

THE BAPTIST LANDMARK

"REMOVE NOT THE ANCIENT LANDMARK, WHICH THY FATHERS HAVE SET." PROVERBS 22:28

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ARE WE MINO?

by M. A. Brawner

MINO is an acronym for "Missionary In Name Only". Is it time that we all ask ourselves if we are guilty of being "Missionary" Baptists in name only? A casual observation of the efforts being made today could easily lead to the conclusion that we are a people who could rightly be labeled as MINO. If it is the case, is it time for us all to be concerned enough to take action?

When the Lord organized and commissioned His Church, it is apparent that He intended for it to be missionary in its practices. That is to say, the Lord intended for His Church to be actively engaged in taking the gospel to others. Let's look at the first part of the great commission as recorded in Matthew chapter 28 to justify these statements. The first verse of the commission found in Matthew 28 records the Lord saying to His Church, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost", Mat 28:19. Notice the opening words the Lord used in the commission. He began by saying "Go ye". The "ye" here is His Church. As the true Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ are still under the same instructions, the "ye" in this verse applies to them today.

As the Lord used these words first in giving the commission, it really causes us to wonder if we can be considered keepers of the commission if we ignore any part of it. For example, if you had an organization located in Lafayette, Tennessee and wanted advertising information hand carried and distributed to as many individuals as possible in a 1,000 mile radius, what would you expect to happen? What if you checked progress in a year and found that advertising information had only taken place in Lafayette, Tennessee? The distribution had failed to get into a ten mile radius much less the desired 1,000 miles. Would you feel that your distribution instructions had been carried out? Even though information had been distributed in a limited area, would you consider your
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SUCCESSIONISM

by H. B. Little

Baptist successionism is the belief that scriptural churches—Baptist churches—have descended in unbroken lineage from the New Testament age to the present. For most of our history, Baptists have believed and contended for this doctrine. Time will not permit quotations of hearty "amens" to Baptist successionism from accomplished Baptists such as Robert Robinson, Thomas Crosby, C. H. Spurgeon, David Benedict, J. H. Spencer, and J. T. Christian.

These men held deep convictions of successionism because the Bible plainly teaches it. "The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed." Dan 2:44. "The gates of hell shall not prevail against" the church that our Lord Jesus built. Mat 16:18. The church will bring glory to God by obedience to Christ Jesus "throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Eph 3:21.

In the last 150 years, successionism has come under attack, even from within the "Baptist" community. Some assail successionism contending that an unbroken line of scriptural churches cannot be historically verified, therefore successionism cannot be believed. In other words, they require historical confirmation of a plain Bible doctrine before they can accept it.

This way of thinking has become all too common. The creation, the fall of man, the genesis of Israel, the exodus from Egypt, the conquest of Canaan, and many other events in the Bible have been questioned by "Baptists" when they cannot be confirmed by an often biased interpretation of historical evidence.

Paul warns us about this very philosophy when he writes, "O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane and vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called: which some professing have erred concerning the faith." 1 Ti 6:21. Many "Baptists" today are erring from the truth due to oppositions of false knowledge.

B. H. Carroll (1843-1914) was a Baptist pastor, author, and professor at

Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. In his "Interpretation of the English Bible - Colossians, Ephesians and Hebrews", he shares his convictions on church successionism. He writes:

I never could understand why some Baptists rejoice to say there is no church succession...I would like for them to take hold of these two passages in this chapter, "To the intent that now unto the principalities and the powers in the heavenly places might be made known through the church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord," coupled with the last verse, "Unto him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all generations forever and ever. Amen."

Whenever church work stops then the glory stops. Did God intend for it to stop? If he did, why did he say, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world"? And why should we tell the church when celebrating the Lord's Supper, "As often as you do this you show forth the Lord's death till he come"? Why does he provide for perpetuity? I am not discussing church history now. I am discussing God's purpose in establishing the church. Jesus said, "The gates of hell shall not prevail against it." I do not believe they have. They have never been able to convince me that the gates of hell have prevailed against the church.

I believe that God not only has had people in all ages, but that he has had an organized people.

*He provided for transmission: "The things which I have committed to you, the same commit thou to faithful men." How do men have faith? By hearing. How can they hear without a preacher, and how can they have a preacher unless he be sent? Did he not send the church all gifts - apostolic gifts, prophetic gifts, evangelistic gifts, and pastoral gifts? He set every one of them in the church. The apostles and prophets served the church; when they were taken away, there remained pastors, evangelists, teachers. On whose authority? Christ's. Where placed? In the church. I am satisfied that
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instructions to “Go” and distribute out to 1,000 miles had been exercised? The answer is obvious. With this in mind, are the Lord’s Churches following His instructions if we are making no efforts to “Go” and share the gospel? If we only share the gospel within the four walls of our home locations, is the instruction to “Go” being obeyed?

Honestly, the instructions to “Go ye” seems to cause all sorts of actions on part of some of us. Sometimes we feel that we are meeting these instructions by simply sending money to support scriptural mission efforts. There are times when we are left with the impression that there is no need for us to worry about going because others will go for us. All we need to do is support them financially. Brethren, we cannot pay someone else to do our part. It seems that we have forgotten the work our forefathers conducted. If you will consider work of brethren such as Calvin Gregory and C. B. Massey, you would find that these brethren pastored Churches (plural intended) and held revival meetings in community buildings, in the open air, and in whatever location they felt the Lord was leading them to do so. Those of us who are familiar with their labors will tell you the Lord blessed them wonderfully. Based on the example of these brethren (and many more could be cited), we find that pastoring a Church was no reason to leave off their obligation to obey the Lord’s command to “Go”. There is one thing for certain. When I was growing up, if I was instructed to go do a thing, I couldn’t get off the hook by trying to get someone else to go do it for me. The instructions were given to me, and it was expected that I would do it. In like manner, the Lord has given instructions to His Church. Are we concerned enough to pray over actually doing it?

When we go in search for a model of mission work, the primary source of information is always the Bible. The book of Acts contains the example which all of the Lord’s true Churches need to study closely. The history of the Church in the Acts is one of action. It is believed that one reason persecution was allowed to fall on the Church in Jerusalem is because it became complacent and ceased to take the gospel out into the world as instructed. After this trouble

came to the Church, we read of the work of Peter, Philip, Barnabas, and Paul. When we do, we find brethren following the Lord to take the gospel to others. It could lead us to stop and wonder if any trouble has come among the Lord’s Churches in the days we live because we have left off seeking His will to “Go” carry the gospel to others. It is apparent when you read the Acts that these brethren engaged in the work after the troubles they experienced. Will we be found doing the same?

We read of periods in the Acts where there seemed to be a pause in this “Going”. Consider for example what we read in Acts 11:20-26 of the gospel being brought into Antioch with great results. Barnabas was sent from the Church in Jerusalem to this new work which resulted in both Barnabas and Paul working with this newly organized Church for a year. Afterward, in chapter 13, we find a list of names of brethren in the Church at Antioch. They were in prayer ministering to the Lord. For all practical purposes, the brethren in this Church were preparing for the Lord to lead them into the work of “going” to regions beyond them. We all need to remember that trying to go without the Lord is a sure recipe for failure. However, when we know for sure that the Lord gave us instructions to “Go”, we should be absolutely convinced that He intends to lead us into the work. Here in Acts, it appears these brethren were giving the Lord their full attention. They knew the Lord wanted them to “Go” so they wanted to know where. So we need to be prepared to go, and we need the Lord’s direction to go. We may fail to see what is waiting far out in the future causing us to readjust our instructions. This is far different than the case with the Lord. He saw exactly what the world would be like in this very day in which we live. Knowing what today’s society would be like, He said “Go”. Should we be more like the Church in Antioch and attend to the Lord in order to get prepared and to find out where He has for us to “Go” do His work?

Sometimes we as a people seem to be under the impression that mission work can only be counted mission work if it takes place hundreds of miles away or on the other side of the world. It may be that the Lord will lead some of us to distant places to do His work; however, there is also work to be conducted close at hand. Is there not a need for us to be actively

engaged in prayer to the Lord about being led in going to those close to our homes? It’s hard for most of us to keep up with who has moved into the community. There are times when we really wonder who lives just down the road or even next door. Are we making any efforts to “Go” to them? In Luke 14 we find this instruction: “And the Lord said unto the servant, “Go” out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that My house may be filled”, Luke 14:23. When is the last time we have been in our “highways and hedges”? No matter what color or what social class, every man, woman, boy and girl has a soul headed towards eternity. We all know the Lord wants His Church go to them. Should we be praying for His leadership into this work? Can we be satisfied until He gives it to us? So much is eternally at stake.

I have just read a quote by J. N. Hall (1849-1905) from his *American Baptist Flag*. It is a hearty “amen” to Brother Brawner’s article.

There is no extravagance in the statement that Baptist churches are the divinely appointed custodians of the ordinances of the gospel, and of its dissemination throughout the earth. It is reasonable to believe that Christ would leave a people in the earth to represent him in the great work of saving the lost, and what people could more appropriately do such work than his own churches? It is absolutely certain that he left no other organization except his churches, and to them he has committed the sacred trust of the gospel of salvation. These churches have this treasure in earthen vessels and they should not shrink at the responsibility that attaches to such a royal service for the King, and for a lost world. Each church is to be accounted a factor in the great work of evangelization, and has no right to excuse itself from service because of the neglect of others. Each member of each Baptist church in all the earth has a duty laid upon him to pray, and preach give [sic] to make the work of the world’s evangelization a success. Such a work is so Christlike that everybody should take special delight in helping to do it. The angels may well envy us the honor we have in bringing in the lost. Surely we are inexcusable if we neglect to do all we can, as churches of Christ, to join in and help in sending the gospel to earth’s remotest bounds. Memoirs of Eld. J. N. Hall, pages 139-140.

A QUESTION ON THE UNIVERSAL CHURCH

by M. A. Brawner

I had a question come up recently, so I wanted to share it along with the answer in case you encounter it yourself. Living in a day where the so-called “universal, invisible church theory” is deceiving so many people, there is little surprise such questions arise. I’m thankful for the question and even more thankful for the willingness of the one who asked it to prayerfully consider the answer.

The question arose from Acts chapter 20. Here is the verse that brought the question up: “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,*” Act 20:28. The one who read this took it to be a clear example that all born again people must be a part of the true New Testament Church seeing that this verse refers to it as being “blood bought”. After all, the Bible clearly teaches that “without shedding of blood is no remission,” Heb 9:22, and “we have redemption through His blood,” Eph 1:7. He concluded that these verses must all harmonize and this means Acts 20:28 must teach that any blood bought person is part of the true New Testament Church. With this in hand, I was asked to explain whether or not this conclusion was sound and based on scripture.

My answer was in the negative. That is to say, he is incorrect. Just because the scriptures refer to the price of redemption being through the blood, it in no way limits that as the ONLY thing purchased when the Lord shed His blood. More than one item can be bought when a purchase is made. Oftentimes we go shopping, make a purchase, and obtain more than one thing. The Lord Jesus Christ did this very thing. He went to the cross and paid the price of redemption for all of man, Heb 2:9, and at the same time purchased His own Church whom He will marry in the future, 2 Cor 11:2. We realize that many sincere and educated people teach the universal, invisible Church theory. But even though they are “sincere”, when they are found “wrong”, they end up being “sincerely wrong”. When attempting to use the Bible to teach this “theory”, that is exactly their situation. Let’s be careful to rightly divide the Word of Truth.

IS THERE A CATHOLIC OR UNIVERSAL CHURCH?

by S. H. Ford

As an appendix to the foregoing article, we affirm there is no such a thing in existence as a catholic—that is, universal church. Church means always an assembly. It means nothing else. If the persons *supposed* to constitute it have never assembled it is not an assembly or church. The thing is absurd. There cannot be a meeting until persons meet. There cannot be a convention till persons convene or come together. There cannot be a church until (to coin a word) persons are church-ed, that is, assembled. There never was a universal assembly of professed Christians, or, as the expression is, the aggregate of believers on earth.

The term is not found anywhere in God’s word. The inspired apostles use no term that is its equivalent. It is foreign to the New Testament. It has no real meaning.

The term is found in the so-called Apostle’s creed. But while it is certain this was not composed until centuries after the apostolic age, it is also true that the word catholic was inserted in it long after it appeared, and change after change occurred in it till at length it assumed its present form, I believe in the Holy Catholic Church.

The word is for the first time used, or found, in the very questionable epistles of Ignatius. In his supposed epistle to the Smyrneans he says: “Wherever the bishop (pastor) shall be seen let the people also be, as where Jesus Christ is there is the catholic church.” Here it is evident it is a real assembly, a local church, the one body with its pastor worshipping at Smyrna, to which he refers. It was not a universal or supposed assembly, or the churches in Asia Minor, or the aggregate of believers; but the one real assembly or church. But it soon obtained a different meaning. The churches, as the apostles called them, were made or conceived to be one church, THE church; and thus received the name catholic. Words govern things, and the word catholic has been a governing, a misleading word, prolific of soul-ruining error, and of terrible oppression.

The term catholic is affixed to some of the epistles, as Peter, John, James, and Jude. But no such word is found in any of the old manuscripts; and it is well

known that the term was prefixed to them in the year 1549 by the famous French printer, Robert Stephens. It is rendered in King James’ version “general” before these epistles...Catholic church means a universal church. We repeat there is no such thing. And the fact that the Philadelphia Confession of Faith adopts this word gives it no weight. For that confession says in its 31st article: “We believe that laying on of hands with prayer upon baptized believers as such is an ordinance of Christ, and ought to be submitted to by all such persons as are permitted to participate of the Lord’s Supper.” But Baptists never have been unanimous in regard to this. Danvers, shortly after the confession was issued, wrote a treatise in opposition to it. The Philadelphia Confession adopted it. But it has been almost universally abandoned. Indeed, Baptists have no authorized confessions. But though this London and Philadelphia Confession says, “The catholic church or universal church consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one in Christ,” they affirm of these elect, that “they are called out of the world through the ministry of the word,” and “Those Christ called He commanded to walk together as particular churches.” The members of the particular churches are saints by calling, “visibly manifesting and evidencing in and by their profession,” “and willingly consent to walk together according to the appointment of Christ.”

So that while, as the confession says, “The catholic or universal church—the elect that ever have been, are, or shall be only with respect to the eternal work of the spirit and truth of grace—may be called universal, these elect are commanded to walk in particular societies or churches, visibly manifesting their call by walking together in their professed subjection to the ordinances of the gospel.” Thus it is. Catholic church is all the elect; the elect are called to particular churches in subjection to the ordinances, and the only universality is “the internal work of the spirit” whose operation is as the viewless wind.

What is there in this resembling a positive, a real, a veritable universal church?—an assembly which never assembled? It is the “baseless fabric of a vision.”

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SUCCESSIONISM

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if the angels, after watching the unfolding of the wisdom of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ, from the time Christ died until the time the apostles died, they have not had a recess since of a thousand years. They are not left in suspense, vainly bending over to learn more through silent centuries. The school goes right on. The purposes ripen. The ordinances continue to tell their story. Churches come from churches somewhat as horses come from horses. History cannot trace every detail of the pedigree showing how a certain drove of wild mustangs in western Texas are descendants of the Spanish barbs, brought here by the discoverers 400 years ago. The fact that the mustangs are here proves the succession, since only like begets like.

I do not undervalue church history, but far more important to me than fallible human records of passing events is the New Testament forecast of church history. The former may err – the latter never. Pages 131-132.

Doctor Carroll believed in church succession. His belief was not founded in historical evidence but in the plain teachings of God's word. The world casts such a foundation as ignorant, or unlearned. With Doctor Carroll this could not be further from the truth. He was well versed in ecclesiastical history. J. B. Cranfill testifies to the studious nature of Brother Carroll in his "Sermons and Life Sketch of B. H. Carroll, D.D.". He writes:

Doctor Carroll...has ever been a profound student of systematic theology. He is an omnivorous reader, having averaged two hundred and fifty pages a day for forty-eight years. The remarkable thing about his reading, moreover, is that he remembers what he reads. He has the most marvelously retentive memory of any man I have ever known. He can lucidly give every pertinent fact concerning any book that he read a quarter of a century ago, and has not opened since...He is thoroughly familiar with both ancient and modern history, and his knowledge of the Scriptures is truly marvelous. Page 12.

According to Dr. Cranfill, Brother Carroll read over four million pages and retained every pertinent fact. In all those volumes, he never read anything that convinced him "that the gates of hell have prevailed against the church". This should come as no surprise. A true interpretation of

historical evidence will always support the predictions and principles of inspired scripture.

D. B. Ray (1830-1922) was a Baptist pastor, author, and editor of two Baptist publications, the *Baptist Sentinel* and the *American Baptist Flag*. He published such works as "Text-Book on Campbellism", "The Church Discussion", and "Baptist Succession". It is this last work, his handbook of Baptist History, which holds the greatest notoriety among our churches today. In this work, Bro. Ray contends for the doctrine of Baptist successionism and addresses gaps in Baptist history during the Dark Ages. He writes:

Because the world in its blindness and superstition, has failed to see and recognize the affianced bride, the Lamb's wife during her stay in the wilderness, shall it be said that she ceased to exist during that time? As well might it be said of the train which enters the mountain tunnel and comes out on schedule time, that it ceased to exist because it was out of sight for a while, or that it must have been off the track all the time that it was not in view! But when the train emerges from the tunnel, on time, with the same officers, with the same passengers, with the same freight, and with the same characteristic marks, we have undisputed evidence that it is the same train which entered the tunnel, and that it had been on the track all the time, or it would not have appeared on time with the same equipments; and especially, if it had been controlled by an infallible conductor, who affirmed that the train had been preserved through the mountain. And likewise, as the church came out of the wilderness on time, according to the divine schedule, with the same officers, with the same passengers, with the same freight, and with the same characteristic marks, and having been controlled by the same Infallible Conductor, we may therefore, safely conclude that the church has neither been destroyed nor off the track of truth during the wilderness period of her history. But the church has not been totally out of view during this period; her light has shined out of the clefts of the rock, and her countenance has beamed forth from the secret place of the stars all the time...If all uninspired history was a total blank, or swallowed up in the gulf of oblivion, we have a right to span the chasm with the prophetic Word, and boldly affirm that the gates of hell have not prevailed against the church of Jesus

Christ. But besides the inspired Word, we have the testimony of friends, and even foes, to the perpetuity of the kingdom of God through all this dark period of the world. Pages 319-321.

Brother Ray's confidence was not in the historical record but the "inspired Word." With this foundation, all Bible believing Baptists can assert church succession. We can bridge the gaps in history with faith in Him who cannot lie. Yet the more we read Baptist history, the more we acquaint ourselves with the confirmation of His promise that the Son of God "set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed."

Here is a quote from J. N. Hall regarding Baptist successionism.

Don't forget that Baptists have the peculiar distinction of being distinct claimants of a scriptural church perpetuity that overleaps the chasm of the ages and touches hands with Christ and the Apostolic age. Such a succession does not depend on uncertain statements that may be collected from their enemies along the course of time, but on the infallible and glorious word of the Lord. Memoirs of Eld. J. N. Hall, page 146.

BOOKS FOR SALE

The Baptist Landmark continues to offer the following books at our cost. They are:

Trail of Blood, by J. M. Carroll. This book contains a brief history of the Baptists and a nice chart mapping our lineage from the New Testament age. Format: Paperback. Length: 60 pages. Price: \$3 + shipping

Baptist Succession, by D. B. Ray. This book sets the record straight on the 1641 Discovery, the Roger Williams Church, the matter of John Smith, and others. It also introduces the reader to the ancient Baptists. Format: Hardback. Length: 396 Pages. Price: \$10 + \$3 shipping

History of the Welsh Baptists, by J. Davis. This book contains the history of the Baptists in Wales from the year 63 to 1778. Interestingly, some of the oldest churches in the South have traced their origins to a church which migrated from Wales. Format: Hardback. Length: 204 pages. Price: \$5 + \$3 shipping

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