.

Baptist Churches Seek Image Change

COLUMBIA, S. C. — What's in a name? Apparently a lot if your are trying to attract folks who usually avoid church on Sundays.

In the past five years, the South Carolina Baptist Convention (SBC) has planted roughly a dozen churches across the state with generic names such as *Golden Corner Church*, *Crossroads Community Church* and *LifeSpring*.

Keith Lancaster, a consultant with the South Carolina Baptist Convention, said the initiative is designed to counter the negative image that many people, especially from other parts of the country, have about Baptists.

"A lot of people think of us as the *no* denomination — no drinking, no dancing, no playing cards, no fun," said the Rev. Wayne Terry, Pastor of LifeSpring in Florence. "We may not like the stereotypes, but the fact is they are there." The *seekers* churches, as some call them, are cropping up in communities that have a lot of people who do not go to church or who are not from the South.

— The *Lubbock Avalanche-Journal*. 11/25/95

What is Behind This Trend?

As we have already stated, these people are ashamed of the name Baptist, and of the doctrines that Baptists have historically believed and preached. These are the doctrines that laid the foundation for the building of the largest non-Catholic denomination in America. Now they are ashamed of those doctrines and of that name. *Golden Corner Church* gives no hint of doctrine or practice. It stands for nothing, and that is exactly what these churches stand for, nothing! Of course that is exactly the impression that they want to leave.

No Stand For Separation

Another startling thing is revealed by the statement of Rev. Wayne Terry of *LifeSpring*. He said “A lot of people think of us as the *no* denomination, no drinking, no dancing, no playing cards, no fun.” Their generic names are meant to get them away from that stereotype. In other words, they are not going to take a stand against drinking, dancing, and playing cards. Worldliness is in and separation is out with this crowd. I relish the day when all so-called Baptists who believe this way will take down the name Baptist. This goes for the SBC, BBF, WBF, GARB, CB, and all the worldly Independent Baptists. If you don’t stand for the name and what the name stands for, then take it down, because you are a disgrace to the name Baptist.

This whole thing sounds like it was taken right out of the play book of Bill Hybels and his Willow Creek Community Church, South Barrington, Illinois.

What Would the Founders of the SBC Say About This?

There is no doubt that they would be appalled and ashamed that the SBC was headed this direction. The founders of the SBC were Baptists and they believed in the doctrine of separation.

I shudder to think what such men as James P. Boyce, B. H. Carroll, J. R. Graves, and George W. Truett would think of this kind of compromise on doctrine and separation. They are gone, and they have no successors today among Southern Baptists.

The most conservative of SBC leaders today are not Baptists in the historic meaning of the word. I speak of Charles Stanley, Adrian Rodgers, Bailey Smith, etc. While they stand for some good things, they have also departed from historic Baptist doctrine.

A reader from South Carolina sent us the following article taken from some religious publication. They neglected to give us the name of the publication. This article is highly relevant to the subject under discussion.

Churches Move to Modern Beat to Attract Members

The February 27, 1994 issue of the **Greenville (SC) News** carried a major article dealing with church services and outreach. Written by Ellen Dockham, it began: “People in suits and

sweatshirts sit side by side; a bass guitar blares to the beat of electronic drums, and it's all over in 50 minutes or less." Dockham says it part of a nationwide trend "that is sweeping Greenville churches of all denominations. From Baptists and Methodists to Lutherans and Episcopalians changing times are forcing churches to buck tradition or risk failure. Some churches are radically altering worship services." Reggie McNeal, director of leadership development for the South Carolina Southern Baptist Convention, is quoted by Dockham, "We're in such a critical time, a pivotal point in church history. The decisions we make about how we're going to do church will have a major impact on whether the church increases its mission or becomes more obscure." He is quoted further as saying that the church must "come to grips with reality and start making changes."

For some Southern Baptist churches, it means Saturday night programs of video and drama, 45 minutes tops, featuring modern music. It's not using the terms of *pew* or *hymnal* or *congregation*. There are more quotes like the following: "The traditional tools that have been used for decades and even centuries worked at first, but they won't work any longer. We have to be innovative." Note the following paraphrase: "the church now wants to give people even more options to explore their spirituality through small groups." That kind of talk makes me sick!

Selling Out The Truth

The above quote is just one more example of the religious apostasy that is sweeping our land. These religious leaders are willing to do anything that it takes to get people to come to church. They will compromise to the Nth degree, if that will keep their religious machine rolling. What tragedy we are seeing today in the religious world.

We Have A Fight on our Hands

Those of us who are determined to stand true to historic Baptist doctrine, and historic Baptist separation, have a fight on our hands. The new trend is popular, successful, and politically correct. We must be prepared to roll up our sleeves and fight the good fight of faith. We cannot hold the fort, and be silent. It will be unpopular to speak the truth on these issues, but we must do so. To fail to cry aloud and spare not, will be tantamount to surrender. Already the termites are eating at the foundation and structure of Independent Baptists. If we are silent, we will be surrendering. Among some Independent Baptists, church doctrine is not important, and ecclesiastical and personal separation is taboo.

Let us take our stand now, for tomorrow may be too late!

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(Originally Published December 1995)