

# **FIRST CONVENIENT BAPTIST CHURCH**

By E. L. Bynum

It seems that many people are looking for a convenient church that will fit all of their needs. When you ask them what kind of church they are looking for, most of them are quite vague in their description. If you watch where they finally end up, or you question them more closely, you will find that they are looking for a church that is convenient in doctrine and practice.

With tongue in cheek we say maybe we can help these people by establishing just the kind of church that they are looking for. We shall call it the **First Convenient Baptist Church**.

## **Convenient In Location**

The children may have to go two miles to school, or ride a school bus for many miles, but the church must be nearby. The husband may drive 20 to 30 miles a day to get to work. Mother may shop at stores that are five to ten miles away, but the whole family wants a church that is only a few blocks away, even though they may only go one to three times a week.

The important thing is for the church to be convenient. Our church will be no further than ten blocks from your house. What it preaches, teaches, and stands for is not all that important. So we are going to call our church, the **First Convenient Baptist Church**. We don't think you will mind the word Baptist, but if it offends you, we will call it the **Convenient Community Church**. We shall just tell people it is Baptist.

## **Convenient In Doctrine**

Doctrine has been out of favor for a long time, so we are going to have the kind of doctrine that does not stand out in a manner that offends.

It will be best to preach on **salvation** in a way that does not offend. Therefore, this ideal church will emphasize an easy-believism. There will be no emphasis on repentance; therefore, it will not be necessary to preach on the evils of sin. People are turned off by preaching on human depravity and all that stuff.

Our stand on **baptism** should satisfy nearly everyone. We shall insist on immersion in water, but it won't matter where you get this done. Just as long as you are satisfied with your immersion, we are not going to complain. You may have been baptized by the Church of Christ, Assembly of God, or some other group. We are not going to raise a fuss about your baptism. Of course if you are dissatisfied, we can do it over, but it is up to you.

The **Bible Version** issue has troubled a lot of churches. Since most people still prefer the KJV, we shall do most of our preaching out of it. Of course we will correct it a little by quoting the

New King James from time to time, and perhaps the NIV. Everyone can feel free to bring the Bible of their choice.

Now we are going to talk some about the local church, for that is where the preacher is going to get his salary. However, if you want to believe in the universal invisible church that so many say was started at Pentecost, you'll never be offended here at **First Convenient Baptist Church**.

Naturally, we are going to say that we believe in the **second coming of the Lord**, but we are not going to say when. You will never discover whether we believe in a pre-trib, post-trib, or a post-mill coming of the Lord. To be dogmatic about that might divide us.

The **Charismatic Movement** has created a lot of confusion in the religious world, and we don't intend to let that divide us. All opinions on this are tolerated at **First Convenient Baptist Church**. We will just ask you not to push your views on everyone else.

The sermons will be short and sweet. We want people to feel good about themselves. We all know how much **self-esteem** is needed today.

We will have a lot of entertainment and social activities, with something that pleases every member of the family.

### **Convenient In Standards**

Some churches used to make a big deal about **separation**. It is our belief that this is legalistic. Our message is going to be positive, and we shall avoid being negative.

Here at **First Convenient Baptist Church**, we are not going to criticize anyone because of their doctrine and practice. If Billy Graham comes to town, we will support him. If Bill Gothard holds a seminar here, we will try to get everyone to go. Every once and a while, the pastor will be quoting from Norman Vincent Peale, and other popular religious leaders. After all, we need to love everybody.

Some of those old narrow independent Baptists used to require that women dress like women when they came to church. Here at **First Convenient Baptist Church**, we know that God looks on the heart, so we are not going to divide our membership over this issue. If the women want to wear jeans or pants suits, that is alright. A little later some will probably come in shorts, but that won't matter if it doesn't distract the service too much.

We are not going to make an issue out of cigarettes, dancing or other such things. The pastor does not drink beer, but if the members keep a few cold ones, that's up to them. After all, Jesus turned the water into wine.

## Convenient In Service

You will never be expected to be **faithful in attendance**. Families need to be together a lot, and the church ought not to interfere. After all there should be some time for sports, recreation, picnics, fishing, and the visiting of relatives.

We are not going to harp on **money**. Give what you can, when you can, and we will be satisfied.

## Is This What You Want?

I have never seen a church named the **First Convenient Baptist Church**, but some of them could wear that name quite well. They are trying to appeal to every point of view, in order to attract the largest number of people.

A lot of people are trying to sneak every Baptist church into the **First Convenient Baptist Church**. Each family might not want their church to compromise on every one of these issues, but they want some doctrine or practice to be changed. By the time you change some doctrine to fit one group, and another doctrine to fit another group, etc. you end up standing for nothing. By the time that you change various things on the doctrine of separation to fit various people, you have no stand left.

Sad to say, a lot of churches ought to change their name and add the word **Convenient**. This is what they are trying to do in practice. Why not advertise it by name?

Published May 1995