

# Baptist Church

# I. Baptist Origins

# History of Baptist Church

“It is sometimes asked: ‘When and where did the Baptists originate? Who were their founders? What is their history?’ These are questions of interest; but a more important one would be: ‘Are they right? Is their faith according to the teachings of the NT?’ –Hiscox

## Anabaptists (1/2)

“In general they all professed to take the NT as the rule of their faith and practice. They held to a spiritual church-membership, and received only professedly regenerated persons to the ordinances. Denying the orthodoxy of the Romish Church, they rebaptized persons received from that body, and hence were called *Anabaptists*” –Hiscox

## Anabaptists (2/2)

“It is not pretended that these ancient sects were known by name as Baptists...they held the more prominent and distinctive principles...characterized...Baptists” – ib. 158f.

1. Defended rights of faith and conscience
2. Denied authority of popes...
3. Rejected infant baptism
4. Baptized by dipping
5. Held Bible to be only rule and authority
6. Admitted to churches only regenerated

# First Baptists

“The first regularly organized church among them, known as such in England, dates from 1607, and was formed in London by a Mr. Smyth, previously a clergyman of the Established Church’ –Hiscox 168.

# The name “Baptist”

- “Baptist” includes many with whom they are not in fellowship, including ‘Disciples of Christ’ – Hiscox, 172-174.
  - Anyone who practiced immersion rather than sprinkling was a Baptist.
- No historical evidence of Baptist Church before 1611, England... – Rosten.

## Baptist 400<sup>th</sup> birthday: 2009

- Some Baptists say this misses the mark by about 1600 years.
  1. Jesus founded church during earthly ministry, promised gates of hell would not prevail against it...an unbroken succession – Landmark Baptists.
  2. Since John the Baptist immersed Jesus, His church was Baptist.



## Founder: John Smyth [d. 1612] (1/4)

- English Separatist (Puritan) founded General Baptists
- 1606/7, fled persecution
- 1609, concluded Church of England was apostate . . .
- Objected to use of translations

## Founder: John Smyth (2/4)

- Charged with inconsistency and changeableness. His reply –

a change for the better is always in order; not to change so long as complete conformity to Scripture has not been attained 'is evil simply; and therefore that we should proceed from the profession of Puritanism to Brownism, and from Brownism to true Christian baptism, is not simply evil and reprobable in itself, except it be proved that we have fallen from true religion.'

## Founder: John Smyth (3/4)

- In sympathy with Arminianism, he adopted Pelagian views, denying original sin (THD).
- Excommunicated by his church because he departed from church principles.
- He and others sought to join Mennonite Church in Amsterdam.

## Founder: John Smyth (4/4)

1611: Smyth and followers made declaration of faith in 100 articles

1. Denied THD
2. Water baptism administered only on penitent and faithful persons, not innocent infants or wicked persons

– Schaff-Herzog

# Landmarkers

Believe in the perpetuity of the church Christ instituted — ‘that there has never been a day since Christ founded his church when there was no scriptural church on earth, and that the church shall continue in existence until he comes again.’

Many hold to ‘Trail of Blood’ teaching

# Dissenters

Some who were persecuted by the state church held 'some strange or even heretical views' – Penn.

Modern Baptists differ significantly from early English Baptists, who did not practice baptism by immersion until about 1641 – Landmark historians.

## Gaps in historical records

Gaps require believers in any theory of Baptist origins to make a leap of faith. 'We cannot show conclusively how modern Baptists sprang from the people who are usually believed to be the founders of the Baptist movement . . . . Those people were about 1,600 years late.'

– Ken Camp, managing editor, Texas *Baptist Standard*.

# Roger Williams

Started Baptist Church in America  
(1630, Salem, Mass.) – Hiscox, 169f.

They did not adopt name Baptist,  
preferring *Brethren, Disciples of Christ,*  
*Christians, Believers,* etc.

1644: first called themselves Baptists.

Baptists have divided into at least 12  
major groups.



I. Its Origin

II. Baptist Teachings

# 1. Church

- Hiscox denies church universal (9,11)
- Pendleton affirms it (5-6) –
  - Ep.1:22; 3:21; 5:25, 27
  - Absurd if particular congregation

# 1. Church – denomination?

- Hiscox prefers 'denomination' (11).  
(Rosten, 16)
  - ALL agree no denominations existed in NT times (Hiscox, 22)
  - Refuse to fellowship other 'faiths' though 'saved' (ib., 23)
- Ac.2:36-47, which denomination?
- Baptist: immersion / Meth.: sprinkling

# 1. Church – Consequences

1. Bystanders conclude Bible cannot be understood.
2. God did not mean what He said.
3. What God said does not matter (as Catholics, Anglicans...).
4. Unbelief, Jn.17:20-22.

## 2. When did church begin?

John baptizer? ... Jesus called disciples??

1. Mt.14:10-12, John's death

a. 16:18, to build church (future).

b. 16:19, kingdom

2. Mk.9:1, kingdom to come w. power.

3. Ac.1:8, power to come with Holy Sp.

4. Ac.2, Holy Sp. → kingdom, power, church, Ac.2:30...36-47.

## 2. When did church begin?

### Baptists assume...

- NT church without death of **testator**, Hb.9:16-17
- ...church He established was '**Baptist**'
- ...John was '**a**' Baptist. Mt.3:1
- ...people John baptized became **Baptists**.
  - Most Baptists never baptize anyone.
  - What does Christ's baptism make?  
[Ac.11:21...26; 1 Pt.3:21...4:16]

### 3. What is a pastor?

- Hiscox (14): one pastor over congregation
- Pendleton (23-25): convertible terms
  - Ep.4:11, pastor distinguished from evangelist