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Why Baptists Don’t Know They’re Puritans

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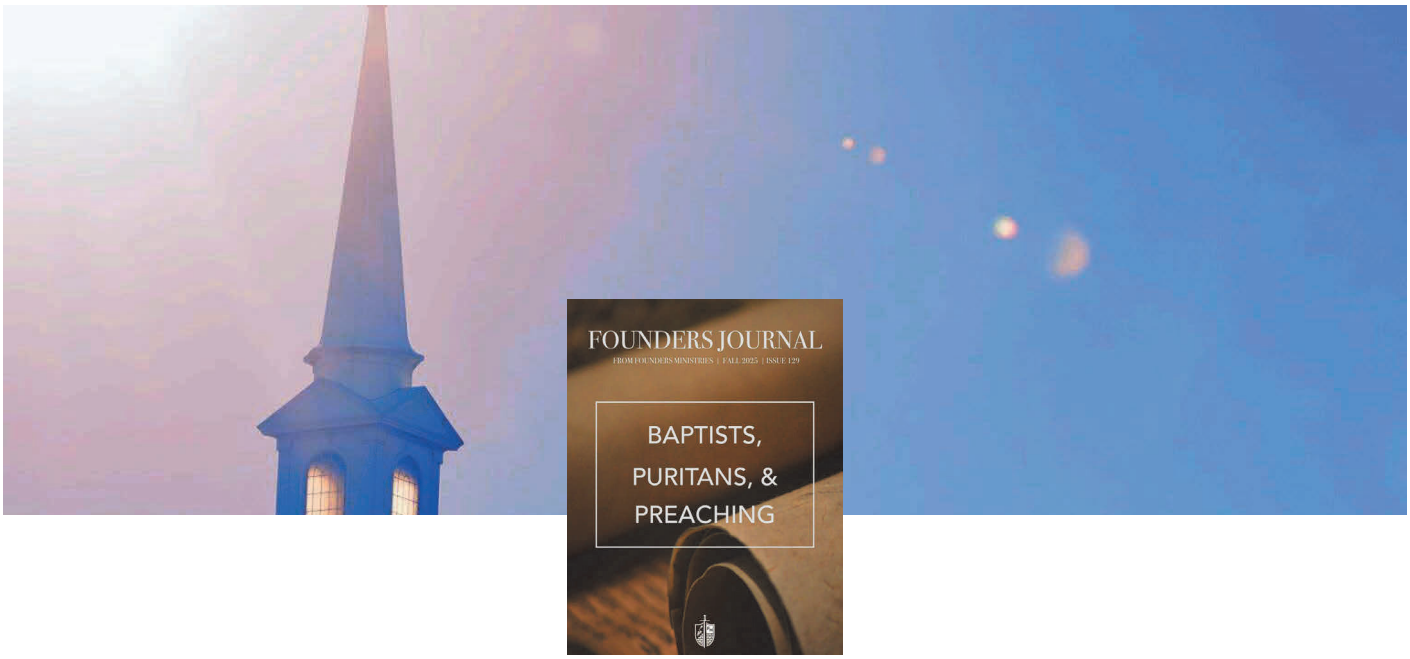

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I set out to study the New England Puritans and was surprised to learn about the origins of the Baptist movement in America. Again and again, I saw how the Congregationalists of New England were similar to the Baptists among whom I had grown up. Finally, it dawned on me that my Baptists were Puritans. The question is, why don't Baptists know they're Puritans?

On some level, many Baptists do, indeed, understand that they are Puritans. T. E. Watson matter-of-factly, while writing for D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, mentioned "Puritan Baptists."[1] Nathan Finn in a podcast interview, said, "The Baptist movement literally arose out of radical Puritanism. They were radical Puritans who embraced believer's baptism."[2] This is accurate, although I am not sure what a "radical Puritan" is, as distinct from a mainstream Puritan. Yet, as we will see, Finn's co-authored book on Baptist origins suggests that Baptists were distinct from Puritans. The narrative of Baptist history, as we will see, suppresses or, at best, obfuscates such claims.

There are seven major reasons creating the fog around the origins of the Baptist movement.

I. The Narrative

The fact that Baptists arose from Puritanism – in particular, Congregationalism, or "Independency," or separatism or "semi-separatism" – has been obscured by the traditional narrative of Baptist origins.[3] The story of Baptist beginnings often commences with John Smyth (1554-1612) baptizing himself and others, including Thomas Helwys (c. 1575-c. 1616) and John Murton (1585 – c. 1626). Bill Leonard says "Baptists beginnings are relatively easy to discern" and then launches into this narrative.[4] They had earlier fled to Holland around 1608 for religious freedom. There, either by independent Bible study or with the persuasion of Mennonites, they embraced believer's baptism.[5] Thus, so the story goes, they were either essentially English Anabaptists or simple Biblicists, encouraged by Anabaptists to adopt the Biblical pattern of baptism. Having become Arminians also in Holland, they began a General Baptist church in London (1611/12). Thus, some Baptists claim, beginning the chain of events that led to the Baptist movement, including its flourishing in America.

There are several problems with the Anabaptist origins narrative. Winthrop S. Hudson (1911-2001) notes, "The single most confusing element in the attempt to understand the Baptist heritage . . . has been the identification of the Baptists with the Continental Anabaptists."[6] First, Smyth, while being persuaded of believer's baptism, converted to be a Mennonite and never returned to England before dying in 1612. Second, Helwys, Murton, and others, while following Smyth into believer's baptism, remained unconvinced of other essential features of

Anabaptism like foreswearing oaths, war, and political vocations.[7] Indeed, church covenanting (a type of oath) became an essential feature of Baptist polity, just as it was in Congregationalism. Helwys, in particular, separated from Smyth on four points, two of which are typical of Reformed rejection of Anabaptism: about the Christian Sabbath and the appropriateness of Christians to serve the government.[8] Helwys confession of 1611 specifically stated "magistracy is a Holy ordinance of God," that magistrates "may be members of the church of Christ," and that they "bear the sword of God," thus implying endorsing of capital punishment, contrary to most Anabaptists.[9] Helwys and his followers were so opposed to Anabaptism, when Smyth converted to it in Holland, Helwys declared that Smyth had "denied the Lord's truth and is fallen from grace." Helwys' church excommunicated Smyth for embracing Anabaptism. This is not how one talks of moves to sisterly Christian churches.

Further, there are the unsubtle statements on the covers of prominent Baptist confessions denying any connection to Anabaptism. The First London Baptist Confession (1644) declared that the confessing church, we now call Baptists, were "commonly, but unjustly, called Anabaptists."[10] In 1660, the General Baptists likewise complained about being "falsely" called Anabaptists.[11] In 1681, in Boston, Massachusetts, John Russell, Baptist pastor, said, "Don't call us Anabaptists and we won't call you murderers for the massacres committed by infant baptizers through Christian history."[12] Nikolausvon Zinzendorf (1700-1760), in about 1741-42, while seeking to form a union of churches, including the Mennonites, reported, "The Baptist Church . . . has sufficiently shown that they have nothing in common with the Anabaptists."[13] Hence, Hudson concludes, "If the early Baptists were clear on any one point, they were clear on their insistence that they were not to be confused with the Anabaptists."[14] One of the ironies of Baptist history is that early Baptists were intent to disavow being Anabaptists and some twentieth century Baptist historians were intent on claiming they were.

Second, even if Helwys had been influenced by Anabaptism, it is unclear whether the Helwys church really began the chain-of-events that touched off the Baptist movement. By about the turn of the twenty-first century, historians were beginning to have doubts about the Helwys church. Douglas Weaver reported that "revisionist" Baptist historians had argued "no direct linkage between the General Baptists of the 1640s back to Smyth and Helwys has been documented."[15] Mark Bell is one of these "revisionist" historians. In his important 2000 book, *Apocalypse How?*, he challenged the claim that there were multiple churches derived from Helwys which endured through the 1630s and lay at the root of the General Baptist churches.[16] He states, "there is no evidence in the affirmative" of either churches deriving from the Helwys church persisting or their having an influence on the subsequent Baptist movement.[17] Bell made his claim in 2000 and stands by it in 2024. Like Bell, B. R. White had noted "there is no certain evidence that the London church of General Baptists [i.e. the Helwys church] persisted through the difficult years of the 1630s.[18] Stephen Wright, in 2006,

likewise questioned the standard narrative of continuity between the Helwys church and Lambe's Bell's Alley church, probably General Baptist mother church.[19] Hence, the traditional narrative, focused on Smyth and Helwys is tenuous. Historians have not been able to show an unbroken chain of believers or churches from the Helwys church to Baptist churches.

This is an historiographical problem because for a church or leader to be at the root of the current Baptist movement, we have to show how it led to the later spread of Baptist churches. There must be documented causation. The history of the Baptists is not simply the retelling of any group that practiced believer's baptism but of tracing the lineage of Baptists from their origins to the present-day movement. That is, just as a history of a particular family tree only rightly consists of the family members who were part of that particular family, so too a legitimate history of Baptists should show a causal connection between one leader or group to another, down to our day. As it is, there's no conclusive evidence that the Helwys church began the chain of events leading to Baptist churches today, especially in America.

Third, is a testimony against interests. Even those most ardent in their support of the Anabaptist origins theory admit, at least implicitly, that they have no evidence. Frank H. Littell (1917-2009), who vigorously championed the cause of the Anabaptists as the source of the "free church" ideal "like a latter-day circuit rider," admitted frankly that direct evidence of a relationship between "continental Anabaptism and radical sectaries of the English commonwealth" "broke down."[20] Baptists hold to the "free church" ideal and are among "the radical sectaries of the English commonwealth." Thus, Littell, promoter of the Anabaptist source theory, confesses to a lack of evidence for its influence on Baptists and similar movements. Likewise, William Estep (1920-2000), perhaps the chief purveyor of the Anabaptist origins theory among Southern Baptists, claims that the Particular Baptists, arising out of the Jacob-Lathrop-Jessey Independent Church in 1641/42, reflects the impact of Puritanism "under Anabaptist influence." He gives no evidence for this but, rather, claims "this influence may have been mediated more by books and tracts than by personal contact."[21] In other words, he has no examples of personal contacts of Particular Baptists with Anabaptists. Instead, he conjectures that some "Anabaptist influence" might have been conveyed by literature. His "may have" reveals he does not have concrete evidence of this either. His testimony to the absence of the evidence for the claim he is advocating is, itself, weighty evidence against his theory.

Fourth, as Winthrop S. Hudson argues, there is not even need to credit Anabaptists as the source of believer's baptism among the Reformed English.

> The insistence upon believers' baptism was a logical corollary drawn from the Reformation emphasis upon the necessity for an explicit faith and from the Congregational concept of a gathered church, as well as from the common storehouse of Biblical precept and example, rather than being the result of any supposed Anabaptist influence.[22]

That is, the narrative of Baptist origins is confused because it seeks unique men or a movement outside the larger Reformed movement to ascribe its genesis. This is unnecessary because Reformed theology and Congregational polity sufficiently account for Baptist origins. Bell believes it is more reasonable that "General Baptists theological beliefs were pretty easy to drive from first principles." [23] That is, the common-sense theology (my term) of the General Baptists could easily have been ascertained by other earnest English believers without any needed connection to Helwys or the Anabaptists.

Fifth, the narrative does not account for the flourishing of the Particular Baptist movement and the existence of mixed Congregational-Baptist churches in England. "Some of their churches embraced both Baptist and Congregational members indiscriminately."[24] Seventh-century England saw the phenomena of mixed churches consisting of both Baptists and paedobaptist Congregationalists united in one membership, such as the Jessey church (London), Vavasor Powell's Welsch Baptist church, New Road Church, Oxford, England, and John Bunyan's in Bedford, England.[25] The difficulty in ascertaining whether Bunyan was a Baptist or not further demonstrates that there was no red-line separating Baptists from other Congregationalists in England. [26] This is at exactly the time when Baptist historians often fixate on persecution meted out to Baptists on the western shore of the Atlantic.

If Baptists were either English Mennonites or a unique, de novo movement arising simply by Bible study – "solo Scriptura" – they would not share so much of the theology of other Puritans, especially Congregationalists, and sometimes even share church membership with them. Not only is this so for the Particular Baptists, who issued a "slightly altered Westminster Confession" in 1677, it was also true for the General Baptists who issued an "Orthodox Creed" in 1679 which affirmed original sin, contrary to the Anabaptists, and reflected the polity of Congregationalism, itself a Reformed movement.

Finally, the explosion of Baptist growth in America after the Great Awakening originally from the seed-bed of New England Congregationalism suggests it is an off-shoot of Congregationalism. The history of American Baptists is not simply that of English Baptists transplanted across the Atlantic. Even if it could be proved that English Baptists – either General or Particular – were significantly shaped by Anabaptism, which we have seen cannot be proven, that still would not prove that such an influence persisted in America. Indeed, that by the

1790s about 93% of Baptist churches in New England were Calvinist suggests that there was little, if any, Anabaptist influence.[27] Hence Winthrop S. Hudson stated flatly that "the Baptists were not Anabaptist, but rather were Puritan."[28]

II. Confusion About the Definition of Puritanism

Part of the confusion about the Puritan roots of Baptists stems from confusion of what, exactly, Puritanism was. Chute, Finn, and Haykin, for example, claim "separatists" (largely Congregationalists) were people who "came out of the Puritan movement."[29] Douglas Weaver ironically claims that John Smyth, by seeking a "pure church," left "Puritanism" (the movement committed to a Biblically pure church.)[30] A blind reviewer for a Baptist journal commented, "Modern Baptists arose from Congregational Separatists (not Puritans). Puritans persecuted Baptists."[31] These historians assume that separatists were not Puritans. Each of them implies an overly narrow definition of "Puritan." Thus (mis)understood, even if Baptists identify themselves with separatists, as they should, separatists have been detached, in this history, from Puritanism.

In reality, "Puritan" is the umbrella term for "hot Protestants" in England and colonial America, after the Elizabethan settlement, who sought to reform the church according to a Reformed interpretation of scripture.[32] They include those who were willing to stay in the Church of England, Presbyterians who settled on the Westminster Confession (1647), and Congregationalists, often also called "Independents." Congregationalists were a type of Puritan. If Baptists are a type of Congregationalist, then, they too are a type of Puritan. Thomas Edwards (1599–1647) said Baptists were "the highest form of Independency."[33] Baptists began as "baptistic congregationalists," a subset of Congregationalists, themselves a subset of Puritans.[34]

Darrett Rutman describes Puritanism as "the intense and evangelical advocacy of the Christian obligation to know and serve God."[35] John Coffey and Paul Lim describe Puritanism as an "intense variety of early modern Reformed Protestantism" that began in the Church of England "but spilled out beyond it."[36] Patrick Collinson defined Puritans as "the hotter sort of Protestants."[37] That definition extends to separatists or "semi-separatists."[38] Likewise, Peter Lake's description of Puritanism includes separatists.[39] In 2021, Michael Winship, in *Hot Protestants*, elaborated on Lake's definition and, by including John Bunyan as a model Puritan, extended it to Baptists (assuming he was Baptist).[40] David Hall's definition of Puritanism includes separatists, Congregationalists and Trans-Atlantic Particular Baptists.[41] Bill Leonard is exceptional among Baptist historians for recognizing this, attaching both the origins of the General Baptists and Particular Baptists to "Puritan Separatists."[42]

III. Demise of Congregationalism

Baptists are not aware of their relationship to Congregationalism because Congregationalism, as an orthodox, evangelical movement, has almost vanished. This results in Congregationalism having few orthodox, evangelical representatives to speak up for them. They have no major seminary championing their tradition; they have no lively denomination faithfully preserving their theology and practices today; they have no major leaders reminding us Baptists that we came from them. The result is that we have few latter-day Congregational scholars reminding Baptists where they came from. Westminster Seminary, J. Gresham Machen, and R. C. Sproul reminded Presbyterians of their heritage. Few have done so for orthodox Congregationalists and made the connection to modern Baptists. When Baptists say they pioneered separation of the magistrate's authority from the church, church autonomy, local church authority in selecting its elders and deacons, etc, there are few Congregationalists clearing their throat, politely raising their hands and saying, "Actually, we believed in all of that. You got it from us." When Baptist boast of being willing to suffer for their convictions of the free church, regenerate church membership, local church autonomy, few Congregationalists remain to interject, with a wry smile, "Well, actually, our fathers ventured themselves and their little ones upon the rude waves of the vast ocean that so they might follow the Lord into his land."[43]

As Stanley Grenz wrote, "One crucial and lasting product of the Puritan movement of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is the existence of a worldwide Baptist denomination ...".[44] The question is why many Baptists, unlike Grenz, do not readily recognize that fact. Likely, a major factor is that most Baptists, unlike Grenz, are not knowledgeable of Congregationalism. Lacking that exposure to Congregationalism, Baptists are not aware that they inherited all the major – and many of the minor – features of their polity from Congregationalism, such as commitment to regenerate church membership with a testimony of regeneration required for admission, letters of dismission, church covenanting, priesthood of all believers, local church autonomy, associationalism (or "consociations"),[45] and philosophies and practices of ordination.[46] With few orthodox Congregationalists remaining to compare themselves with, Baptists cannot see their family resemblance.

IV. The Persecution Obsession

Puritanism in Baptist history is often caricatured as an oppressive political-theological movement bent on persecuting all who deviated from it. Baptists encountering it are nearly always pictured as victims of its lash. For example, Bart Barber, recent president of the Southern Baptist Convention and a church historian, quoted Increase Mather's support for persecution of Baptists as evidence that Baptists ought not heed the Mathers. [47] About one-third of William McLaughlin's important essay on Baptist origins in America consists ofaccounts

of persecution meted out to Baptists by the "Standing Order."[48] Thomas Kidd's and Barry Hankins' *Baptists in America* offers virtually no definition of Puritanism while launching the story of Baptist origins, both in the preface and in chapter one, with tales of persecution from it.[49]

The persecution narrative obscures the reality that Baptists often fellowshipped harmoniously with other Puritans. In England, Baptists were part of the Puritan mix. English Baptists were persecuted by the established church, the Church of England, along-side other Puritans. They were not persecuted, so far as we know, during the English commonwealth (1649-1660). We have already noted the important fact that the English Puritan scene saw mixed Congregational-Baptist churches at the same time in history when Baptists focus on the persecution they endured at the hands of Puritans in New England. This demonstrated that the larger Puritan theology and Congregational polity was the unifying principle and deemed large enough to include Baptists.[50]

Even Congregational churches that were exclusively paedobaptist or Baptist recognized one another across the baptism divide as spiritual siblings. In England, there was an "extensive and harmonious cooperation between Baptists and Congregationalists."[51] William Kiffin (1616-1701), though exclusively Baptist after 1644, never mentions his Baptist identity in his autobiography. In his memoirs, Kiffin mentions the "Independents" (i.e. Congregationalists) he joined and the "dissenters" but never the Baptists. Remarkably, "Mr. Kiffin gives no account of his becoming Baptist."[52] This is because being a Baptist was a kind of Independent or "dissenter," that is Puritan. Kiffin lived simultaneously with the persecution in New England Baptist historians now focus on. English Baptist hagiographer, Thomas Crosby (1683–1751), described Puritans as "the most sober and gracious Christians," obviously not the embittered victim of persecution.[53]

Even in the Puritan "City Upon a Hill," Baptist individuals were tolerated. What Puritans found objectionable was Baptists separating and forming their own churches. After all, New England had been envisioned to be a Congregational training ground "to muster up the first of [God's] forces in."[54] The Puritans had sought the charter, recruited the colonists, and had the vision for it. They can be excused for some possessiveness. If, hypothetically, conservative Baptists bought a remote island, free of any national sovereignty, moved there to be what they envisioned to be a perfect Baptist homeland and, then, Presbyterians or Methodists or even Jehovah's Witnesses showed up, how would they respond?

Increase Mather, second generation New England leader, like his contemporary Solomon Stoddard (1643-1729), called for suppressing Baptists churches, when they had the power. After the Toleration Act of 1689 relations changed. When John Farnum sought to transfer membership from the local Baptist church to Mather's North Church, Mather asked the Baptists if they had any objection. Thus, he acknowledged, in practice, the Baptists were Congregational brothers, not "heretics."[55] In 1718, Increase Mather and his son Cotton helped lead a

Baptist pastor's ordination service. The younger Mather preached the sermon. Cotton Mather, far from anathematizing Baptists as "heretical," claimed in New England "the names Congregational, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, or Antipaedobaptist, are swallowed up in that of Christian."[56] He claimed that Baptists were "among the planters of New England from the beginning, and have been welcome to the communion of our churches, which they have enjoyed, reserving their particular opinion unto themselves." He asked his church members who held to believer's baptism to stay in his church. He described the Baptists he knew as "most worthy Christians, and as holy, watchful, fruitful, and heavenly people as perhaps any in the world."[57]

While persecution is an important chapter of Baptist origins, it is merely a chapter. An excessive focus on persecution obscures how Baptists were "baptistic congregationalists," with close theological affinities and friendly relationships with other Puritans.[58]

V. The Lack of a "Great Man"

Baptist origins, unlike Lutheran or Anabaptist or Presbyterian, lacks a single, dominating "great man" who founded the movement and who can be looked to as definitional. "Baptists have no recognizable founder like Martin Luther or John Calvin or John Wesley."[59] John Smyth (1554-1612) was not the founder. He was drawn to become Mennonite and earned a reputation for instability. Thomas Helwys (c. 1575-c. 1616) was not the founder. His church, as we noted, may not have survived the 1630s. In America, Roger Williams (1603-1683) was not the founder. He only attended a Baptist church for four months in 1639. Williams remained a "seeker," never a committed Baptist. Thus, there is no single person Baptists esteem as the "father of the Baptists" to whom they could agree to look to as a model, whose life or theology created a norm. There is, instead, a team of great men, each doing their part to launch the Baptist movement. Every one of them was, first, a Congregationalist, thus a Puritan.

VI. Lack of Pre-History

Much of the confusion about Baptist origins stems from Baptist histories beginning with Baptists. Two recent Baptist overview histories take this approach: *Baptists in America: A History* (2015) and *The Baptist Story: From English Sect to Global Movement* (2015). It is akin to beginning an American history on July 4th, 1776 and then picturing, even if just by implication, the British as foreign oppressors. The uneducated reader would assume that Americans were distinct from the British from their inception; that the British were foreign invaders. Just as no history of the United States is adequate without a pre-history of European colonization and the century

and a half of colonial America, so no history of the Baptists is adequate without telling the story of the Reformation, especially the English Reformation, Puritanism, Congregationalism, "the City Upon a Hill," and the Great Awakening.

Developing the pre-history of Baptists will show that "Baptists were children of the Reformation and stood clearly within the Calvinist tradition."[60] Failure to explore the history of Congregationalism is the immediate cause of Baptists' seeing themselves as severed from church history. When Congregationalism is not sufficiently explored, we do not see what it means that "practically all" early Baptists – "whether John Smyth, Thomas Helwys, Samuel Richardson, [Hanserd Knollys,] William Kiffin, John Bunyan, Roger Williams, John Clarke, Obadiah Holmes, . . . Henry Dunster [and Isaac Backus] – had been Congregationalists before they became Baptists."[61]

Hence, Charles Deweese, while admitting that "Baptist churches often inherited the church covenant directly from their Congregational roots," in his superb book on church covenants, is not able to discern what that fact means. He classifies Congregationalists as "another religious tradition," as if Baptists were distinct from it at their outset.[62] Likewise, the two recent general Baptist histories, noted above, fail to adequately explore Baptists' pre-history leading to serious misclassification of Baptists vis-à-vis other movements. Thomas Kidd and Barry Hankins imply that the Puritans' gospel was essentially different than "the gospel of the Baptists."[63] Chute, Finn, and Haykin claim, without any citation, that Puritans and Baptists were divided by a presuppositional difference that forced Puritans to regard Baptists as "heretical."[64] Their radical differentiation of Baptists from Congregationalists reflects the narrative rather than the actual history.

VII. Anti-Calvinism

Finally, some of the oversight of Baptists connections to Puritanism is likely due to resistance to Calvinism. For example, probably the pre-eminent purveyor of the narrative that Baptists are descended from Anabaptists, William Estep, was also anti-Calvinist. Estep predicted if "the Calvinizing of Southern Baptists continues unabated, we are in danger of becoming 'a perfect dunghill,' to borrow a phrase from Andrew Fuller," ironically citing the early 19th century Particular Baptist. He also claimed that "logically, Calvinism is anti-missionary," despite the fact that as a church historian he would have to be aware that William Carey, "the father of modern missions," was a Calvinist.[65] He served as a professor of church history at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary for forty years, writing numerous works on Baptist and Anabaptist history. The question is whether his opinion of Calvinism caused him to him to gravitate toward the slight connection of Anabaptists with Baptists and repulse him from the abundance of documentation showing Baptists relationship with Congregationalism. Or is it just a coincidence? That he was both anti-Calvinist and championed the Anabaptist

origins narrative is probably not just correlation but causation. Certainly, historians are free to personally reject or even despise Calvinism. However, they are not free to allow that animus to color their historiography, to move them to classify the Baptists as belonging to a tradition Baptists really do not belong to simply to avoid identifying them with a tradition they, personally, disdain.

Result

With Puritanism misunderstood, Baptist origins dominated by the Anabaptist or spontaneous Biblicist narrative, the persecution obsession and no Congregationalists or "Great Man" reminding us of our true origins, new Baptist theological students are unlikely to look to the Puritans for their spiritual birthright. Like Bart Barber, they'll push them to the side.[66] These distortions, perhaps even more than the anti-intellectualism in some strands of Baptist life, are responsible for the Baptist sense of rootlessness, of being ahistorical, of the myths either that Baptists transcended church history from the days of the Apostles or that they appeared on the scene detached, uncaused in history, "de novo."[67] These distortions leave some Baptists starved for historical roots.

Because Baptists do not understand their identity as Puritans, we have the phenomena of Baptist academics calling for "theological retrieval" while celebrating the liturgical calendar, apparently unaware that their own tradition rejected that calendar. Original Baptists (or their Congregational progenitors) rejected the liturgical calendar not because they were intellectually benighted hicks who had never heard of it and suspicious of everything different but because they were Cambridge educated, exposed to high church liturgy, Latin and Greek reading scholars who came to the considered conclusion that it undermined the gospel.[68] They may have been wrong but they were not ignorant.

The conclusion of finding that Baptists are Puritans is that when a Baptist wants to retrieve his or her theology or tradition, he or she needs to make a deep dive into Puritanism. What Increase Mather declared about his own Puritans, so also can we Baptists say about ourselves, "We are the children of the good old *non-conformists*."[69] It is in our Puritan heritage that we find that we are not anti-intellectual, other-worldly, disconnected; we find why we are congregational, promote a learned ministry but are not chained to it; why we are evangelistic and missions-minded. In Puritanism we find why we believe salvation is by grace but God works through means; why we celebrate the priesthood of all believers but are not anti-clerical; why we believe in autonomous churches but most of us still associate; why we hold to regenerate church membership and, even, why the immediate impetus for the founding of the Southern Baptist Convention (1845) to protect slave-holding was a tragic failure of Southern Baptists to nurture the seeds Puritans had planted and which bloomed in abolitionism;[70] why "traditional Southern Baptist soteriology" is articulated by William Perkins, William

Ames, John Owen, Jonathan Edwards, and George Whitefield; and we find many more of the reasons we are as we are. We find, in many instances, what we have strayed from and we find, in the Puritans, spiritual fathers eager to guide us back home.

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[1] T. E. Watson, "Andrew Fuller's Conflict With Hypercalvinism," *Puritan Papers, Vol. 1 1956-1959* (Philipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2000.)

[2] Nathan A. Finn, "History of The Baptist Church," Remnant Radio, August 2, 2021, 13:09; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QPWGEAkXbE.

[3] The term "semi-separatist" refers to those who were "independent but not against the Church of England," who retained a "brotherly communion" with the established church. Mark R. Bell, *Apocalypse How? Baptist Movements During the English Revolution* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2000), 55-56.

[4] Bill J. Leonard, *Baptists in America* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005), 7.

[5] For example, Carol Crawford Holcomb, in "Doing Church Baptist Style: Congregationalism" (Baptist History and Heritage, 2001), tells the story of Baptist origins and polity without any reference to Congregationalism (the movement). http://www.centerforbaptiststudies.org/pamphlets/style/congregationalism.htm, accessed July 18, 2023.

[6] Winthrop S. Hudson, "Baptists Were Not Anabaptists," *The Chronicle*, XVI (October, 1953), 171.

[7] The Schleitheim confession (1527) stated "Christ . . . prohibits all swearing, whether true or false. . . ". (Donald F. Durnbaugh, *The Believers' Church: The History and Character of Radical Protestantism* [New York: The MacMillan Company, 1968], 74.)

[8] Willaim Estep, "A Believing People: Historical Background," *The Concept of the Believers' Church: Addresses from the 196 Louisville Conference*, Edited by James Leo Garrett, Jr (Scottsdale, PN: Herald Press, 1969), 49.

[9] Thomas Helwys, "Helwys' Declaration of Faith–The First Baptist Confession," Society of Evangelical Arminians, paragraph 24; http://evangelicalarminians.org/helwys-declaration-of-faith-the-first-baptist-confession/, accessed September 15, 2023.

[10] London Baptist Confession of 1644, https://www.reformedreader.org/ccc/h.htm, accessed August 11, 2023.

[11] "A Brief Confession or Declaration of Faith," (London, 1660); https://www.reformedreader.org/ccc/tsc.htm.

[12] C. Douglas Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church: The Baptist Story* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008), 47.

[13] Hudson, "Baptists Were Not Anabaptists," 172.

[14] Hudson, "Baptists Were Not Anabaptists," 171.

[15] Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church*, 20.

[16] Bell, *Apocalypse How?*, 42.

[17] Bell, personal correspondence with Mark Bell, April 16, 2024.

[18] White, *The English Baptists of the 17th Century*, 29.

[19] Wright, *The Early English Baptists, 1603-49.*

[20] On Littell's promoting the importance of Anabaptism for the "free church" movement, Donald F. Durnbaugh, The Believers' Church: The History and Character of Radical Protestantism (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1968), x, 18. Franklin H. Littell, "The Concept of the Believer's Church," *The Concept of the Believers' Church*, 21.

[21] Estep, "A Believing People: Historical Background," *The Concept of the Believers' Church*, 53.

[22] Hudson, "Baptists Were Not Anabaptists," 176.

[23] Bell, personal correspondence with Mark Bell, February 13, 2024.

[24] Hudon, "Baptists Were Not Anabaptists," 176.

[25] Dennis C. Bustin, *Paradox and Perseverance: Hanserd Knollys, Particular Baptist Pioneer in Seventeenth-Century England* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2006), 164-165. The New Road Church (Oxford) reported, "Some of us do verily believe that the sprinkling of the infant children of believing parents is true Christian baptism. . ." (Charles W. Deweese, *Baptist Church Covenants* [Nashville: Broadman Press, 1990], 34.)

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[27] Thomas Kidd and Barry Hankin, *Baptists in America: A History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 78.

[28] Donal F. Durbaugh, The Believers' Church: The History and Character of Radical Protestantism (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1968), 16.

[29] Contra Anthony L. Chute, Nathan A. Finn, Michael A. G. Haykin, *The Baptist Story: From English Sect to Global Movement* (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Academic, 2015), 14.

[30] C. Douglas Weaver, In Search of the New Testament Church: The Baptist Story (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008), 9.

[31] *Journal for Baptist Theology and Ministry*, New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, August 20, 2023.

[32] Michael P. Winship, *Hot Protestants: A History of Puritanism in England and America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021.)

[33] Michael Watts, *The Dissenters* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1978), 97-98; according to James M. Renihan, *Edification and Beauty*, 13.

[34] Matthew C. Bingham, *Orthodox Radicals: Baptist Identity in the English Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019), 4, 18, 23.

[35] Darrett B. Rutman, *American Puritanism: Faith and Practice* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Company, 1970) 13.

[36] John Coffey and Paul C. H. Lim, *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), 1-2.

[37] Patrick Collinson, *The Elizabethan Puritan Movement* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1967), 467.

[38] The term “semi-separatist” refers to those who were “independent but not against the Church of England,” who retained a “brotherly communion” with the established church. Mark R. Bell, *Apocalypse How? Baptist Movements During the English Revolution* (Macon, Georgia: Mercer University Press, 2000), 55-56.

[39] “A style of piety, an emotional and ideological style, producing distinctive structures of meaning whereby both the world and the self could be construed, interpreted, and acted upon.” Lake, “Defining Puritanism—again?,” *Puritanism: Transatlantic Perspectives on the Seventeenth Century Anglo-American Faith* (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1993), 4.

[40] Michael P. Winship, *Hot Protestants: A History of Puritanism in England and America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021.)

[41] David D. Hall, *The Puritans: A Transatlantic History* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019), 1-2.

[42] Leonard, *Baptists in America,* 8.

[43] Paraphrased from Increase Mather for the 1679 Boston Synod, *The Necessity of Reformation* (Boston, MA: John Foster, 1679), i.

[44] Stanley Grenz, *Isaac Backus — Puritan and Baptist: His Place in History, His Thought, and Their Implications for Modern Baptist Theology*(Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1983), 1.

[45] Bingham, *Orthodox Radicals,* 59.

[46] See John B. Carpenter, “Baptist Polity Inherited from Congregationalism,” *Journal of Baptist Theology and Ministry* 20.2 (Fall 2023), 153-172.

[47] Bart Barber, Twitter, November 29, 2022. "Also Increase Mather: "The Council ordered the doors of the meeting house which the [Baptists] have built in Boston to be shut up...So perverse were they that they would not meet in a private house, but met this Sabbath out of doors." Yeah. Let's listen to the Mathers." In context, this is meant sarcastically.

[48] McLaughlin, "The Rise of Antipedobaptists in New England, 1630-1655," *Baptists in the Balance: The Tension Between Freedom and Responsibility*, edited by Everett C. Goodwin (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1997), 84-92.

[49] Kidd and Hankin, *Baptists in America,* ix, 1.

[50] Matthew C. Bingham, *Orthodox Radicals*, 4, 18, 23.

[51] Hudon, "Baptists Were Not Anabaptists," 176.

[52] William Orme, Remarkable Passages in the Life of William Kiffin (London: Burton and Smith, 1823), 110.

[53] Thomas Crosby, *The History of the English Baptists*, Vol. 1 (London: The Editor, 1738), 334.

[54] E. Johnson, *Wonder-Working Providence of Sion's Saviour in New England* (1654) (Delmar, New York: Scholars' Facsimiles & Reprints, 1974), 1.

[55] Stephen Foster, *The Long Argument: English Puritanism and the Shaping of New England Culture, 1570-1700* (Chapel Hill: The University of Carolina Press, 1991), 199.

[56] Cotton Mather, *The Wonders of the Invisible World* (London: John Dunton, 1693), 5. By "Antipaedobaptist" he means Baptists.

[57] Cotton Mather, *The Great Works of Christ in America,* 2 (Edinburg: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1979), 532-533.

[58] Matthew C. Bingham, *Orthodox Radicals*, 4.

[59] Weaver, *In Search of the New Testament Church: The Baptist Story*, 9.

[60] Hudson, "Baptists Were Not Anabaptists," 172.

[61] Hudson, “Baptists Were Not Anabaptists,” 173.

[62] Deweese, *Baptist Church Covenants*, 36.

[63] Kidd and Hankin, *Baptists in America*, ix, 1.

[64] Anthony L. Chute, Nathan A. Finn, Michael A. G. Haykin, *The Baptist Story*, 35.

[65] Keith Hinson, “Prof’s attack on Calvinism renews debate among Baptists,” *Baptist Press*, April 18, 1997. https://www.baptistpress.com/resource-library/news/profs-attack-on-calvinism-renews-debate-among-baptists/

[66] Barber, Twitter, November 29, 2022. See fn 47 for full quote.

[67] Kidd and Hankins, *Baptists in America*, 29. Kidd and Hankins described the rise of the “Separate Baptists” after the Great Awakening as “de novo,” despite the fact that the term referred to Congregational separatists from the standing order who adopted believer’s baptism.

[68] Separate Baptists condemned “holy day observances.” (Christine Leigh Heyrman, *Southern Cross: The Beginnings of the Bible Belt* [Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997], 11.) Also noted by Chute, Finn & Haykin, as “following in the train of the Puritans” (p. 67.)

[69] original emphasis, *An Earnest Exhortation to the Inhabitants of New England* (Boston: John Foster, 1676), 21.

[70] John B. Carpenter, “A secular Jew makes a surprising discovery about Christians and American slavery,” *Acton Commentary*, April 17, 2019.

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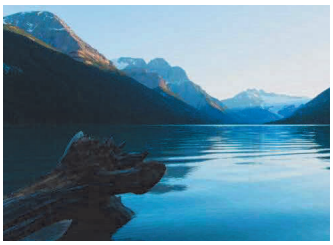

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