

The Definition of the Church (*ekklesia*) – “The called out ones...”

I. A group of redeemed sinners who are *called out* to affirm essential beliefs.

- A. The Great Confession. (Matthew 16:16 - You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.)
- B. The Great Commandment. (Matthew 22:34-40)
- C. The Great Commission. (Matthew 28:19-20)

Excurses:¹

WHO INVENTED THE B.A.P.T.I.S.T. DISTINCTIVES?

Who invented the BAPTIST distinctives? Careful now—we hope the reader did not answer “John the Baptist.”

Baptist beliefs developed during the 1600s in several different places, led by local congregations that were eventually named “Baptist” by detractors who sought to discredit the growing movement. While Baptists hold to some doctrinal ideas that are common to all true Christians (such as the Trinity), we also believe in “distinctives,” specific doctrinal beliefs that are unique to Baptists. And if you grew up in a Regular Baptist church, you were probably taught these beliefs with a simple acrostic of eight brief phrases spelling the word “Baptists.”

This teaching method has become so popular that its origins are often forgotten—and tracking down a “first” claim can be tricky and controversial. Who was the first person to invent an automobile? (Careful! Don’t say Henry Ford.) Or who was the first person to invent the computer? (Not Steve Jobs or Bill Gates.) While some readers will view the acrostic as being so ubiquitous that it has no real origin, the *Baptist Bulletin* is wading into the fray here to offer its correction to the historical record.

The BAPTISTS acrostic was developed in the early 1960s by L. Duane Brown when he was pastor of Pine Valley Baptist Church, Pine Valley, N.Y. Brown was a graduate of Baptist Bible Seminary, where he studied theology with Paul R. Jackson. The following account is from Brown’s recently released memoir, *My Cup Runneth Over*:

While pastoring at Pine Valley Baptist Church, I prepared a systematic lesson plan about the Baptist distinctives designed for thirteen lessons (a Sunday School quarterly). One of the dear ladies in the church, Esther Munson, suggested I set up these Baptist distinctives in an acrostic of the word BAPTISTS. It was mimeographed for Sunday School. I eventually set the acrostic on the plural BAPTISTS as I settled on eight distinctives (doctrine) that historically all Baptists held. A teacher at Baptist Bible Seminary requested copies for his class. Soon requests came from all over.

Brown left Pine Valley Baptist Church to complete his PhD at Bob Jones University, graduating in 1965. He was then called as state representative for New York’s Empire State Fellowship of Regular Baptist Churches. Still receiving requests for his mimeographed copy, Brown decided to have his material printed as a booklet, which he published and copyrighted in 1969. The book became so popular among Regular Baptists that RBP editor Jim Dersham asked Brown for permission to print an edition of the book, leading to the updated edition released by RBP in 1987. After it fell out of print with RBP, Brown continued to publish the book himself (still available at

¹ <http://www.garbc.org/news/who-invented-the-b-a-p-t-i-s-t-distinctives/>

www.drbrownbooks.com). Brown reports 65,000 copies have been printed in English, and the book has been translated into 20 languages.

Brown's acrostic has roots in Paul Jackson's summary of the Baptist distinctives, published in *Doctrine of the Church* (1956) and his later full length book, *The Doctrine and Administration of the Church* (1968). Jackson's outline is quite similar to what became Brown's acrostic, but interestingly, Jackson never used the BAPTISTS acrostic in print. And though Regular Baptist Press published Brown's acrostic in *The Biblical Beliefs of Baptists*, we did not always properly credit Brown when using his acrostic for other Sunday School lessons we published (a mistake we will correct in —future editions).

There is some indication that Duane Brown's BAPTISTS acrostic is gaining popularity in broader Baptist circles. In 1985 Stanley Grenz used the acrostic in his well-known book on polity, *The Baptist Congregation*. In a similar way, Joe Early Jr. used the acrostic in his introduction to *The Life and Writings of Thomas Helwys*. But neither book offers attribution for the acrostic's source!

Is the acrostic still an effective teaching tool? When a teaching method becomes wildly popular, it often attracts criticism and reevaluation. Colin Smith addressed this in a recent *Baptist Bulletin* article, "Where's the 'C' in the Baptist Distinctives?" (July/August 2008, available online at BaptistBulletin.org). Smith suggests that we should not confuse a teaching method with a theological system. And a teaching method that works very well in a local church setting may not be equally effective with seminary students and church leaders. This need for advanced works on Baptist theology is what motivates the new series of books from Regular Baptist Press.

B Biblical Authority

A Autonomy of the Local Church

P Priesthood of the Believer

T Two Ordinances

I Individual Soul Liberty

S Saved Church Membership

T Two Officers

S Separation of Church and State

The Definition of the Church (Matthew) – “The called out ones...”

I. A group of redeemed sinners who are called out to affirm essential beliefs.

II. A group of redeemed sinners who are called out to engage in foundational activities.

A. Building community (Acts 2:42)

1. Around Instruction (the Apostle's doctrine)
2. Around Connection (fellowship)
3. Around Reflection (the breaking of bread – Communion)
4. Around Supplication (the prayers)

B. Providing accountability (Hebrews 10:24-25)

1. Regarding your motives (love)
2. Regarding your deeds (good works)
3. Regarding your ministry commitment (meeting together and encouraging each other)

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- I. A group of redeemed sinners who are called out to affirm essential beliefs.**
- II. A group of redeemed sinners who are *called out* to engage in foundational activities.**

APPLY THE TEXT:

Join the church.

- **Attend a monthly “Get to Know PBC” gathering at the home of Greg and Debbie Blakes to learn more about the church.**
 - Share your testimony at the conclusion of the morning worship service with one of the pastors.
 - Get baptized: next baptismal service is Sunday, September 30, 2018.
 - Get voted in by the membership at the conclusion of one of the morning worship services.

Connect with a Shepherding Group.

- **The Purpose of Shepherding Groups**
 - "Shepherding Groups at PBC exist to connect our members through small communities that fellowship, learn, serve, suffer, and pray together." (based on the “one another passages...”)
- **The organization of Shepherding Groups**
 - Study Scripture (lightbulb; question mark; arrow... Incorporating the Blue Letter Bible App)
 - Corporate prayer
 - Fellowship at the conclusion of each group and at least once a month as a focus of the gathering time
- **The need for host homes.**
 - We need two more SG in the Greenville/ Cherrydale area.
 - We need one more SG in the Travelers Rest area.
 - We need one more SG in Taylors/Greer area.
 - We need one more SG in Mauldin area.

Serve in a particular ministry of the church.

- Join us on Saturday evenings at 6 PM to set up chairs.
 - Help take down the chairs at the end of the service.
- Join the parking and ushering team.
- Invite guests to lunch following the service.
- Volunteer to serve as a nursery worker or teacher’s assistant.
- Volunteer to help with the coffee set up.
- Volunteer to help with the AV team.

Send an email via the church website (pbcpowdersville.org) expressing your area of interest or Facebook Message the church!