

Baptists and Denominationalism: My View - Part 1

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Introduction And Baptist Claims, Origins Of The Protestant Reformation, History Of Anabaptists, Denominations Which Practice Infant Baptism, History Of The Waldenses, William Tyndale And Myles Coverdale, Anabaptist Doctrines I Agree With, My Opposition To Necessity Of Water Baptism, Misguided Spirit Of Exclusivity, Obnoxious Condescending Know-It-All Christians, Why I Distance Myself From Organized Religion, Denominationalism Is Of The Devil, Denominationalism Both Divides And Destroys Unity In The Body Of Christ, Divisions In First Century Church, Apostles' Warnings Regarding False Doctrines And False Brethren, Jesus And Paul Desired Unity

Some time ago, I came across a particular Facebook post and comment thread where -- as I have seen occur on a number of other previous occasions -- some members of a Baptist church were claiming to be doctrinally descended from the original Apostles. As the typical Baptist argument goes, they make the claim that not only were they never a part of the Roman Catholic Church, but neither were they ever a part of the early Reformers who began breaking away from the same Roman Catholic Church -- or at least they tried to, to some degree -- during the fourteen century.

On a side note, while a lot of Christians believe that the Reformation began with Protestants such as William Tyndale and Martin Luther during the sixteenth century, as I explain more fully in a few other Bill's Bible Basics articles such as "History of the Authorized King James Bible", it actually began during the fourteenth century with earlier Catholics such as John Wycliffe and his followers, who were ridiculed and referred to as Lollards. These men translated the Latin Vulgate Bible into what was known as Middle English, after which they distributed God's Word via hand-written tract form.

To further distinguish and differentiate themselves from other Protestant denominations, historically speaking, the

Baptists also like to associate themselves with both the Anabaptists and the Waldenses. So exactly who were these people?

To begin with, the Anabaptists are a Christian movement who trace their origin to the Radical Reformation of the 16th century, which began in Germany and Switzerland, but which eventually spread throughout Europe, and then to the United States as well. Some of the early Anabaptist groups include the Hutterites and the Mennonites. While the aforementioned early Reformers separated themselves from the Roman Catholic Church due to the serious corruption they saw within it, the Anabaptists took it a step further and even parted ways with those early Reformers, because they perceived corruption in the Reformation as well. Thus, their movement became known as the Radical Reformation.

One of the core beliefs of Anabaptists is that water baptism is only valid when candidates freely confess their faith in Jesus Christ, and specifically request to be baptized. This act is commonly referred to as "believer's baptism". Stated another way, Anabaptists do NOT believe that infant baptism is sufficient, because the Believer cannot make a conscious decision to repent and turn away from their sins, and then choose to be baptized when they are an infant. Some of the major denominations which practice infant baptism are the following:

1. Roman Catholic Church
2. Eastern Orthodox Church
3. Oriental Orthodox Churches
4. Anglican/Episcopal Church
5. Lutheran Churches
6. Presbyterian Churches
7. Reformed Churches
8. Methodist Churches
9. United Church of Christ

The name "Anabaptist" is actually an exonym. That is to say,

it is a name for a place or group of people that is only used outside that place or group. In short, the name is given to the group by other non-members of the group. The name itself actually means "one who baptizes again". Following is some additional information which I extracted from the Wikipedia website. There is a lot more information found on their web page, but the following excerpts will at least provide you with some of the Anabaptists' foundational beliefs:

----- Begin Quote -----

"The early Anabaptists formulated their beliefs in a confession of faith in 1527 called the Schleithem Confession. Its author Michael Sattler was arrested and executed shortly afterward. Anabaptist groups varied widely in their specific beliefs, but the Schleithem Confession represents foundational Anabaptist beliefs as well as any single document can.

The Amish, Hutterites and Mennonites are direct descendants of the early Anabaptist movement. The Schwarzenau Brethren, River Brethren, Bruderhof and the Apostolic Christian Church are Anabaptist denominations that developed after the Radical Reformation, following their example. Though all Anabaptists share the same core theological beliefs, there are differences in the way of life among them.

Emphasizing an adherence to the beliefs of early Christianity, Anabaptists in general are distinguished by their keeping of practices that often include nonconformity to the world: "the love feast with feet washing, laying on of hands, anointing with oil, and the holy kiss, as well as turning the other cheek, no oaths, going the second mile, giving a cup of cold water, reconciliation, repeated forgiveness, humility, non-violence, and sharing possessions.

Most Anabaptists adhere to a literal interpretation of the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7, which teaches against hate, killing, violence, taking oaths, participating in use of force or any military actions, and against participation in civil government. Anabaptists view themselves as primarily citizens of the kingdom of God, not of earthly nations. As committed followers of Jesus, they seek to pattern their life after his."

----- End Quote -----

Regarding the Waldenses -- who are also known as Waldensians -- I discovered that they actually preceded the Reformation and the Radical Reformation by hundreds of years. Originally called the "Poor of Lyon", their founder was a wealthy French merchant by the name of Peter Waldo, who around the year 1173 gave away his property, and began preaching apostolic poverty as the way to perfection. We might say that he was similar to the Franciscan religious order which was founded by Francis of Assisi a few decades later. While some people have come to view the Waldenses as proto-Protestants, they distinguished themselves from the later 16th century Reformers by the fact that they did not raise the same doctrinal objections which came to characterize those later Protestant leaders.

Nevertheless, their teachings eventually came into conflict with the Roman Catholic Church. Thus, by 1215 the Waldenses were declared heretical. Prior to his death in 1216, Pope Innocent III offered the Waldenses an opportunity to return to the Roman Catholic Church. While some of them did take up his offer and adopted the name of "Poor Catholics", many others refused to do so. Thus, they were subjected to very intense persecution, and they were forced to confront with organized and general discrimination in the centuries which followed.

Finally, after several centuries of being heavily persecuted, they came to align themselves with the Protestant Reformation by way of the Synod of Chanforan, which took place in Italy in September of the year 1532. It was at that time that they formally became a part of the Calvinist tradition. What you may likewise find interesting is the fact that the Waldenses financed the first French translation of the Bible, which was translated directly from original Hebrew and Greek texts. At the 1532 Synod of Chanforan, they commissioned and provided 500 gold crowns for the project, which was executed by Pierre Robert Olivétan and published in 1535.

On a side note, it may interest you to know that it was also in that very same year that English reformer William Tyndale likewise published a revised version of his New Testament in the English language. While he was working on a translation of the Old Testament as well, William Tyndale never published a full English translation of the entire Bible. As I explain in "History of the Authorized King James Bible", that job was left to another English reformer named Myles Coverdale, who in fact supplemented Tyndale's translations with his own to

produce the first complete printed Bible in English in 1535. It was known as the Coverdale Bible. Regarding Tyndale, he was convicted of heresy and executed by strangulation, after which his body was burnt at the stake in 1536 by the Roman Catholic Church.

Returning to the Waldenses, despite being absorbed into the Protestant Reformation during the mid-16th century, and also despite being responsible for the first French translation of the Bible in 1535, nevertheless, the Waldensians were nearly annihilated during the Savoyard-Waldensian wars that occurred between the Waldensians and the Savoyard troops in the Duchy of Savoy in France during the later half of the 17th century. The Waldenses who survived those wars eventually fled to the countries of Germany, Switzerland and Italy. Today, several different types of Waldensian churches still exist in Europe, North America and South America. Their mission is "proclaiming the Christian Gospel, serving the marginalized, promoting social justice, fostering inter-religious work, and advocating respect for religious diversity and freedom of conscience."

As a Bible-believing Christian myself who is rather familiar with the Holy Scriptures, I will say that I agree with some of the doctrines and practices which were embraced by early Anabaptists and the Waldenses. Whether or not they still live by them in our modern day, I honestly do not know, because I have never met anyone who belongs to either denomination. As I point out in other BBB articles, I haven't been associated with any denomination, or with any form of organized religion in quite a few decades. More on this point in just a moment.

In particular, I agree with their stance regarding avoiding worldliness and material wealth as much as possible, being as they will always both corrupt us and distract us from our primary work for the Lord. Thus, I too believe that we are primarily citizens of God's Kingdom and not of this present world. I also agree with turning the other cheek, taking no oaths such as the Pledge of Allegiance, going the extra mile if and when we may be called to do so, giving a cup of cold water to those who are in need, always having a willingness to forgive others, practicing humility, sharing with others when it is in our power to do so, never hating anyone or anything unless it is something which God also declares that He hates in His Word, avoiding killing, war and other forms of violence, and not being politically involved. As you may know, I discuss all of these various points in quite a few of my other Bill's Bible Basics articles.

Of course, at the same time, as I point out in the series entitled "Roman Catholicism, Water Baptism and the Holy Trinity", one point where I do strongly disagree is with regard to the necessity of water baptism. If you happen to be really interested in the whys and wherefores concerning my current position regarding this issue, then I invite you to read the series. You will find it listed at the end of this same article with a clickable link. Now, while I can agree with all of the aforementioned points, nevertheless, in my view, there is still something that all these online Baptists are still missing, and I will now tell you what it is.

Through their endeavors to prove how different they are from the Roman Catholic Church, and also from all other Protestant denominations as well, and by trying to prove that they are supposedly much more aligned by doctrine with the Anabaptists and the Waldenses, these online Baptists are committing the very same mistake which I have seen so many times before over the years. What am I referring to? I am referring to the fact that these types of people all carry a self-righteous spirit of exclusivity. As I explain in the series entitled "Elijah: Where Are the True Prophets of God?", sadly, it appears that every single denomination, and every single cult does this.

Now, mind you, they may not necessarily say it openly. They may only indirectly hint at it. At the very least, they will hold the thought in their hearts. Basically they will say or at least think something similar to the following:

"We are true disciples of Jesus Christ. We have the absolute Scriptural truth. God has revealed certain things to us which no one else even knows. We are not like those other misguided denominations. We are so different from all other Christians. Our doctrines are pure. We live in obedience, and we practice the Word the way it is supposed to be lived and practiced. We adhere to the Bible more than any other denomination you will ever meet. Our leader is God's chosen."

So tell me, my friends. Have you ever personally encountered denominations, churches or individual Christians who are like the above? I have; and to be quite honest, I find them rather obnoxious; particularly when they begin to ferociously attack and bully other online Christians with their condescending attitude. Such folks won't hesitate to make other Christians feel as if they are totally stupid, and as if they don't know

anything. They will boast of their knowledge in a very proud, haughty fashion. This is one reason why I wrote the article called "Doctrinal Correction: The Proper Way to Do It". I am reminded of the following Bible verses:

"Now as touching things offered unto idols, we know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth any thing, he knoweth nothing yet as he ought to know."

1 Corinthians 8:1-2, KJV

This is one reason why for many years now, I have refused to engage with or be a part of organized religion, meaning the church system. It is for the same reason that, usually, when people start resisting what I am saying online, I will simply bow out of the conversation. After all, you can't convince a person who is unteachable, who doesn't have an open mind and heart, and who doesn't want to be convinced. Trying to do so is simply a waste of your time and an exercise in futility, as I point out in the article "Should Christians Engage in Doctrinal Debates?".

So this one reason why I am against denominationalism, and why I have become convinced that regardless of a particular denomination's name, denominationalism is of the Devil. It is an evil invention of Satan. Compared to the doctrinal and spiritual unity which we clearly read about in the Bible, it is plain to see that modern denominationalism both divides and destroys unity in the Body of Christ. ALL denominations slice and dice the Body of Christ. They ALL cut it up into little pieces divided by their particular doctrines, many of which are absolutely false, man-made doctrines which have no Scriptural basis whatsoever.

Sadly, this development is nothing new. As I explain in my article called "The Theologian War and Man Worship", the Bible informs us that denominationalism began to tear apart the First Century Church too. Satan was already beginning to destroy the Church from within, even two thousand years ago. Exactly how did it happen? Early Christians began coalescing around certain Church leaders who they admired, each of whom had their particular beliefs, teachings and doctrines, and the destructive division has continued to this very day as well. This becomes quite evident by a number of verses which can be found in the New Testament where the Apostles warn against false doctrines and false brethren infiltrating the Lord's flocks. They also warn against worshipping any of the

Church's leaders, or seeking to please them in some way in order to hopefully gain some kind of special favor with them. Consider the following set of sample Bible verses:

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared unto me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?"

1 Corinthians 1:10-13, KJV

"For ye are yet carnal: for whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men? For while one saith, I am of Paul; and another, I am of Apollos; are ye not carnal? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase . . . Therefore let no man glory in men . . ."

1 Corinthians 3:3-7, 21, KJV

"And these things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myself and to Apollos for your sakes; that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one against another. For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?"

1 Corinthians 4:6-7, KJV

"These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage."

Jude 1:16, KJV

"That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ:"

Ephesians 4:14-15, KJV

"Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein."

Hebrews 13:9, KJV

"As I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, when I went into Macedonia, that thou mightest charge some that they teach no other doctrine, Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do."

1 Timothy 1:3-4, KJV

"Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;"

1 Timothy 4:1-2, KJV

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears;"

2 Timothy 4:3, KJV

"Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. 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 20:28-30, KJV

"Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them."

Romans 16:17, KJV

"But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him . . . 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. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works."
2 Corinthians 11:3-4, 13-15, KJV

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed."
Galatians 1:6-9, KJV

"And that because of false brethren unawares brought in, who came in privily to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us into bondage:"
Galatians 2:4, KJV

"Beware of dogs, beware of evil workers, beware of the concision."
Philippians 3:2, KJV

"If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness; He is proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions and strifes of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, supposing that gain is godliness: from such withdraw thyself."
1 Timothy 6:3-5, KJV

"But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain. A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject; Knowing that he that is such is subverted, and sinneth, being condemned of himself."
Titus 3:9-11, KJV

"But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that

bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of."

2 Peter 2:1-2, KJV

"Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us."

1 John 2:18-19, KJV

"Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. 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."

2 John 1:9-11, KJV

This is why Jesus very specifically prayed for unity in the seventeenth chapter of the Gospel of John, and also why the Apostle Paul beseeched the brethren that they would "speak the same thing", be "joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment" in the following set of Bible verses, and in other verses which are found in the New Testament as well, which I share below:

"Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all SPEAK THE SAME THING, and that there be NO DIVISIONS AMONG YOU; but that ye be perfectly joined together IN THE SAME MIND and IN THE SAME JUDGMENT."

1 Corinthians 1:10, KJV

"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, THAT THEY MAY BE ONE, as we are . . . THAT THEY ALL MAY BE ONE; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be ONE IN US: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; THAT THEY MAY BE ONE, even as WE ARE ONE: I in them, and thou in me, THAT THEY MAY BE MADE PERFECT IN ONE; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."

John 17:11, 21-23, KJV

"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be ONE FOLD, and ONE SHEPHERD."

John 10:16, KJV

"That ye may with ONE MIND and ONE MOUTH glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Romans 15:6, KJV

"Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of ONE MIND, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you."

2 Corinthians 13:11, KJV

"I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, With all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace . . . That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ: From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love."

Ephesians 4:1-3, 14-16, KJV

"Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in ONE SPIRIT, with ONE MIND striving together for the faith of the gospel;"

Philippians 1:27, KJV

"Fulfil ye my joy, THAT YE BE LIKEMINDED, having the same love, being of ONE ACCORD, of ONE MIND."

Philippians 2:2, KJV

"For God is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints."

1 Corinthians 14:33, KJV

". . . Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell TOGETHER IN UNITY!"

Psalms 133:1, KJV

"Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up. Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone? And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken."

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12, KJV

"Can two walk together, except they be agreed?"

Amos 3:3, KJV

Please go to part two for the conclusion of this article.

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Baptists and Denominationalism: My View - Part 2

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The Name "Christian" Is Sufficient For Me Without Any Other Denominational Attachments, Self-Deception To Believe That We Or Our Denomination Is Better Than Others, Foolishness Of Comparing Ourselves Between Ourselves, My Personal Experience With Baptists In Texas And On Guam, Freely Share The Gospel, Guard Your Mouth And Stop Cussing, Why I Have A Low Opinion Of Baptists, Be Careful About Stereotyping Other Christians, Summation Of My Advice, Conclusion, Suggesting Reading List

Continuing our discussion from part one, As I've long shared with my readers, personally, I simply view myself as being a Bible-believing Christian who strives his best to please the

Lord through my daily service to Him. Nothing more. As such, I have no personal need to prefix or append any other name or label to the word "Christian". The word is fine all on its own. After all, a Christian is a person who believes in Jesus, and who strives to follow His teachings, and shares those same teachings with others. What more needs to be said or done? I just don't need the approval of any church or any denomination in order to do what God has called me to do. I simply need the approval of my Heavenly Father. After all, He alone will be my Judge in the end when I stand before Him.

So considering these online comments I have seen where some Baptists are endeavoring to set themselves apart from other Christians -- similar to Roman Catholics, the Seventh Day Adventists and other denominations, and of course, most of the cults -- I honestly do not see these divisive Baptists striving for the unity that is described in the previous set of Bible verses. Any denomination which thinks that they are any different, or any better, or more knowledgeable of the Scriptures, or closer to God, or adhering more closely to the Biblical pattern, or has some special revelations from God which no one else knows about, is simply deceiving themselves.

Folks, to engage in such things is just your pride and that damnable, divisive spirit of exclusivity which I mentioned earlier. Furthermore, the Apostle Paul warned against this foolish practice of comparing ourselves to others in order to make ourselves feel better about ourselves or perhaps even more righteous. Consider what Paul wrote:

"For we dare not make ourselves of the number, or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: but they measuring themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. But we will not boast of things without our measure, but according to the measure of the rule which God hath distributed to us, a measure to reach even unto you. For we stretch not ourselves beyond our measure, as though we reached not unto you: for we are come as far as to you also in preaching the gospel of Christ: Not boasting of things without our measure, that is, of other men's labours; but having hope, when your faith is increased, that we shall be enlarged by you according to our rule abundantly, To preach the gospel in the regions beyond you, and not to boast in another man's line of things made ready to our hand. But he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord. For not he that commendeth himself is approved,

but whom the Lord commendeth."

2 Corinthians 10:12-18, KJV

Quite frankly, during my lifetime, I have attended a number of all-White, Southern Baptist churches where the membership was primarily -- if not completely -- comprised for the most part of the local community's successful, rich business and political leaders who ran the local government, and operated many of the local businesses. So I do know what I am talking about. Some of those churches were nothing more than social clubs for the elite. They were spiritually dry, obviously very materialistic and money-minded, and as is very common knowledge, their record concerning infidelity, divorce and remarriage, drunkenness, etc., is not exactly stellar to say the least.

I have shared the story before regarding one Baptist church I attended in McAllen, Texas back during the early 1980s. I used to go out Gospel tract passing, and one day this local businessman -- a Chicano fellow who owned a car dealership -- invited me to his Baptist church. This fellow was quite obviously well-off, because he drove around town in a black mustang with four carburetors that he was selling for the sum of \$80,000 at the time. Even back then, I was NOT the church-going type. However, I accepted his invitation anyway because the man had laid a \$100 donation on me which really surprised me to say the least. So, out of courtesy, I went to church with him that Sunday.

This event occurred at least forty-three years ago, so I do not remember all of the details now. However, I do distinctly remember two things. The first one is that my friend's rather dark-skinned, mustached face was the only one I saw in that very White congregation. I realized at that point that the only reason why he was probably even allowed to be a member of that Baptist church was because of his social status as a local rich businessman. The second thing -- which likewise surprised me -- was that when we attended the adult Bible study class that day, the mayor himself -- who will remain unnamed being as he is now deceased -- was the teacher.

The topic that day was a reading of part of 1 Corinthians 12 where the Apostle Paul discusses the various spiritual gifts of the Holy Spirit. I have to say that my jaw dropped as the mayor read right through the verses, and then proceeded to offer his own modern interpretation of what the verses meant. To say the least, the mayor totally despiritualized what the

Apostle Paul had written. In the mayor's mind, the gifts of the Spirit included things such as driving the bus to take people to church. Huh? Okay. When it came to 1 Corinthians 12:10 where Paul mentions speaking in tongues as well as the interpretation of tongues, the mayor simply said that it was not for today and kept moving on.

Needless-to-say, I never attended that church again, although I did attend one other Baptist church one time with different friends sometime after that. I cannot recall what happened, other than the fact that the pastor of that church told us to not return to his church because we did not agree with one of his doctrines. Again, it happened so long ago, that I honestly don't remember what the troublesome doctrine was.

Let me share one final incident I had with a Baptist person. This last event occurred here on Guam where I have now lived for forty years. It occurred quite a few years ago. At that particular time, I was without personal transportation -- I do not recall if my car was in the repair shop or what -- so I had to catch a ride by hitchhiking. Well, this young fellow picked me up who immediately identified himself as a Baptist. We began chatting, and I informed him about my online writing ministry, and how I offer all of my online work to my website visitors for free, because that is precisely what Jesus said we should do in the following Bible verse:

"And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give."
Matthew 10:7-8, KJV

Let me mention here that even though this fellow claimed to be a Christian and a Baptist, he had a very dirty mouth. In fact, he repeatedly dropped the F-bomb as we chatted. Upon learning that I offered my work for free, he began to berate me and tell me that I was doing it the wrong way. According to him, what I should be doing was allow my site visitors to read just a few paragraphs or pages, and then have a mechanism on the web page which informed them that if they wanted to read the rest of my article, they had to send me a donation of five dollars. I of course told this guy that, no, that was wrong according to the Scriptures, and that was NOT how I wanted to do it.

Well, the more I resisted his suggestion, the more he raised his voice and cussed. I mean I was really quite shocked by his behavior. To say the least, I was very relieved when we

finally arrived at my destination and I was able to escape him by getting out of his car. I never saw him again, thank God! Anyway, it was because of that incident, as well as another online incident I had at a different time, that I finally wrote my three-part series entitled "Money-Making Bible Hucksters and Mammon", which you will find listed at the end of this same article with a clickable link. As far as that man's cussing is concerned, consider the following Bible verses:

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."

Ephesians 4:29, KJV

"But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth."

Colossians 3:8, KJV

"Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few."

Ecclesiastes 5:2, KJV

"But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."

Matthew 12:36, KJV

"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer."

Psalms 19:14, KJV

"Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

Exodus 20:7, KJV

"He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls."

Proverbs 25:28, KJV

"Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths: But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the

earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil."

Matthew 5:33-37, KJV

"And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand: Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man. Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying? But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up. Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch. Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable. And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies: These are the things which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man."

Matthew 15:10-20, KJV

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

Philippians 4:8, KJV

"For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire

of hell. For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh."

James 3:2-12, KJV

In light of the aforementioned incidents, I imagine that you the reader can understand why I don't exactly have a positive opinion regarding Baptists. Of course, I am NOT saying that all Baptists behave in that fashion. After all, every person, and every Christian, is different, and it isn't wise to paint with a broad brush -- or to stereotype people -- as they say. None of us is perfect, and we are all still growing in our personal faith and walk with the Lord. Nevertheless, based on my personal experiences, I still have to say that while some Baptists may toot their own horn and brag about how different they are from all other Christians, claim that they are more directly related to John the Baptist and the Christians of the first century, and even view themselves as the so-called "originals", in my opinion, they deceive themselves, whether they accept it or not.

In conclusion, as I explained earlier, it is my view that our Christian faith would be a lot better off, and more unified in the Spirit, if we dropped all of the foolish comparisons, abandoned our denominational nomenclatures, and strived to find more doctrinal unity between ourselves. I am sure that doing so would please the Lord, and make us a more effective witness to the world, because right now, I imagine that we are quite the disappointment and embarrassment to the Lord. Furthermore, if we fail to do these things, the day may come when we destroy ourselves from within, while the world also destroys us from without, and that could be the end of our Christian faith. Think about it.

With these thoughts, I will bring this article to a close. It is my hope that you've found it informative and enlightening, and I pray that it has been a blessing in your life as well. If you have an account with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr or with any other social network, I would really appreciate if you'd

take the time to click or tap on the corresponding link that is found on this page. Thanks so much, and may God bless you abundantly!

For additional information and further study, you may want to refer to the list of reading resources below which were either mentioned in this article, or which contain topics which are related to this article. All of these articles are likewise located on the Bill's Bible Basics web server. To read these articles, simply click or tap on any link you see below.

Abundant Life Doctrine: Scripturally Exposed!

Are the Gifts of the Spirit for Today?

Are You Deceived and Don't Even Know It?

Are You Flexible?

Do You Seek the Truth or Short-Change Yourself?

Doctrinal Correction: The Proper Way to Do It

Elijah: Where Are the True Prophets of God?

History of the Authorized King James Bible

Humility in Our Understanding of God's Word

In Defense of the KJV Bible

Is the KJV Bible the Inerrant Word of God?

King James Bible: Structure and Breakdown

Money-Making Bible Hucksters and Mammon

My Evolving Theology

Roman Catholicism, Water Baptism and the Holy Trinity

Should Christians Engage in Doctrinal Debates?

So, You Have Got It All Figured Out, Do You?

Stop Cussing! Be Not Conformed to This World!

The Theologian War and Man Worship

Understanding the Bible in Context

What Is a Cult?

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