

# Why We Are Not Primitive Baptists

This brief outline about Primitive Baptists must be read with care. The Primitive Baptists are a loose denomination with divergent positions held by different splinter groups, churches, and ministers. The following list applies generally to Primitive Baptists in the Hassell-Cayce tradition. This summary outline is not intended to be complete, definitive, or final. Questions should be clarified with the author. Individual churches or ministers should be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. While we are not Primitive Baptists, we hope to be primitive Baptists like John and Paul!

- A. A little Baptist history should be surveyed to identify the origin of the Primitive Baptists.
  - 1. Many of the Baptists in the early history of the United States were strongly Calvinistic.
  - 2. The primary distinction then was between Particular and General Baptists from England.
  - 3. Creedal loyalty was either to the London Confession of 1689 or the Philadelphia of 1742.
  - 4. The 1800's found mission boards, Sunday Schools, seminaries, musical instruments, etc.
  - 5. Those denying these inventions and staying Calvinistic became the Primitive Baptists.
  - 6. They initiated the Black Rock Address of 1832 and the Fulton Confession of 1900.
  - 7. They were derogatorily called anti-mission Baptists, hard shells, mossbacks, and so forth.
  - 8. In England and Australia, similar Baptist churches to these were called Strict Baptists.
  - 9. There are three kinds of Primitive Baptists: Progressives, Old Line, and Absoluters.
  - 10. Progressives adopted many of the church inventions that had caused the earlier division.
  - 11. The Old Line hold unconditional eternal life and time salvation by obeying the gospel.
  - 12. Absoluters are antinomian fatalists by exalting absolute predestination over human duty.
  - 13. There are also black Primitive Baptists, which divide into two or three similar branches.
  - 14. The Old Line group in the Hassell-Cayce tradition is the largest white segment of them.
  - 15. The Old Line now has factions between traditionalists and the evangelistically minded.
  
- B. There are several beliefs of the Primitive Baptists that we wholeheartedly endorse.
  - 1. They believe eternal life is wholly by the grace of God apart from man's cooperation.
  - 2. They believe in the Holy Spirit's immediate work of regeneration without gospel means.
  - 3. They believe simple faith and practice based on the Bible alone should be the standard.
  - 4. They reject most or all of the religious inventions and modifications of the last 200 years.
  - 5. They believe the apostolic sign gifts were just that and do not exist today by God's will.
  - 6. They believe that true churches have existed outside Rome since Christ and the apostles.
  - 7. They reject the baptisms and ordinations of any church or group with manmade origins.
  - 8. They believe the millennial kingdom of Christ is the gospel church set up by Jesus Christ.
  - 9. However, the following points form a list of doctrines and practices we must oppose.

### **C. THE NAME**

1. Primitive Baptists claim a name never found in Scripture or used by apostolic churches.
2. The Lord named churches by geographical location (Acts 8:1; 13:1; Gal 1:2; Rev 1:4).
3. The true churches of God founded by the apostles were known possessively as the “churches of Christ” (Rom 16:16) and the “churches of God” (I Thess 2:14).
4. Such a defining name as “Primitive Baptist” might be allowable, if it were not so idolized and made an issue of fellowship, for it then becomes a manmade addition to God’s word.
5. For a group boasting of being primitive and scriptural, why require a manmade name, while neglecting other duties and rules of order plainly taught in the New Testament?
6. They refuse communion or fellowship with churches or believers not Primitive Baptist, for they adore this name and believe God’s true churches are only “Primitive Baptist.”
7. They rebaptize any coming to their churches from other than a “Primitive Baptist” church, regardless of how ancient their history or how Baptist their doctrine/practice.
8. They will reject churches or ministers compromising the name Primitive Baptist, even to split a church where the word “primitive” in the church’s name was not capitalized.

### **D. THE DENOMINATION**

1. Primitive Baptists are strictly, though informally, very denominational, which they deny.
2. See the above obsession about a denominational name, which is very important to them.
3. They often call all their churches the “Primitive Baptist Church” in denying the scriptural doctrine that local churches combined do not make a church (I Cor 14:23 cp I Cor 14:33).
4. They ignore and reject all other Baptist churches as false churches, thus requiring rebaptism and reordination, even though they must trace their own history from them!
5. They will band together, overlooking internal differences, to oppose any church seeking to follow the Bible alone without regard for the Primitive Baptist name or tradition.

### **E. ASSOCIATIONS**

1. Primitive Baptists have generally and continue to this day to use church associations.
2. For a denomination that prides itself on being primitive and scriptural, why associations?
3. While association and fellowship in their verbal senses are scriptural, there is no Bible ground to defend or justify the formal authority of manmade organizations over churches.
4. The association becomes a super-church, where open communion is practiced freely.
5. Associations create annual rah-rah meetings to be attended by other church members.
6. The associations are used as a club to keep individual churches and ministers in line.
7. God condemns lords, and associating is man’s idea (Is 5:8-10; 8:9-16; Jer 5:31; I Pet 5:3).

### **F. BEGOTTEN GOD**

1. Primitive Baptists endorse Catholic doctrine by accepting the eternal sonship heresy, for certain terminology in their confessions originated in Rome long after the apostles.
2. These creeds are usually the London of 1689, Philadelphia of 1742, or Fulton of 1900.
3. Article II; Paragraph 3 concerning the Godhead comes from the Nicene of 325 AD.
4. Hassell, their revered historian, appeals to these Reformed creeds and associations.
5. They teach the divine nature of Jesus Christ was begotten by eternal generation; and such language requires a begotten god, as Origen and the NASV affirm in John 1:1 or 1:18.
6. This heresy began with Origen and is a cardinal doctrine of Rome and her daughters.

7. Primitive Baptists have used this doctrine to attack churches and destroy ministers, just as the Gospel Standard Baptists did in England with the same heresy during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
8. Sonny Pyles wrote a typical Reformed defense of eternal generation in 1978 for a nationwide smear campaign against one of their finest preachers who denied the heresy.
9. In the same year, their theologian, R.V. Sarrels, defended it in his systematic theology.
10. Jesus of Nazareth is unbegotten God, the Word made flesh, the fullness of the Godhead, the Mighty God, and even the Everlasting Father Himself (John 1:1,14; Col 2:9; Is 9:6).
11. His deity is not begotten in any sense at all; His deity is Jehovah, I AM THAT I AM.
12. For a full presentation of the truth of our Lord's sonship, see "[The Sonship of Jesus Christ.](#)"

#### **G. BIBLE VERSION**

1. Some Primitive Baptists are willing to accept and use modern false versions of the Bible: an example would be the systematic theology by Sarrels, endorsed by other ministers.
2. A denomination priding itself on being primitive and scriptural has no preserved Bible?
3. While many or most use the King James Version, they also use and allow other versions.
4. As is typical with many issues, they do not have a well-developed and firm position.

#### **H. PLAGIARISM**

1. Primitive Baptists will identify with documents or twist history to lay claim to antiquity.
2. They claim the 1689 or 1742 Confessions, though they are creeds plainly teaching gospel means of regeneration in line with Presbyterian and Reformed Calvinism.
3. These two creeds represent the earliest "Reformed" Baptists following the Presbyterians, who would have quickly and thoroughly repudiated the Primitive Baptists.
4. They took their 1900 Confession from the 1689, but they wrote extensive footnotes overthrowing the original intent of the dead authors, who could not defend themselves.
5. The way they speak of Baptist history is to imply Primitive Baptist churches all the way back to Jesus Christ, if not by name, then at least by footwashing and other traditions!
6. There is a current movement dividing the traditionalists from those holding to the 1689.

#### **I. CHURCH DISCIPLINE**

1. Primitive Baptists are generally lax about New Testament church discipline of members.
2. They allow aberrations in doctrine or practice, as long as belief in God's total sovereignty in unconditional salvation and Primitive Baptist traditions are maintained.
3. Since practical Christianity and good works are not emphasized in many churches, they do not recognize the danger or know the obligation to exclude sinning members.
4. Attendance is an option in denial of Paul's tradition (Hebrews 10:25 cp II Thess 3:6). This error is determined by how many members are allowed to forsake assemblies.
5. Peace is sought at the expense of purity in denial of James's doctrine (James 3:17).

#### **J. FULL-TIME MINISTERS**

1. Most Primitive Baptist ministers reject Paul's pattern and teaching regarding ministry.
2. Only a few Primitive Baptist ministers out of the ordained total are fully supported.
3. For a group priding itself on being primitive and scriptural, why so few paid ministers?
4. In their overreaction against 19<sup>th</sup> century inventions, they also rejected paid ministers.
5. These ministers do not give themselves wholly to the work (I Tim 4:13-16; II Tim 2:2).
6. These congregations do not support the work financially (I Cor 9:4-14; I Tim 5:17-18).

7. Many do not oversee a congregation, but travel like salesmen among many churches, preaching canned sermons, while holding a full-time job all the way to retirement.

#### **K. CHURCH GOVERNMENT**

1. Primitive Baptists do not follow the New Testament regarding church government.
2. They call their ministers and pastors “elders,” which creates confusion about their office, since “elder” is not provable as any one office. The Bible teaches bishops and deacons.
3. Ministers may be accountable, directly or indirectly, to deacons (I Tim 5:17; Heb 13:7).
4. Rules of decorum may be followed strictly, even to neutering the pastor (Mark 7:9).
5. Association or visiting ministers have privileges and rights that pastors must honor.
6. Ministers cannot ordain or form churches personally, which makes them dependent on associations or denominational preachers to validate their work (Titus 1:5; II Tim 3:17).

#### **H. PAGAN HOLY DAYS**

1. Primitive Baptists practice and defend the pagan holy days of Roman Catholicism.
2. For a group that prides itself on being primitive and scriptural, why pagan holy days?
3. God has expressly forbidden the use of pagan practices in His worship (Deut 12:29-32).
4. The way of the heathen (Jer 10:1-5) and pagan compromise (II Cor 6:14-17) are wrong.
5. They allow them as a matter of liberty by misunderstanding the Bible (Romans 14:5).
6. If they preach against them to sound primitive, they still allow them in private practice.
7. They do not dare make them a matter of faith and fellowship for excluding offenders.

#### **I. TRADITION**

1. Primitive Baptists measure true faith and practice by tradition in several respects.
2. Having made the primitive name of great importance, other traditions are sure to follow.
3. Many churches have meetings only once or twice monthly, due to deadness and tradition.
4. More emphasis is placed on church buildings and age than on the doctrine taught there.
5. Even when the creeds deny their doctrine, they reverence them for their antiquity.
6. They call ministers and pastors “Elder,” in violation of manmade titles (Matt 23:5-12).
7. Their ministers sit in special pews, treat the pulpit as holy ground, and must be preached.
8. They have a manmade tradition of licensing young men to preach from “the floor” before they are ordained to preach from “the stand.”
9. Little old ladies are often the instigators for licensing or ordination, and it is the church that calls for elders and deacons to form the presbytery. Deacons? Yes, deacons!
10. Many young Primitive Baptists have been ordained in their teens or early twenties for merely bringing their Bible to church and being able to pray intelligently.
11. It is difficult for some churches to even pass a vote for a baptistery or indoor plumbing!
12. To have the Lord’s Supper more than once or twice a year is unusual and strange!

#### **J. PREACHING**

1. Primitive Baptist preaching is often partial in the scriptures, weak, and unfruitful.
2. Of course, there are exceptions to this point, but we are dealing with the general problem.
3. Most sermons are feel-good storytelling sessions about the “old Baptists” and “grace.”
4. Many texts are taken from the Old Testament, forgetting the N.T. obligation (II Cor 3:6).
5. Experience, feelings, spiritualizing, and predestination monopolize meetings (Is 30:10).
6. They do not preach the whole counsel of God, as shown by Paul’s example (Acts 20:27).

7. Bible studies, practical teaching for holy living, and related matter generally go missing.
8. Doctrine on many subjects is unclear due to ignorance and/or ambiguity (II Cor 3:12).
9. The lack of sound doctrine brings silly and heretical ideas i.e. no hell, Garden atonement, humanity of Jesus eternally begotten, age of accountability, wild spiritualizing, etc.
10. Trained Campbellite or Presbyterian ministers could overthrow most on many texts.
11. Some use a sing-song style of preaching, like Rome's use of Latin; they work up to an up-and-down rolling form of unintelligible ranting to most hearers, but they consider this being "in the Spirit." Noise, speed, volume, and length are more important than content.
12. Many preachers are fatalists, for they do not study or prepare, but wait for the singing or praying to give them some thought to develop. Others get in the pulpit and spiritualize about "Old Baptists" and "grace" from whatever text their eyes land on. Until you have seen it or heard about it, it is hard to believe! They are equal to the word of faith heresy!

#### **K. CHRISTIAN LIBERTY**

1. Primitive Baptists misunderstand and misapply Christian liberty (Romans 14:22-23).
2. Ministers and/or members can be seen smoking cigarettes openly outside meetings.
3. They are known to allow members of the Masonic Lodge to also be church members.
4. Little preaching or enforcement is made against immodest clothing, television, etc., etc.
5. While they will reject every Reformed Baptist baptism as not being good enough, they will allow and defend the holy days of Rome that the Reformers fought against!
6. While footwashing and the Primitive Baptist name are not liberties, ministers with full-time professional careers and claiming heretical creeds as their own are liberties!

#### **L. FATALISM**

1. Primitive Baptists are doctrinal and/or practical fatalists – though they would deny it.
2. Of course, the Absoluters are obvious fatalists; but the Old Line are in practice.
3. Most do not evangelize or exhort their congregations with authority (II Timothy 4:5).
4. They emphasize election and predestination rather than works by grace (Titus 3:8).
5. They believe there are vast numbers of unconverted elect throughout all ages and all nations, so some informed members ascribe to universalism or deny hell's existence.
6. They wait on "the Spirit" to assist preaching, where little or no study has been done.

#### **M. FOOTWASHING**

1. Most Primitive Baptists require footwashing as a formal ordinance at the Lord's Supper.
2. Some ordinations become null and void, if the minister does not require footwashing!
3. They do this though I Timothy 5:10 proves it was a limiting mark of exceptional widows.
4. They do this though ignoring recitation of the Lord's Prayer and kissing for greetings.
5. They do this though ignoring that God ordained full-time ministerial support (I Cor 9:14).