

Why Are We Baptists?



It's getting less and less popular for any church to identify themselves as "Baptist" these days. In fact, it's getting less popular for churches to even identify themselves as a "church"! Instead we see a trend towards "worship centers" and "assemblies" and "fellowships" and some names even more vague than that.

Why? Well, surveys and studies show that people tend to have negative feelings towards "church"... and even more negative feelings about "Baptists"... consequently many well-meaning people have decided to change the name, spice up the music, shorten the sermons, and 'focus on the positive' in hopes to better appeal to the general public.

So why are we sticking with the name "**Spokane Baptist Church**"?

The answer is simple... it's because the name "Baptist Church" has great meaning, history, and significance... all of which we consider an honor to be associated with.

Tragically, there's a great deal of misunderstanding today about what this name means. There are even people out there who call themselves Baptists - but have nothing to do with actual Baptist history. The following outline is a very brief introduction to the true meaning and history of the Baptist name.

A Name from our Enemies

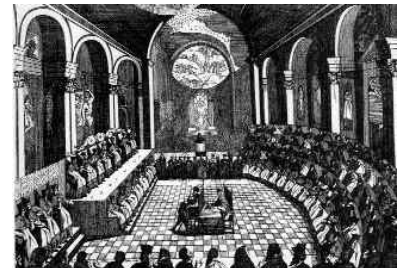


► The Baptist name was actually originally created as a slur against those who would baptize a person only after that person had repented and believed on Christ for salvation. This practice was considered insulting (at best) by the large organized churches (Catholic and Reformed) that baptized people as babies.

► Since Baptists wouldn't give up this practice, they were labeled, hunted, driven into hiding, and thousands were actually killed for refusing to abandon the Biblical practice of Baptism.

A History of Separation from Error

► The first major error to gain wide acceptance in Christianity was the establishment of a Church power-structure (started around 200 AD). This un-Biblical practice put some men in charge of multiple churches - which made these men politically powerful in the Roman Republic - and ultimately corrupted the purpose of the church. Baptists were persecuted for standing against this error and separating from churches that pledged allegiance to church hierarchy rather than to God's Word alone.



► As so-called "Christianity" became politically powerful, around 300 AD, these politically entangled churches started baptizing babies (under the unbiblical notion that baptism brings salvation) to make

their churches even bigger. Baptists refused to acknowledge the validity of a baptism where the person had no choice in the matter (since this is not what the Bible teaches) and many Baptists were therefore killed as enemies of these “churches.”



► By 400 AD, these erring churches were fully united with the government, and the spiral of corruption and deviation from the Bible plunged to new depths. This united Church & State used its power to martyr many Baptists who preached against the elevation of politics and traditions which superseded the Word of God.

Colossian 2:8 - Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

Sir Isaac Newton said: “The Baptists are the only body of known Christians that have never symbolized with Rome [the Roman Catholic united ‘church’ & state].”

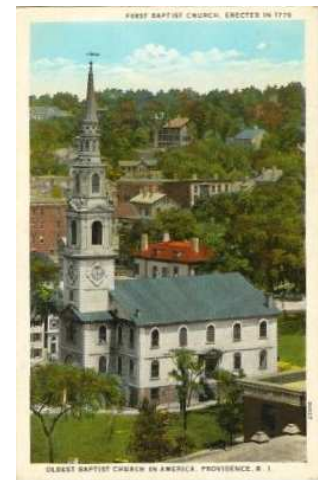
A History of Standing for Right

► For Freedom of Conscience.

- Baptists wrote the first constitution (*State of Rhode Island*) granting religious liberty to people of all faiths - recognizing that true salvation comes from a free-will response to Jesus Christ... not from a forced conversion as a result of government pressure.
- In-fact: the phrase “Separation of Church and State” comes not from the US Constitution, but from a letter that Thomas Jefferson wrote to the Danbury Baptists - crediting them for their example!

► For Equality for All.

- Baptists have always been staunch advocates of freedom of conscience, are thus the only historical religious group to have never advocated or used state authority to persecute another religious group.
- Baptists were the first to ban slavery in North America. Abraham Lincoln was raised as a Baptist and even Martin Luther King considered himself to be a Baptist.
- Baptists led the effort to treat the Native Americans as men, not savages.



It is our goal to be faithful to the Word of God, and to follow Jesus Christ, and not any other person. There are obviously plenty of "Baptists" who have claimed the Baptist name but have done terrible things and probably aren't even Christians! Because we believe, like the historical Baptists, that creating church hierarchy and power structures is a very bad and unbiblical idea we don't belong to any denominations - not even "Baptist" denominations like the Southern Baptists or the American Baptist Churches, etc. some of those church might be pretty good - but many of them we would want nothing to do with! This is why we proclaim our status as an "independent" Baptist church.

We use the name "Baptist" only for the historical meaning and rich tradition it includes. It's a way to easily identify our church with a distinctive set of principles and doctrines that we hold as precious - but it is NOT the sum total of who we are. It's very similar to why we call ourselves a "church" - just because the name has been terribly abused and used as a cloak for evil, doesn't mean the name is bad or shouldn't be used. It simply means we have to do a better job of explaining what a real, Bible-honoring Church (or Baptist) is.

That's the purpose of this article.
We hope it's been helpful for you!

May God bless you as you search for the Truth.