



BAPTIST HISTORY AND WORSHIP



FEBRUARY 1, 2025
IRBY WALLACE

Table of Contents

England and the Reformation	2
Baptist Beginnings in England	3
Baptist Beginnings in America	9
The Eighteenth Century	10
The Nineteenth Century	15
Worship in the Nineteenth Century	17
The Twentieth Century and Beyond	20
My Conclusion of Baptist Worship History.....	24
Bibliography.....	26

THEOLOGY OF WORSHIP
Baptist History and Worship

England and the Reformation

- I. Reformation and the Five Solas
 - a. In 1517, Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany
 - b. During the Reformation, five doctrines would be credited with summing up the theology of the reformers that separated them from the Roman Catholic Church
 - i. Sola Scriptura – Scripture alone – Scripture is the sufficient and final authority for theology and doctrine
 - ii. Sola Fide – Faith alone – Justification is a free gift given to us through faith
 - iii. Sola Gratia – Grace alone – We can not save ourselves, but salvation only comes through the grace of God
 - iv. Solus Christus – Christ alone – Christ must be at the center of our theology and salvation only comes through Christ Jesus
 - v. Soli Deo Gloria – The glory of God alone – Our salvation is for the glory of God
- II. The Reformation in England
 - a. King Henry VIII was a Catholic who married to his brother's widow, Catherine of Aragon
 - i. The two had several stillborn children and children who died very early
 - ii. They only had one daughter who would survive, Mary, who we will see again later.
 - b. Henry sought to divorce his wife and marry a protestant woman named Anne Boleyn
 - i. He had to have consent from the Roman Catholic Church
 - ii. Pope Clement VII would not give consent
 - c. Through the Act of Supremacy in 1534, Henry broke all ties with the Roman Catholic Church placing the headship of the Church in England with the King
 - d. Henry would remove all Catholic monasteries by 1539 and all the churches in England became known as the Church of England (Anglicans)
 - e. Their theology and worship largely remained the same, only that they were now separated from Rome
- III. Henry VIII died on January 28, 1547, leaving the son of his third marriage, Edward VI, as the king of England
 - a. By 1549, Protestant services were the standard in England through the Book of Common Prayer from Edward's reign.
 - b. Edward would die on July 6, 1553
- IV. Henry VIII's oldest daughter, Mary, became Queen of England
 - a. Mary used her reign to turn England back to Roman Catholicism by removing the Act of Supremacy

- b. She introduced heresy laws which led to many Protestants being burned at the stake, resulting in her nickname, Bloody Mary
- V. Mary died on November 17, 1558, without any children and her half sister Elizabeth became Queen.
 - a. Elizabeth was an adamant Protestant and undid all the work Mary did to restore Roman Catholicism and the Act of Supremacy and her own Act of Uniformity in 1559
 - b. From this point forward, the Church of England was the official religion of England
 - c. Many Catholics attempted to overthrow Elizabeth, and many Protestants sought to reform the theology of England with Calvinistic views resulting in the “Elizabethan Settlement” that attempted to find compromise between the two groups
- VI. Puritans in England
 - a. As Protestantism was growing and the preaching of Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, John Calvin, and many others were transforming the religious world
 - b. Parties of Englishmen who would become known as the Puritans, sought to purify the church by reforming the Church of England by seeking:
 - i. Simplified worship
 - ii. Presbyterian polity over the episcopal model
 - iii. Calvinistic doctrines
 - c. The Church of England would not allow these changes and Elizabeth sought to enforce conformity through law

Baptist Beginnings in England

- VII. Separation from the Church of England
 - a. As reform was unsuccessful, groups began to separate themselves from the church for many reasons
 - b. By the 1560s there were groups meeting separately for worship, Bible study, and prayer
- VIII. The General Baptists
 - a. The first identifiable Baptist church to separate from the Church of England would become known as the General Baptists
 - b. They are designated as “general” because they held to an Arminian theology and believed in a general atonement
 - c. This church was founded by John Smyth (c. 1570-1612) around 1606 as he joined together with another Separatist group of which he was named the minister
 - d. Over time, this church grew so large it became dangerous for them to meet under the persecution of England and the church divided for their own protection in 1607
 - i. One group left for America on the *Mayflower*
 - ii. The other group, led by Smyth, moved to Holland
 - e. By 1609, Smyth and another leader in the church, Thomas Helwys, were convinced that baptism should only be applied to believers, and they disbanded their church and constituted a new one based on believer’s baptism

- i. The problem that arose for Smyth was that he believed no one in his church had ever received a valid baptism as they were all baptized as infants
 - ii. Smyth baptized himself and the members of his church
 - f. Very soon afterward, Smyth regretted his self-baptism and started to believe that baptism must come through succession and he left to join the Mennonites, though they never received him into their church
 - g. Helwys did not agree with Smyth and took over the church as pastor upon Smyth's leaving
 - i. Helwys then moved the congregation back to Spitalfield, England in 1611
 - ii. This is believed to be the first Baptist church in England by many
 - h. Helwys would later be imprisoned for his Baptist convictions and John Murton became the pastor.
 - i. By 1624, there were at least five other General Baptists churches in England
- IX. The Particular Baptists
 - a. A second group of separatists arose that would later be named the Particular Baptists
 - b. This group of Baptists held to reformed theology (Calvinistic theology) and are called "particular" because they believe in a particular atonement
 - c. Henry Jacob returned to London in 1616 after a conference with reformed-minded individuals and started a separatist church that would become known as the JIJ church after its first three pastors
 - d. Jacob would move to Virginia in 1622 and John Lanthrop would become the pastor
 - i. During Lanthrop's ministry, many of the members were upset that some of their members continued to attend parish church services under the Church of England
 - ii. Even further offense occurred when some members had their babies baptized in the parishes in 1630
 - iii. Some members left under the leadership of a Mr. Dupper and started a new separatist church
 - e. In 1633 another schism happened when the church grew too large to be safe and there was continued unrest about the acceptance of the Church of England's services and ceremonies
 - i. Another group followed Samuel Eaton and left
 - ii. We are not sure what happened to this group but there is evidence of a Calvinistic church in London in which some of its members had received a baptism as adults
 - f. In 1634, Lanthrop left the church, and the church did not call another pastor until 1637 when it called Henry Jesse
 - i. As Jesse wanted to continue in the way of the pastors before him, members of the church left under the leadership of John Spilsbury
 - ii. Spilsbury would become the pastor of the first Particular Baptist in London
 - iii. It is unclear if Samuel Eaton started the church in 1633 and Spilsbury took it over in 1638 or if Spilsbury started a new church

- iv. It is possible that the first Particular Baptist church was formed in 1633, but we know it was formed by 1638
- g. By 1644, there were seven other Particular Baptist churches in and near London as they issued the First London Baptist Confession
- X. Worship of the General Baptists
 - a. John Smyth's personal beliefs on worship were that:
 - i. Worship must come from the heart
 - ii. Reading out of any book in time of worship was a sinful invention of men and would not even allow reading from the Bible in worship
 - iii. Prayer, singing of psalms, and preaching had to be spontaneous
 - b. The oldest record of Baptist worship comes from a letter to Smyth from his cousins, Hughe and Anne Bromhead

"The order of the worshippe and government of oure church is .1. we begynne wth A prayer, after reade some one or tow chapters of the bible gyve the sence thereof, and conferr vpon the same, that done we lay aside our bookes, and after a solemne prayer made by the .1. speaker, he propoundeth some text owt of the Scripture, and prophecieth owt of the same, by the space of one hower, or thre Quarters of an hower. After him standeth vp A .2. speaker and prophecieth owt of the same text the like tyme and space, some tyme more some tyme less. After him the .3. the .4. the .5. & as the tyme will geve leave, Then the .1. speaker concludeth wth prayer as he began with prayer, wth an exhortation to contribute to the poore, wch collection being made is also concluded wth prayer. This Morning exercise begynes at eight of the clocke and continueth vnto twelve of the clocke the like course of exercise is observed in the afternowne from .2. of the clock vnto .5. or .6. of the Clocke, last of all the execution of the goverment of the church is handled."¹

- i. Their order of service looked like:
 1. Prayer
 2. Reading of scripture
 3. Prayer
 4. Preacher 1
 5. Peracher 2
 6. As many preachers to follow that time would allow
 7. The first preacher would conclude with prayer
 8. Offering collection
- ii. These services lasted from 8:00 AM to 12:00PM and again from 2:00PM to 6:00PM
- iii. The above service model would continue over the next century with some modifications
- c. Spontaneity in worship was required in worship which came from an extreme resistance to the *Book of Common Prayer*

¹ McBeth, *Sourcebook*, 21.

- d. Foot washing was part of some of these early churches but was not very widespread.
 - e. The Lord's Supper was an important act of worship and was observed weekly by some and in some churches the Lord's Supper was part of a love feast
 - f. Singing was very restrictive
 - i. Group singing was not allowed
 - ii. No musical instruments were allowed
 - iii. Only men were allowed to sing, and they had to sing solo
 - iv. Only biblical texts could be sung because the use of hymns was viewed as manmade
 - v. Singing had to be loud and clear
- XI. Worship of the Particular Baptists
- a. While the Particular Baptists emphasized baptism for believers only in opposition to their Puritan contemporaries, they did not diverge from them in the structure of their worship
 - b. Much of their theology was by John Calvin and other major reformers
 - c. This image is an example of what the Church of England Liturgy looked like from the Book of Prayer

BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER (1549)	BOOK OF COMMON PRAYER (1552)
Psalm	Lord's Prayer
Lord's Prayer	Prayer of Preparation
Prayer of Preparation	Decalogue
Psalm	Confession
Kyrie	Collects
Gloria	Epistle
Salutation	Gospel
Collects	Creed
Epistle	Sermon
Gospel	Offertory Sentences
Nicene Creed	Offering
Sermon	Intercessions
Exhortation	Exhortation
Offertory Sentences	Invitation
Offering	Confession
<i>Sumus Corda</i>	Absolution
Preface	Comfortable Words
Sanctus	Preface
Prayer for the Church	Sanctus
Prayer of Consecration	Prayer of Humble Access
Prayer of Oblation	Prayer of Consecration
Lord's Prayer	Distribution
The Peace	Lord's Prayer
<i>Agnus Dei</i>	Prayer of Thanksgiving
Invitation	Gloria
Confession	Benediction
Absolution	
Comfortable Words	
Prayer of Humble Access	
Distribution	
<i>Agnus Dei</i>	
Sentences of Scripture	
Prayer of Thanksgiving	
Benediction	

2

- d. The following image is an example of the Middelburg Liturgy (1586) that many of the Puritans and Particular Baptists of the day might have followed:

^{2 2} 1. Jonathan Gibson and Mark Earngey, eds., "Middelburg Liturgy," *Reformation Worship Book*, accessed January 30, 2025, <https://reformationworship.com/book-of-common-prayer/>.

SERVICE OF THE WORD	SERVICE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER
Preparatory Scripture	Preparatory Scripture and Psalms*
and Psalms	Votum* (Ps. 124:8)
Votum (Ps. 124:8)	Confession*
Confession	Psalm*
Psalm	Prayer for Illumination*
Prayer for Illumination	Lord's Prayer*
Lord's Prayer	Scripture*
Scripture	Sermon*
Sermon	Intercessions*
Intercessions	Words of Institution
Psalm	Exhortation
Benediction or the Grace	Prayer of Thanksgiving
Dismissal*	Distribution
	Scripture
	Prayer of Thanksgiving
	Psalm 103 or another Psalm of Thanksgiving
	Benediction or The Grace

3

- e. The early Particular Baptists were not as adamant as the General Baptists were on singing, yet they still opposed it in their worship; however, it would be the Particular Baptists who would introduce hymn singing into their worship by the end of the seventeenth century

XII. Baptist Hymn-Singing Controversy

- a. We must remember that part of the puritan separation movement which our Baptist forefathers came from was the desire to purify worship through reform
- b. One of the major doctrines that developed in the Reformation about worship is the regulative principle which teaches that anything we do in worship should be based on scripture and what God had commanded
- c. The first major conflict in Baptist history occurred within the Particular Baptist communities over whether scripture allowed for congregational singing of hymns or not
- d. One of the most prominent influences upon Baptist hymn singing was Benjamin Keach who first introduced his children's song book to his congregation at Horsleydown in 1664
 - i. This led to stark disagreement within the congregation
 - ii. He convinced his church to sing a hymn after the Lord's Supper in 1673, allowing those who did not wish to participate to leave before the song
 - iii. In 1679, the church decided to sing a hymn on special event days
 - iv. It wasn't until fourteen years later that the congregation would make singing a regular part of their worship

³ 1. Jonathan Gibson and Mark Earney, eds., "Middelburg Liturgy," *Reformation Worship Book*, accessed January 30, 2025, <https://reformationworship.com/middelburg-liturgy/>.

- v. Even after the twenty years of working towards singing, twenty-two members of his church left for a church that did not sing, though that church would soon begin singing
- e. There was so much division over singing in the Particular Baptists that most believe that this controversy is what kept the Calvinistic Baptists from becoming a nationally organized denomination in England in the seventeenth century
- f. The Particular Baptists assembled in 1689 and they gave approval for each church to decide for themselves to allow singing or not
- g. The 1689 Second London Baptist Confession includes the following statement: “The reading of the Scriptures, preaching, and hearing the Word of God, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in our hearts to the Lord; as also the administration of baptism, and the Lord's supper, are all parts of religious worship of God, to be performed in obedience to him, with understanding, faith, reverence, and godly fear; moreover, solemn humiliation, with fastings, and thanksgivings, upon special occasions, ought to be used in an holy and religious manner.”⁴
- h. The General Baptist Assembly met in 1689 and declared hymn-singing as a “foreign to evangelical worship”
- i. The General Baptists would not accept hymn-singing until the eighteenth century

Baptist Beginnings in America

- XIII. First Baptists in America
 - a. We do not know who the first Baptist was in America, but the first Baptist church in America was officially formed in 1639 by Roger Williams in Providence, Rhode Island
 - i. Though it began as a Particular Baptist church, by the 1650s it became more General in theology
 - ii. By the next century it switched by to a Particular emphasis
 - iii. The church had no meeting house until 1700 and met in homes and outside (in good weather) until then
 - b. The second Baptist church in America was founded in Newport, Rhode Island in 1644 by John Clarke
 - i. Though this church was a Particular church, it had General Baptists members who would split from the church in 1665 (though some sources say 1656)
 - ii. Another issue that caused the division and was happening throughout Baptists was the issue of laying on of hands
 - 1. Particular Baptists did not always practice this and would become known as the “Five-Principle Baptists” from principles found in Hebrews 6:1-2

⁴ The 1689 Baptist Confession of Faith: Chapter 22, Paragraph 5. Accessed January 30, 2025. <https://www.the1689confession.com/>.

- 2. The General Baptists were called “Six-Principle Baptists” as they did practice laying on of hands for new converts
 - iii. A later schism would occur in 1671 over the Sabbath day
 - c. Though today Baptist churches dominate the south, in the seventeenth century the Baptist denomination had a slow start
 - d. The first Baptist church in the south which has played a prominent role in Southern Baptist history is the Baptist church formed in Charleston, South Carolina
 - i. When the original settlers moved to Charleston, the colony was granted religious freedom and there were many Baptists among that group
 - ii. They never had a formal church or leadership until October of 1696 when William Screven moved his church from Kittery, Maine, to Charleston
 - iii. The settlers and Screven’s church began to worship together and many of the settlers joined the church
 - iv. This church was a Particular Baptist church but accepted General Baptists
 - e. Churches in the colonies were small and scattered
- XIV. Dividing Issues for Baptists in the Seventeenth Century**
- a. There were many doctrines causing problems for Baptists
 - i. Predestination was at the heart of the conflict between Particular and General Baptists across the world but also in the colonies
 - ii. The doctrine of laying on of hands upon new converts
 - iii. Hymn singing in worship
 - iv. The debate of the Sabbath being on Saturday or Sunday
- XV. Baptist Worship in the Seventeenth Century**
- a. Worship was informal with great emphasis upon the Bible
 - b. Pastors were bi-vocational and what education they had received before coming to America
 - c. Since most Baptist churches were founded by immigrants from England, singing was controversial in America as it was in England
 - d. It seems that some of the churches tried singing the Psalms but laid them aside

The Eighteenth Century

- XVI. Enlightenment in England**
- a. In the eighteenth century, an intellectual revolution that would later be known as “The Enlightenment” changed peoples’ views on God, humanity, and the universe
 - i. Natural theology (theology based on observation of nature rather than divine revelation) became a popular position
 - ii. Commerce, rationalism, and science would take the place of religion for many
 - iii. The Baptist churches in England would be heavily impacted from this movement and see a massive decline
- XVII. The General Baptists’ Decline in England**
- a. The General Baptists would fall into theological decline as they would begin accepted unorthodox doctrines

- i. The first issue that arose among the General Baptists came as many of their leaders denied the deity of Christ which led to major schism among the assembly
- ii. They would also adopt liberal theology and thus had no gospel to preach
- iii. There was a lot of infighting over minor issues such as singing and whether singing could be done standing or sitting
- iv. The eighteenth century was not a good century for the General Baptists in England
- v. In 1715, there were around 146 churches and by 1750, there were only 65

XVIII. The Particular Baptists' Decline in England

- a. The Particular Baptists did not fare well in the beginnings of the century, either
 - i. Hyper-Calvinism grew in the hearts of the churches, and they lost their zeal for evangelism
 - ii. They also adopted an Antinomian view because of their extreme Calvinism
 - iii. Many of their congregations were neglected with no one stepping up to be ministers
 - iv. In 1715, there were around 220 churches, but by 1750, only 146 remained

XIX. The Great Awakening

- a. In 1738, John Wesley, his brother, Charles, and their friend, George Whitfield would begin a movement of "revival" that changed Christian churches for good and for bad
 - i. This great revival will be at the heart of every matter we discuss about worship within the Baptist denomination even today, whether we know it or not
 - ii. This great revival brought a passionate calling of evangelism to churches in both Europe and America
- b. The Methodist Church was born out of this movement based upon the methods used to revive churches in this revival
- c. This movement brought along with it a renewed morality within Christianity and participation in missions, Sunday School, and evangelism
- d. Additionally, worship and preaching in some churches were changed
- e. Though the originators of this movement were not Baptists, Baptists benefited greatly from this awakening

XX. Baptist Revival in England

- a. After the division of the General Baptists, a Methodist convert to Baptist, Dan Taylor came into Baptist life in 1763 and founded a Baptist congregation
 - i. He started a General Baptist association known as the "New Connection of General Baptists" who were "Free Grace Baptists"
 - ii. The General Baptists who existed before, or the "Old Connection," dwindled away and this New Connection became the General Baptists of England
 - iii. One of the major differences between this New Connection and the Old was that they practiced congregational singing
- b. In the 1750s, the Particular Baptists began to have a revival out of the strict Hyper-Calvinism that had gripped many of its congregations

- i. One inspiration in this revival was *The Reign of Grace* by Abraham Booth written in 1768 who was a strong Calvinist with a massive emphasis on evangelism
- ii. We cannot talk about the renewal of the Particular Baptists without talking about Andrew Fuller and William Carey and their influence in the Baptist world would impact even the Baptist churches in America today
- iii. Andrew Fuller is considered one of the greatest English Baptist theologians that was called to pastored in Kettering church in 1783
 1. His book, *The Gospel Worth of All Acceptation*, is one of the most influential books in that century which taught a Calvinism that made room for evangelism and missions
 2. His book would help pave the way for the mission movement that continues today
 3. Fuller's theology would become known as "Fullerism"
- iv. Fuller had a close friend named William Carey who shared in the same theological convictions
 1. In May 1792, Carey was preaching at the associating meeting at Nottingham which Andrew Fuller was leading on expecting great things from God and attempting great things for God
 2. Fuller was to close the meeting without any action until Carey said to him, "Oh, sir, is nothing to be done? Is nothing again to be done?"
 3. This changed the tide, and the association adopted the resolution saying, "Resolved, that a plan be prepared against the next Ministers meeting in Kettering, for forming a Baptist society for Propagating the gospel among the Heathen."⁵
 4. This group that would be formed would be known as the "Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel among the Heathen," but the shorter title was the Baptist Missionary Society (BMS)
 5. The BMS would send William Carey to India as a missionary where Carey would spend the rest of his life
 6. This movement is what would inspire the mission boards born in the American colonies

XXI. Baptist Revival in America

- a. Nowhere did the Great Awakening have a greater impact on Baptists than in America
 - i. At the beginning of the eighteenth century, there were 24 Baptist churches in America with 839 members
 - ii. By 1790, there were 979 churches with 67,490 members and at least 42 associations discussing a national organization
 - iii. It was the influence of the Presbyterian pastor and theologian, Jonathan Edwards, and the preaching of George Whitfield that shook the American churches and inspired revival throughout the Baptist churches

⁵ McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 185.

- b. Though no one can deny the massive impact of this revival, not everyone saw the Great Awakening as a good thing
 - i. The preaching of men like Whitfield was a new style of preaching that was filled with zeal and a lot of shouting
 - ii. This style of preaching was considered “shallow, overly emotional, and without lasting effect”⁶
- c. This division over revival would lead to a disagreement in the Particular Baptists
 - i. The Regular Baptists who did not like the revival for fear that they were manipulative and emotional
 - ii. The Separate Baptists who saw the revivals as God’s work in the church
 - iii. These two groups were both Calvinistic groups and weren’t divided as much on doctrine but mostly on the impact of revivals
 - iv. The Separates would end up having the biggest influence in the southern colonies

XXII. Two Traditions

- a. The Sandy Creek Tradition
 - i. In 1755, the first Separate Baptist Church was formed in the south in Sandy Cree, North Carolina
 - ii. The church grew from 16 members to 606 members in a few years and had spread throughout the south planting similar churches
 - iii. The following list were commonly shared among the Sandy Creek Tradition:
 - 1. Very emotional preaching and services and “shouting, weeping, and falling down in a faint were not uncommon”⁷
 - 2. Most held to the nine rites: baptism, Lord’s Supper, love feast, laying on of hands, foot washing, anointing the sick, the right hand of fellowship, the kiss of charity, and dedicating children
 - 3. Pastors did not have an education for if God wanted educated pastors, he would call them
 - 4. Many opposed paying a pastor any salary
 - iv. The Separates devised the method of the “evangelical invitation”
- b. The Charleston Tradition
 - i. While the Separate Baptist churches in the South are referred to as the “Sandy Creek Tradition,” the Regular Baptists are typically categorized within the “Charleston Tradition” from the Baptist church that was founded in Charleston, SC in 1696
 - ii. Some historians have distinguished the two groups with the expressions ORDER and ARDOR
 - 1. ORDER – The Charleston tradition favored liturgical order in their worship and stately hymns, educated ministers, and ecclesiological order

⁶ McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 203.

⁷ McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage*, 230.

2. ARDOR – The Sandy Creek tradition favored charismatic, revivalistic worship where “Faith was felling and every Sunday a camp meeting”⁸
- c. Union of the Regular and Separate Baptists
 - i. Both sides of the Baptist tradition attempted to seek unity as the Charleston Association (Regular Baptists) sent Oliver Hart and Evan Pugh to North Carolina to meet with the Separate Baptists in 1763
 - ii. Each group had barriers that slowed the process of uniting
 1. For the Regulars:
 - a. The Separates allowed women and untrained men to preach
 - b. Their manner of preaching and worship
 - c. The Regulars were confessional, typically holding to the Philadelphia Confession (1742), and the Separates refused to hold to a confession
 - d. The Separates use of the nine rites
 - e. Some of the Separates strict social customs (i.e. plain clothes)
 2. For the Separatists:
 - a. The Regulars kept women silent in church
 - b. The Regulars tolerated expensive and elaborate forms of clothing
 - c. They felt that confessions undermined the authority of Scripture
 - iii. Over time both sides softened on these issues as they both desire religious liberty and became united around the Philadelphia Confession, but both agreed that the Separates should be free to disagree with parts of the confession as said in the following report from the committee in which this debate took place:

“To prevent the confession of faith from usurping a tyrannical power over the conscience of any, we do not mean, that every person is bound to the strict observance of every thing therein contained; yet that it holds forth the essential truths of the gospel, and that the doctrine of salvation by Christ, and free and unmerited grace alone, ought to be believed by every Christian, and maintained by every minister of the gospel. Upon these terms we are united, and desire hereafter, that the names Regular and Separate be buried in oblivion; and that from henceforth, we shall be known by the name of the United Baptist Churches, in Virginia.”⁹
 - iv. It is these two streams of Baptist churches that would influence the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention and we still are trying to maintain a balance between these two traditions

⁸ Walter B. Shurden, “The Southern Baptist Synthesis: Is It Cracking?” *Baptist History and Heritage*, pp. 2–11, quoted in H. Leon McBeth, *The Baptist Heritage* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1987), 234.

⁹ McBeth, *Sourcebook*, 166.

XXIII. Religious Freedom Achieved

- a. In the southern colonies, Anglicanism was established by law and the Baptists still were fighting for religious freedom in the eighteenth century
- b. Another contribution of the Great Awakening alongside the explosion of churches in America was the greater push for religious liberty and this movement propelled this country toward the American Revolution as it transformed American culture
- c. With the American victory and the Constitution put in place, religious freedom was achieved in America and the nineteenth century would be a time of monumental growth for the Baptist church

XXIV. Baptist Worship in the Eighteenth Century

- a. Most of their services were focused on the preaching of the Word and the pulpit was typically elevated with stairs to access it
- b. Instruments were rarely used as they were not available, too expensive, or too worldly, or not viewed as scriptural
- c. By 1750, most Baptists accepted congregational singing, though some still resisted, but the next disagreement was over what to sing as this century produced many different hymnbooks from people such as Nahum Tate, Nicholas Brady, and Isaac Watts
- d. It is difficult to know what their singing looked like in these churches because we don't have many records
 - i. There were no professional music leaders, and the hymns were lacking
 - ii. One practice of the day was "lining out" where the minister would read out the line and the people sing after him
- e. Those in the Sandy Creek Tradition fully accepted singing and were well known for their enthusiasm while those in the Charleston Tradition were more restrained in their manner of singing psalms and hymns
- f.

The Nineteenth Century

XXV. National Organizations

- a. One of the major points of growth in the nineteenth century for the Baptist church was organizing nationally into associations
- b. There were no national Baptist associations in 1800, but by the end of the century there were many
- c. Despite a general adoption of the Philadelphia Confession of 1742 and the New Hampshire confession of 1833, Baptists could not achieve a unite in their theology and below are some of the issues that caused division:
 - i. Unitarianism, Mormonism, and Campbellism took many churches
 - ii. Sabbath day debates
 - iii. Membership in secret societies like the Masons
 - iv. Some took on an anti-mission mindset
 - v. Those who favored missions could not decide how to organize them
 - vi. The greatest controversy was slavery

XXVI. Triennial Convention

- a. Luther Rice was one of William Carey's colleagues in their mission efforts in India and Rice was sent to America to raise support for the Baptist mission effort
- b. Due to Rice's efforts, thirty-three delegates met at First Baptist Church of Philadelphia to form the General Mission Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States for Foreign Missions, though most people referred to it as the "Triennial Convention" because it met every three years
- c. Even though they were committed to mission work, they were Baptist and sharp disagreement immediately ensued over how to organize their efforts
 - i. Most of the northern Baptists wanted mission support to be through an "society plan" in which independent groups, unconnected to the churches, would support missionary efforts
 - ii. The southern Baptists wanted a "convention plan" in which the mission efforts based on the churches which would send delegates and contributions to organize missions
- d. At first, the plan that was adopted was a compromise of the two and the vote came down to a swing vote of a northern Baptist named Francis Wayland who favored the southern plan for about a decade
- e. The Convention would expand into home missions, education, and publications
- f. In 1826, due to many issues, the Convention removed all of these expansions to focus only on foreign missions and reversed their organization style to a "society plan" only and moved the convention meetings from Philadelphia to Boston

XXVII. North and South Discord

- a. Tensions rose from Baptist in the southern region as all the changes were made through the years and they felt they were not getting their fair share of home missionaries, but the final straw was over the issue of slavery
 - i. The northern Baptists were very much against slavery, but the leaders of Baptist societies did not want to divide over the issue and continued to try to cooperate in missions, but division was inevitable
 - ii. In 1841, the Convention voted on a neutral stance on slavery, saying that their purpose was missions and not to control Baptist churches
 - iii. These efforts were fruitless as the two sides grew more adamant about their positions
 - iv. In 1844, a resolution was introduced at the Home Mission Society meeting that owning slaves would not be a barrier to appointment as a missionary, a resolution which was accepted by the HMS
 - v. In the very next action of the meeting, however, there was a motion for a friendly dissolution of the HMS
- b. While division had begun, an event in Georgia and Alabama sped up the process
 - i. Georgia Test Case
 - 1. The Georgia Baptists nominated a slave owner named James E. Reeve, for appointment as a home missionary and raised the funds for his support to test the HMS and see if they would honor their neutrality

2. The HMS decided not to act on the test case because they felt it would go against their neutrality, so they neither voted yes or no, they just didn't vote
- ii. Alabama Resolutions
 1. The Baptist State Convention of Alabama wrote a strongly worded letter to the Triennial Convention asking if slaveholders would be appointed as foreign missionaries
 2. The resolutions stated that the power to appoint missionaries was shared by churches and not just the board
 3. The board responded by saying that the appointing power was confined only to the acting board and would remain there
- iii. The board was left with a dilemma of whether to placate the South and lose the North or vice versa
 1. Division was inevitable either way and Northern Baptists could divide among themselves or cut ties to the South
 2. They chose to separate themselves from the South
- c. The Southern Baptist Convention
 - i. On May 8, 1845, delegates from various Southern Baptist churches met in Augusta, Georgia
 - ii. The Southern Baptist Convention was born, and William Bullein Johnson was elected the first president
 - iii. At its formation, the SBC had 4,126 churches and 351,951 members

XXVIII. Landmarkism in the SBC

- a. One of the greatest crises to arise for the newly formed SBC in the nineteenth century is that of landmarkism
- b. Landmarkism teaches:
 - i. Baptist churches are the only true churches in the world
 - ii. The true church is a local, visible institution and there is no "universal" church
 - iii. Churches are the kingdom of God and that the kingdom of God is made up of Baptist churches
 - iv. There can be no "pulpit affiliation" with non-Baptist groups
 - v. Only Baptists can perform the ordinances of scripture
 - vi. Baptist churches have always existed and can be traced by to Jesus Christ and even John the Baptist in an unbroken succession
 - vii. There was a low tolerance for uncertainty, and one needed to have absolute certainty on any religious issue and there could be no diversity of views
- c. Landmarkism was never adopted fully into the SBC, but traces of it still remaining today

Worship in the Nineteenth Century

XXIX. The Second Great Awakening

- a. After the forming of the United States of America, there were many things leading the country into a staleness in their faith
 - i. The rise of Deism
 - ii. The aftermath of war
 - iii. A great influx of immigrants to this new country who moved westward
- b. The Second Great Awakening happened in three stages:
 - i. In New England under leaders such as Timothy Dwight (1752-1817), grandson of Jonathan Edwards, who promoted renewal among young Christians
 - ii. Along the Erie Canal in Upstate New York under the leadership of Charles Finney (1792-1875)
 - iii. In central Kentucky and Tennessee in camp meetings
 - 1. One such camp meeting is known as the Cane Ridge Revival (1801) led by Barton Stone (1772-1844)
 - 2. At this camp meeting, thousands of pioneers were in attendance and there are records that “signs and wonders appeared all around, as hundreds of worshipers, slain in the Spirit, barked like dogs, jerked uncontrollably, fell into trances, danced, and shouted”¹⁰

XXX. Charles Finney, the New Measures, and the Birth of Revivalism

- a. Though he did not invent revival, Charles Finney (1792-1875) has become known as the “Father of Revivalism” because his teachings on revival became the foundation of the revivalist movement
- b. Finney did not believe Revival to be a miracle of God, but to be the work of man inspired by the Spirit of God and for man to come to God, they must be excited to the point that it overcomes any opposing influence in their life:

“Religion is the work of man. It is something for man to do. It consists in obeying God with and from the heart. It is man’s duty. It is true, God induces him to do it. He influences him by his Spirit, because of his great wickedness and reluctance to obey. If it were not necessary for God to influence men—if men were disposed to obey God, there would be no occasion to pray, “O Lord, revive thy work.” The ground of necessity for such a prayer is, that men are wholly indisposed to obey; and unless God interpose the influence of his Spirit, not a man on earth will ever obey the commands of God.

A ‘Revival of Religion’ presupposes a declension. Almost all the religion in the world has been produced by revivals. God has found it necessary to take advantage of the excitability there is in mankind, to produce powerful excitements among them, before he can lead them to obey. Men are so spiritually sluggish, there are so many things to lead their minds off from religion, and to oppose the influence of the Gospel, that it is necessary to raise an excitement among them, till the tide rises so high as to sweep away the opposing obstacles. They must be so excited that they will break over these counteracting influences, before they will obey God. Not that excited feeling is religion, for it is not; but it is excited desire, appetite and feeling

¹⁰ Sweeney, *The American Evangelical Story*, 83.

that prevents religion. The will is, in a sense, enslaved by the carnal and worldly desires. Hence it is necessary to awaken men to a sense of guilt and danger, and thus produce an excitement of counter feeling and desire which will break the power of carnal and worldly desire and leave the will free to obey God.”¹¹

- c. To accomplish the goal of revival, there must be measures employed that allow the preaching of the Gospel to take effect in people:
“It is manifest, that, in preaching the Gospel, there must be some kind of measures adopted. The Gospel must be gotten before the minds of the people, and measures must be taken so that they can hear it, and to induce them to attend to it. This is done by building churches, holding stated or other meetings, and so on. Without some measures, it can never be made to take effect among men.”¹²
- d. Finney employed the use of his “New Measures”:
 - i. *Anxious Meetings* where a person or group would be invited to have a “personal conversation with anxious sinners, and to adapt instruction to the cases of individuals, so as to lead them immediately to Christ”
 - ii. *Protracted Meetings* that would last for days “in order to make a more powerful impression of divine things upon the minds of the people”
 - iii. The *anxious seat* was a chair or a bench that was placed at the front of the meeting place where “the anxious may come and be address particularly, and be made subjects of prayer, and sometimes be conversed with individually”¹³
- e. Finney and the new measures were very controversial in their day, but Finney’s defense for their employment was that “new” things have always been adopted in church life
- f. Finney did not invent any of these new measures, but he is credited with securing their place in the Christian faith and popularizing them
- g. Charles Finney’s ideas would become the standard methods used by the great evangelists of the twentieth century such as Billy Sunday and Billy Graham
- h. Finney’s impact in the Baptist worship of our day is undeniable

XXXI. Worship of Southern Baptist Churches in the Nineteenth Century

- a. From the First Great Awakening, Baptist worship began to become more evangelistic and, combined with the push for missions, the Second Great Awakening of the nineteenth century influenced Baptist worship in that direction more widely
- b. In the beginning of the century, Baptist worship was less formal where everyone could sing or lead the music
 - i. They would sing around half a dozen hymns that could be selected by anyone or the minister would “line-out” the song with the congregation following him

¹¹ Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religions*, 8.

¹² Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religions*, 190.

¹³ Finney, *Lectures on Revivals of Religions*, 197-202.

- ii. At the close of the sermon, it was common for “appropriate” songs to the occasion to be sung¹⁴
- c. By the end of the century in more urban areas, worship was becoming more organized, and the music being turned over to choirs and professionals
 - i. While choirs are almost standard in our day, this was not a welcomed change for all
 - ii. One such person was Dr. Jeremiah Jeter (1802-1880), who saw almost every decade of the nineteenth century and played an important role in the newly formed SBC
 - iii. At the end of his life, Jeter was asked to write a book on the things he had seen in his life and, though he was hesitant to do so, he penned down his experiences in his book, *The Recollections of a Long Life*, where he speaks about the changing formality in worship by saying:

“Now a great change has taken place. Music is conducted chiefly by choirs. These are composed largely of the young and volatile, and led by choristers, some of whom are not even professors of religion. The tendency is, more and more, to make church music a matter of taste and amusement rather than of devotion. The aim is, in many cases, to exalt the choir rather than the Redeemer, and the congregation are expected simply to hear and praise the music. The singing is an exhibition, not religious worship.”¹⁵

- d. Sacred harp singing became a very popular style and opened Baptist worship to the more emotional hymns and songs we sing today
- e. Instruments were being introduced into the worship services, but it was not very common and resisted in many places
- f. The preachers of the nineteenth century were more educated than the previous century due to the efforts of the nationally organized denominations to start theological schools
- g. While at the turn of the century, many churches didn’t have buildings and what buildings they did have were “framed buildings, many of them unplastered, and most of them unpainted,” in the middle of the century a push was made for “improving their places of worship”¹⁶
- h. The “church life” itself was becoming busier with the push for missions, Sunday-schools, education, and various organized ministries, there were more places for the Christian to be involved

The Twentieth Century and Beyond

XXXII. Baptist Worship

¹⁴ Jeter, *Recollections*, 316.

¹⁵ Jeter, *Recollections*, 317.

¹⁶ Jeter, *Recollections*, 312.

- a. The Southern Baptist churches took steps to drastically improve worship throughout the twentieth century
 - i. We began training people in music in 1915 in Gospel Music, led by I. E. Reynolds at Southwestern Seminary
 - ii. In 1925, a resolution was adopted which recognized the low standards of worship and sought to provide materials which would guide and upgrade worship:

II.

WHEREAS, The Bible makes so much of music, and

WHEREAS, Music has been and is such a vital part of all Christian worship, and

WHEREAS, In this Jazz age, the music in the average church of the Southern Baptist Convention is so far beneath the standards which should be maintained in both the type and character of music used, and in its rendition;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That a committee of five be appointed by the Convention to investigate this matter and report at the next Convention meeting such recommendation as it may deem wise and proper for the advancement of music in the Southern Baptist churches. 17

I. E. REYNOLDS, Texas.

- iii. The response to this resolution came from the 1926 annual convention report from the Committee on Better Music with 13 recommendations for churches and the convention to consider
- iv. A Committee on Church Music was formed in 1939 with the following concern:

“Although we consider it would be worthwhile, we are not primarily concerned with the improvement of the hymn text and tune solely for cultural purposes. We are definitely concerned about the following question: Do the hymns we use and the manner in which we use them contribute to the spiritual development of our people?

We need to realize that there must be more of a vertical note in church music, and less of a horizontal tendency; that the music which aids worship is that which finds the heart and not the feet. As we place our best endeavors in the task of soul winning, it will be well to recall that John Wesley found his greatest ally next to the Bible, in the hymns of his brother Charles.”¹⁸

- v. At the 1943 convention, a report was given by the Committee of Church Music and Worship which stated, “We have always been and still are, of the opinion that many of our problems in regard to worship will be solved when we have better Church Music, and certainly, we can’t have better Church Music until we train our people along better Church Music lines.”¹⁹
- vi. A series of hymnals would be published by the SBC:
 - 1. *Broadman Hymnal* (1940)

¹⁷ *Annals*, Southern Baptist Convention, 1925, 103.

¹⁸ *Annals*, Southern Baptist Convention, 1939, 124.

¹⁹ *Annals*, Southern Baptist Convention, 1943, 51-52.

2. *Baptist Hymnal* (1956)

3. *Baptist Hymnal* (1975)

XXXIII. First Wave - The Pentecostal Movement

- a. Though it wasn't a Baptist movement, it would be impossible to talk about Baptist worship in 2025 without understanding the Pentecostal movement in the twentieth century.
- b. The roots of the Pentecostal movement can be traced from:
 - i. The John Wesley revivals and the Methodist Movement
 - ii. The Cane Ridge Revival of the Second Awakening
 - iii. The theology of Charles Finney
 - iv. The National Holiness Movement of the late nineteenth century
- c. Charles Fox Parham (c. 1873-1929) left the Methodist Church and began his own ministry and started a Bible school in 1900
 - i. Parham taught that the events in Acts 2 were normative for all Christians
 - ii. On New Year's Eve, 1900, his student, Agnes N. Ozman, began "speaking in tongues" at a night service when Parham led
 - iii. By Parham's account, he laid hands on Ozman and she began speaking Chinese and couldn't speak or write in English for three days
 - iv. The stories of this event spread from Kansas rapidly through the United States
 - v. In 1901, Parham closed his school and went on preaching tour with some of his students where many people came to witness baptism of the Holy Spirit, speaking in tongues, and healings
- d. One of Parham's students, William Joseph Seymour (c. 1870-1922), who was once a Baptist pastor who became a Holiness preacher, opened a rescue mission on Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California, in 1906
 - i. Seymour started preaching the teachings of Parham and crowds of people poured in to hear his messages
 - ii. These meetings would have events of speaking in tongues, healings, shouting, and mass altar calls
 - iii. These meetings came to be called "The Azusa Street Revival" and meetings continued from 1906 to 1915
 - iv. The events of this revival and the teachings of this movement spread, not just in America, but all over the world
 - v. Many new denominations were born out of this movement, such as the Assemblies of God and the Church of God in Christ

XXXIV. Second Wave - The Charismatic (Neo-Pentecostal) Movement

- a. The Neo-Pentecostal Movement, or the Charismatic Movement, began in the 1960s as Pentecostal practices started influencing the mainstream denominations
 - i. In 1959, an Episcopalian clergyman named Dennis Bennett (c. 1917-1991), announced that he had been baptized with the Holy Spirit and spoken in tongues
 - ii. This movement would spread into the Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodists, and even the Roman Catholic Church

XXXV. Third Wave – Neo-Charismatic Movement

- a. In the 1980s, C. Peter Wagner of Fuller Seminary claimed a third wave of Pentecostalism was awakening
- b. This new wave of Pentecostals rejects the classical Pentecostal teaching that the baptism of the Spirit is a separate event Christians must experience and that speaking in tongues is necessary for all believers
- c. A big distinctive for this movement is the emphasis on personal experience, prosperity, offices of apostle and prophet, and power evangelism
- d. A major church of this movement is the Vineyard Assemblies

XXXVI. Possible Fourth Wave of Pentecostalism

- a. Many debate if a fourth wave of Pentecostalism has occurred, but this “fourth wave” is used to describe what is happening in the church today
 - i. Those who oppose this terminology will say that the movement of the Spirit today is not new or a wave
 - ii. Instead, they insist this is a time of rebirth for the church
- b. This new movement has influenced its way into all denominations, especially us Baptists
- c. Whether it is true there is a fourth wave or not, the modern Pentecostal movement is being carried forward in churches like Hillsong and Bethel
- d. Elevation Worship and their pastor, Steven Furtick, were Southern Baptist until 2023, when they left over the issue of female pastors and Elevation has played a prominent role in getting Pentecostalism into Baptist Churches
- e. One of the ways these churches have gained such a stronghold in Baptist culture is through the use of their music in Baptist worship

XXXVII. The Seeker Sensitive Church Movement

- a. One thing that sets the twentieth century apart from all other centuries of the Church is the rise of the “mega-church”
 - i. Many factors have given to this phenomenon, technology being one of the biggest
 - ii. However, these churches would not be what they are if not for the development of the “seeker sensitive” movement
- b. The Seeker Sensitive movement began in 1975 in Palatine, Illinois, at Willow Creek Community Church and has been pushed forward by men like, Bill Hybels, Rick Warren, Joel Osteen, and Andy Stanley
- c. The goal of this movement was to draw in as many unchurched people as possible into their churches through making their music, preaching, and services culturally relevant to speak to a lost culture
- d. Proponents of this movement argue that this is the biblical model of the church by quoting verses such as:
 - i. “Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.” – Colossians 4:5, ESV
 - ii. “For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being

under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.” – 1 Corinthians 9:19-23, ESV

- iii. Acts 15 and how the disciples sought not to make it difficult for the Gentiles

My Conclusion of Baptist Worship History

XXXVIII. Connecting the Dots

- a. From the Baptist beginnings in the sixteenth century, the Baptist denomination has grown into a worldwide group and our worship has changed dramatically, looking very little like it began
- b. We have gained a lot of beautiful things in our worship, but what we have lost has had a significant impact on our corporate gatherings
 - i. As we separated from the Church of England, the focus of our worship was centralized around confession, prayer, the reading of scripture, and the preaching of the Word
 - ii. Today, our emphasis is on music
 - iii. Our biggest debate today is over the use of contemporary worship versus “traditional” (if you can call it that) worship and we have divided our churches over the debate
 - iv. Even preaching, while still an instrumental part of worship, has taken a back seat to music
 - v. The other focus of many churches today is not necessarily the growth of the Christian in the room but the evangelism of the lost in the invitation time
- c. In 2025, as we look backward, we can see the influence of the Great Awakenings, Revivalism, the Pentecostal/Charismatic Movements, and the Seeker Sensitive Movement
 - i. We have not officially adopted any of the doctrines of these movements, but the styles and methods have been engrained in our Baptist culture
 - ii. The way we view the church, the corporate worship, and the movement of the Holy Spirit in our lives and worship has been changed these movements
 - iii. In the Twentieth Century, the SBC sought to make our music better and that spirit of improvement has opened us to bringing in all styles of worship that may not have been good for us and the way in which many of these movements have gained a stronghold in our churches is through the singing of their music in our worship

XXXIX. What Should We Do?

- a. We need to recover the elements of our worship from the beginning

i.

Bibliography

Annals, Southern Baptist Convention, <https://sbhla.org/digital-resources/sbc-annals/>.

Finney, Charles Grandison, *Lectures on Revivals of Religion*. Grand Rapids, MI: Christian Classics Ethereal Library.

Gibson, Jonathan, and Mark Earney, eds. "Middelburg Liturgy." Reformation Worship Book. Last modified April 5, 2018. Accessed January 30, 2025. <https://reformationworship.com/middelburg-liturgy/>.

Jeter, Jeremiah Bell, *The Recollections of a Long Life*, Richmond, VA: The Religious Herald Co., 1891.

McBeth, H. L. 1987. *The Baptist Heritage*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

McBeth, H. L. 1990. *A Sourcebook for Baptist Heritage*. Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

H. Leon McBeth, [*A Sourcebook for Baptist Heritage*](#) (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1990), 166.

Shurden, Walter B. "The Southern Baptist Synthesis: Is It Cracking?" *Baptist History and Heritage* April, 1981. Quoted in McBeth, H. Leon, *The Baptist Heritage* (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1981), 223.

Sweeney, Douglas A., *The American Evangelical Story: A History of the Movement*, Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2005.