

## The Protestant Reformation

Its “official” beginning

1. Martin Luther's 95 theses, Oct. 31, 1517
2. John Calvin's Institutes of Christian Religion, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, 1536, following closely the teaching of the 5<sup>th</sup> century theologian, Augustine.

Its theological influence

1. The return of the church to...
  - scripture alone
  - faith alone
  - grace alone
  - Christ alone
  - to the glory of God alone
2. The doctrines of the Synod of Dort, which came to be known as Calvinism 1618-1619, later known by T.U.L.I.P.
3. Other doctrines of reformed theology, such as...
  - infant baptism
  - baptism by sprinkling
  - replacement theology
  - elder rule

## The Anabaptist Movement

The Anabaptist movement is called the Radical Reformation. Students of Zwingli in Zurich began to see that baptism should be for believers only. No infants should be baptized. On Jan. 21, 1525 a small group met at the home of Felix Manz in Zurich. In that meeting, the leader, Conrad Grebel, baptized (by sprinkling) all who were present. The Swiss Anabaptist movement had begun.

As the movement spread throughout Europe, so did their persecution. Tens of thousands of Anabaptists were martyred between 1525 and 1660.

One of the most well known Anabaptist leaders was Menno Simons (1496-1559), who led the Dutch Anabaptist movement. The Mennonites were established from the group.

The Anabaptists stood for:

1. Arminian Theology
2. Baptism of believers only by sprinkling or pouring

3. A church of believers only
4. Separation of church and state
5. Pacifism

Some Anabaptists still remain in the world: 2.1 million Mennonites .3 million Amish

## Baptists

### The first Baptist church

In 1606, John Smyth, A Separatist started a Separatist Church in Lincolnshire. When opposition from the English authorities became too great, Smyth's congregation fled to Amsterdam, Holland in 1608. There, they rented a meeting place from a Mennonite man. Through his influence, Smyth began to adopt the teachings of the Anabaptists. In 1609, Smyth baptized himself by pouring and then baptized the rest of the group in the same way. They, like the Anabaptists, were Arminian in theology. This is considered to be the first Baptist church.

### The Baptist churches of England

Thomas Helwys was an assistant to John Smyth in Amsterdam. When a disagreement arose between Smyth and Helwys, Helwys and 10 of the members returned to England and established the first Baptist church in England. This church was established in London in 1611. Because they were Arminian in theology, they took the name General Baptists.

#### 1. General Baptists

The Baptist movement grew in England and by 1655 there were 79 General Baptist churches throughout England. In the 1700's, many General Baptist churches became Universalists.

#### 2. Particular Baptists

In 1638, John Spilsbury established the first Particular Baptist church in England as a few Puritans adopted believers' baptism but kept their Calvinist theology. In 1644 they began practicing baptism by immersion. (The General Baptists also began practicing baptism by immersion soon after that.) By 1644, there were 7 Particular Baptist churches in England and by 1655 there were 96. In the 1700's many Particular Baptist churches became Hyper Calvinists. Well known Particular Baptists included...

- John Bunyan
- William Carey
- Charles Spurgeon

## The Baptist Churches in America

1. **The first Baptist church** was founded by Roger Williams, an ordained minister in the Church of England. Sensing the corruption of the Church he became a Puritan, then a Separatist. In 1630, Roger and his wife, Mary, sailed to America in search of religious freedom.

Ministering to the Narragansett Indians in 1636, they came to a cool spring of fresh water. He called that place "Providence." It became Providence, Rhode Island. In 1638, having become convinced of believers' baptism, he established the first Baptist church in America. Because of his Puritan background, Roger Williams was a Calvinist. Therefore, the first Baptist church in America was a Calvinist Baptist church.

2. **The expansion of Baptist churches throughout the colonies.**

Baptist churches were being planted in the New England colonies, the Middle colonies and the Southern colonies. While there were many General Baptists in New England, most churches throughout the colonies were Calvinist churches.

The most influential church in the south was the First Baptist Church of Charleston, S.C., organized by William Screven in 1683. It was strongly Calvinistic.

3. **The First Great Awakening (1735-1743)**

The number of Baptist churches greatly increased during the years of the Awakening. Because of the Calvinistic character of this Great Awakening, most of the newly established Baptist churches were Calvinistic.

4. **Sandy Creek Baptist church.**

One exception to the Calvinistic expansion during the First Great Awakening was the Sandy Creek Baptist Church in Sandy Creek, N.C. founded by Shubal Stearns in 1755. Though Calvinistic in doctrine, it had the evangelistic fervor of the General Baptists. The work of the Holy Spirit there was called "the miracle of Sandy Creek."

5. **The first national convention of Baptists.**

"The General Missionary Convention of the Baptist Denomination in the United States of America for Foreign Missions" was established on May 20, 1814.

In 1845 this convention divided between the Northern Baptists and the Southern Baptists over two issues:

1. Home missions
2. Slavery

The Southern Baptists were in favor of both and in May of 1845, 300 delegates gathered in Augusta, Georgia to establish the Southern Baptist Convention.

6. **Early leaders of the SBC, 1845-1950**

John L. Dagg (1794-1884) – First writing theologian of the SBC - Calvinist

James P. Boyce (1827-1888) - Founder of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary - Calvinist

J. M. Frost (1848-1916) - First President of the Sunday School Board (now Lifeway) - Calvinist

B. H. Carroll (1843-1914) – Founder of the Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary – Calvinist

E. Y. Mullins (1860-1928) – 4<sup>th</sup> president of Southern Seminary – Traditionalist

W. T. Conner (1877-1952) – Taught 40 years at Southwestern Seminary – Traditionalist

## **7. Leaders of the SBC, (1950-1995) – Traditionalists**

## **8. Leaders of the SBC, (1995-Present) – Traditionalists and Calvinists**

### **HOWEVER...**

#### **Were the Baptists in America from 1700-1850 really Calvinists?**

- Many were.
  - Most were not.
1. In the SBC, many of the leaders in the early years had much in common with the Charleston stream (Calvinism), but the grassroots had more in common with the Sandy Creek stream (Traditionalism). – *Southern Baptist Consensus and Renewal*, David Dockery, p. 3
  2. Regarding the Baptists in America from 1700-present, a vast number who claim to be Calvinists are not 5-point Calvinists. Rather they are 4-point or 3-point Calvinists.

Many Calvinists theologians claim that to be less than a 5-point Calvinists is to be NO Calvinists at all.

#### Examples:

- Michael Horton, Calvinist theologian of Westminster Theological Seminary – “There is no such thing as Calvinianism.”
- R. C. Sproul – “There are a host of folks who call themselves 4-point Calvinists because they can’t swallow the doctrine of limited atonement... I think that a 4-point Calvinist is an Arminian.”
- B. B. Warfield – The denial of limited atonement is “not therefore necessarily a good form of Calvinism, an acceptable form of Calvinism, or even a tenable form of Calvinism... it is a logically inconsistent form of Calvinism.”

“The Inconsistence of Four-Point Calvinism” Banner of Truth – 4-point Calvinists are as inconsistent as “hymn-singing Atheists.”