

# The Baptist WATCHMAN

INDEPENDENT

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DISTINCTIVELY MISSIONARY

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PREMILLENNIAL

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Terry Basham II, Editor

April 2014

## A New Year – Another Chance

by Terry Basham, II 10.06.13

I like this time of year. It's actually the newness of it that causes me to have a positive feeling. It's like a new sheet of paper—I like to start working on filling it up because I like to see the finished product. A new year gives me the same feeling: it's a new year of service for the Lord, it's a new year of fellowship with my family (my wife and children), and it's a new year of corporate effort with my Brothers and Sisters here at Bethel Baptist!

I'd like to share some of what we want to do for the Sake of the Gospel here in Lawton. We are here to proclaim to every creature the Gospel of Jesus Christ! Even though in the last year we did make a real honest to goodness stab at filling our area with the gospel, there "remaineth yet very much land to be possessed." So we aren't done yet!

Brothers, we cannot let the work of Gospel proclamation cease—we cannot rest on the work of last year, or the work of the last generation! We must press onward, never stopping until the Lord of Glory sounds the recall trumpet, and we are gathered with those who've gone on before to glory!

By the end of 2014 we want to know the family name and church affiliation (if they have one) of every person in the one square mile around Bethel Baptist's location at 1902 NW Columbia. Why? So that we can focus our efforts on those who are not Baptists and on those who are unchurched.

By the end of 2014 we want to have started a new adult Sunday School Class and have established a regular Sunday School van route—picking up folks for the Sunday School hour.

*continued at A New Year, page 15*

## Stereotypes

Whether you realize it or not, most of your decisions are made subconsciously. This is actually a good thing. It's the way God made us. As best as researchers can tell, we catalogue experience into a kind of brain database that controls our subconscious actions. If we didn't have this subconscious system, driving home from work would take hours and would cause us nervous fits.

We often make subconscious decisions without experience, however, and that's a problem. It's especially a problem when we make subconscious decisions about the character of other people, because we aren't making those decisions based on knowledge of their person – but on preconceived stereotypes.

*continued at Stereotypes, page 11*

## Backsliders

*Proverbs 14:14: The backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways: and a good man shall be satisfied from himself.*

What do we do with backsliders? When can we reactivate them to service?

### **What is a backslider?**

- 1: to lapse morally or in the practice of religion
- 2: to revert to a worse condition

That's how *dictionary-dot-com* defines backslide, and I'd say I agree with it. Of course, you can backslide in any area it's not just limited to religion! My co-workers used show they'd been backsliding when they took too long for break or violated some rule of conduct.

*continued at Backsliders, page 7*



The Baptist Watchman is an outreach ministry of

## Bethel Baptist Church

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# Closed Communion

by Adam Nixon

Part 1 of 3 Parts

## *The Governor of Correct Church Practice*

The way to kill the church is by simply eliminating one point of Christian doctrine in each successive generation, so that it is not missed or defended by the next generation, because they can't remember it. After five or six generations, what you eventually end up with is a religion which has no doctrines at all, and is thus indistinguishable from the unsaved world culture which surrounds it. And when that point is reached, the worldly government can then reasonably approach what's left of the church, and say to it "You people behave no different from us, really: Why not just give up your moral pronouncements, and become a registered charity instead? We'll even give you a tax break." And that is exactly what's happened. Because that is Satan's plan.

By gradually removing the distinctives of correct church practice, the church eventually ceases being the church, and becomes just a part of the world instead, and when it becomes a part of the world, it can then be governed by the world, and because the world is of its father the devil, the world will then simply abolish the church. That's the plan. Because making the church available to anybody, is the final step in making it available to nobody.

We have seen the same thing happen with the institution of marriage, the distinctives and qualifications of which have been slowly erased over the last few generations, until, today, marriage means almost nothing at all. It is popularly assumed that Satan's goal is to legalize homosexual marriage. But the true satanic goal is actually far worse than that, for it is in fact Satan's goal to abolish marriage altogether. Removing the distinctives of marriage is how Satan has now almost accomplished this. And he's using the same method to abolish the church. It follows therefore, that to survive, a church must maintain its distinctive doctrinal identity, such that, contrary to the popular idea that separatism will destroy the church, separatism is in fact the one thing which will preserve us. And the proof of this is in history.

## *Separatism will preserve us*

Our forefathers, the 14th century, and 15th, 16th and 17th century believers, the Anabaptists and other non-conformist Christians of Europe, such as the Albigenes and Waldenses understood this strategy of Satan better than many Christians today understand it. Those early European Christians understood that compromise would dissolve the church, but that distinctive separation would preserve it. Their insistence on this distinctive doctrinal and cultural separation is the reason why however many thousands of them were killed under persecution by Roman Catholicism, the true church survived, so that when it came time, four hundred years later, for you to be born and live your vapor on this sod, the gospel, untainted, pure and complete, would still be available for you to hear, and to avail yourself of its mercy.

The Lord's Supper, in its purest correct form of a closed communion table, protects and governs the church in such a way that the church maintains its distinctive identity as the body of Christ manifested in local assemblies of believers living a separated lifestyle of constitutional opposition to the host world culture which surrounds us. Therefore, Satan has sought to specifically destroy the Lord's Supper. He has accomplished this destruction of the Lord's Supper by gradually, bit by bit, generation by generation, church by church, hoodwinking us into opening it up, from a closed table, to a completely open table, until, in many churches today, just like modern marriage, the Lord's Supper now finally means almost nothing at all. Indeed, just as modern marriage has now become so perverted that it is widely understood in the secular world to mean nothing more than (and chiefly) 'a declaration of love', in the same way, the doctrine of the Lord's Supper has been perverted by modern liberal churchmen to mean nothing more than (and chiefly) 'a declaration of unity'. This of course is a dangerous unity: Dangerous because it seeks to remove division between obedient and disobedient Christians, to remove division between churches of right doctrine and

churches of wrong doctrine, to remove division between believers and unbelievers, and ultimately to remove division between the church and the world.

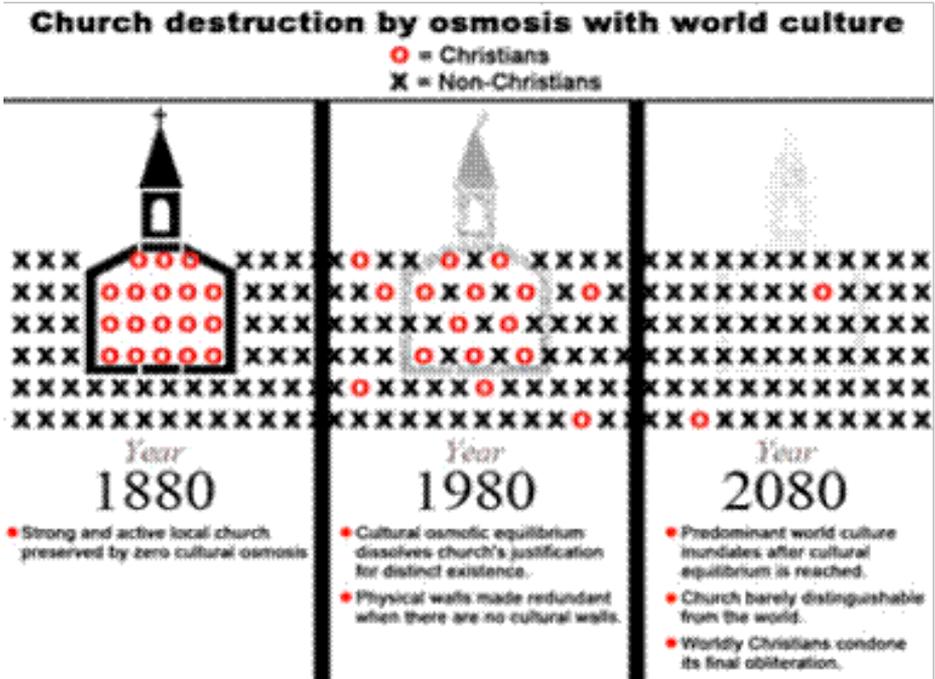


Figure 1

Thus, when a church reaches that diluted, osmotic equilibrium with the world around it, it ceases to have logical tenure for distinct existence, and so obliterates itself. And that is exactly what has happened over the last fifty years, since about 1960. The landscape in Britain and much of the western world in this 21st century is now scarred by the sight of thousands of old church buildings lying empty, demolished, bulldozed, or converted into shops, converted into housing, converted into cinemas, converted into sports gyms, some even abominably converted into temples of false eastern religions and cults, or converted into nightclubs, singles bars, and even pop-music recording studios. This has happened because the behavior and beliefs of the people inside those church buildings, had stopped being sufficiently distinctive from the behavior and beliefs of the world outside their building, to justify a dividing wall. That is what kills churches.

Therefore, a closed communion table will not damage the church, but on the contrary, will preserve and multiply the church so that it will

still be available for the rescuing of lost souls in future centuries. Christians today should ask themselves: "Will my church still be here in 400 years? How can we ensure that it will be?" The answer is simple: Christ left us with a maintenance tool to prolong the life of any local church. That tool is the Lord's Supper (or the 'communion' supper as it is also sometimes known).

### *Closed communion governs correct church practice*

Christ instituted the Communion Supper as a reference template of what the church is supposed to be. Holding a communion service allows you to regularly check back with that template in order to monitor if your local church is still what Christ intended it to be. The Lord's Supper is a plumb line, and by keeping it tight, you can spot when something is out of line. That is its purpose. The Communion Supper was never intended as an affirmation of unity. It was intended as the *doctor of disunity!*

The Lord's Supper is the fire alarm, the gatekeeper, the diplomat, and the governor of your church. Used correctly, the communion table is a very capable and finely calibrated instrument of church management. Do you think Christ would have left us with no tools for the maintenance of the church? On the contrary: as a pastor, the sharpest tool in your toolbox is a closed communion table. Six months of closed communion will accomplish what would take five years with the blunt instrument of one-to-one counseling.

### ***Definition of terms***

*By closed communion, we mean that the Communion Supper is:*

1. *Closed to (that is to say, excluding) anyone except born again persons.*
2. *Closed to anyone except born again persons scripturally baptized (i.e., by immersion).*
3. *Closed to anyone except registered members of the local church in which the Communion Supper is being held.*
4. *Closed to any church member who is under discipline enforced by that local church for behavior damaging to the rest of the church membership, or damaging to the spiritual life of the member himself.*

***Closed communion is not a practice dictated by a correct theological view of the church.***

***On the contrary: A correct theological view of the church is dictated by closed communion.***

A church which practices closed communion as the beginning of its theological thinking for church management, and follows all naturally occurring corollaries of a closed communion table, will discover that closed communion successfully becomes the governor of correct church practice in all areas of church life. For example:

***Closed Communion correctly defines the church***

When you eat your portion of bread in the communion service, you are *not* doing it to symbolize that you are a part of the great world-

wide universal church. That is not what it means. If it did, then there would need to be a gigantic loaf of bread hovering in the sky and enveloping the earth like an atmosphere, and once a month it would be some deacon's job to go and break a piece off it and bring it back to the church so that all the members could eat a piece and say "We are part of the universal body of Christ". But that is not what the Bible teaches.

Instead, everything written in scripture about the church and the Lord's Supper is written in a *local* context.

Why must the church be a local entity? Because the purpose of the church is to do God's business, on earth, as indeed we have been taught to pray: "Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven." Let us therefore examine how God accomplishes that purpose of His will being done on earth:

Jesus said: "Ye are not of this world, but I have chosen you out of the world".

1 Peter 2:9 tells us exactly what we have been chosen to do. We've been chosen to do some particular work: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, *that you should shew forth the praises of Him* who hath called you out of darkness into his marvelous light".

So in 1 Corinthians, Paul addresses the people who have been called out of the city of Corinth to show forth God's praises, and he addresses them as "The church of God which is at Corinth". That's exactly what he writes on the envelope.

The Greek word translated as "church", is 'ekklesia', meaning 'a body of citizens locally assembled as representative of the whole nation'. An ekklesia is *NOT* the *whole* nation, but a locally assembled portion of the population *representative* of the whole nation, and functioning with the same power and authority as if the whole of the nation was present. When a *town* ekklesia assembles, the assembly is *NOT* the *whole* town, but a locally assembled portion of the population *representative* of the whole town, and functioning with the same power and authority as if the whole of the town was present. Paul's use of the word *ekklesia* on the envelope of his letter to the Corinthians therefore unlocks the full meaning of Christ's pronouncement in Matthew 18:20 that "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them". Because when an ekklesia of Christians assembles, the gathering

is *NOT* the *whole* of Christ, but a locally assembled portion of the population *representative* of the whole of Christ, and functioning with the same power and authority as if the whole of Christ was present.

Therefore, an *ekklesia* of Christians, that is to say a local church, are the people God has chosen out of the locality to assemble and to represent God and perform His will, and show forth His praise *in that locality*, with the same power and authority as if the whole of Christ was present, because Jesus said that when such a gathering occurs, there will He be, present and complete.

So Paul has not addressed his letter to only a *part* of the whole world's church. Because Christ did not say "where two or three are gathered together, there will be only a *part* of me in the midst of you". No! Christ said "*I* will be there". He means that "*all of me* will be there". He means: "My full and entire presence, a complete representation of me will be constituted by your gathering together in any local spot on the world's map!"

So when Paul writes "church", he means that the assembly at Corinth is completely the body of Christ. Because a local church is the assembled and fully operational presence of Jesus, territorially manifested in any locality on earth, in order that God's will, will be done on earth, and specifically in your locality, in your town, anywhere that you assemble a church in this nation. 1 Corinthians 12, "Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular". That is to say, "members assembled in one location". Thus "ekklesia" means *local* assemblies, because a *local* assembly is the *only* type of assembly that it is possible to have. The reason that civic *ekklesias* of nations and towns were invented is because it is impractical or even impossible to gather all the citizens of an entire town or nation in one place at the same time. It is certainly impossible to have a universal assembly of all Christians, because there are too many of us, and we live in too many different countries, with oceans separating us. But we need not worry how to accomplish this because Christ has provided the solution, in that he has

**1 Cor 12:27 "Ye are the body of Christ"**

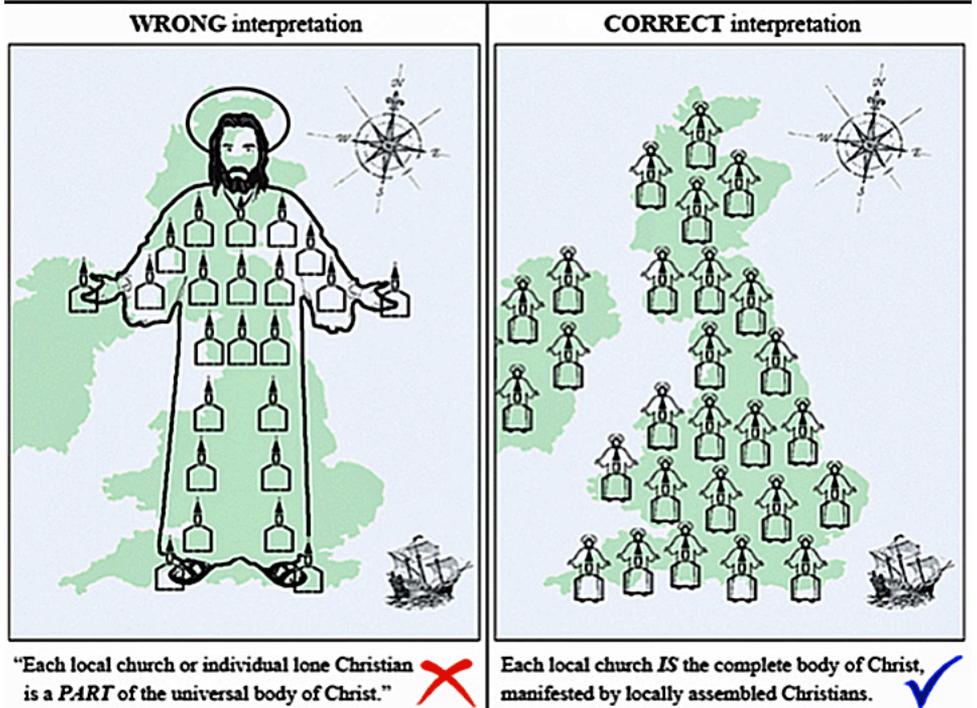


Figure 2

categorically stated: “Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I”. Thus, a local assembly of Christians manifests the body of Christ in that locality.

***In view of this, we can unequivocally answer the following two questions:***

***Question 1: Is one person a church?***

***Answer: No.***

***Question 2: Is one person the body of Christ?***

***Answer: No.***

*It is true that the spirit of Christ is present in one regenerate person. But the body of Christ is only manifested when a Christian assembles with one or more other Christians.*

When a bomb explodes, it blows the different parts of a man’s body into pieces and throws them apart, the nose over there, the hand twenty yards away over there, the intestines into the next street, so that that body is disassembled, and thus dead, and therefore cannot function. It’s called dismemberment. And that is why we have a dead church today, because too many Christians have swallowed the devil’s lie that they don’t need to be church *members*. Instead, they consider themselves merely free-floating, independent individuals of an invisible universal church, without functional connection, responsibility or allegiance to any single *local assembly* of the Lord’s body, so they think that it doesn’t matter where they worship. Therefore, they never or rarely *assemble* together. They don’t go to church. Ergo, the local church is dismembered, ergo, there is never or rarely any local church, ergo, there is no longer a continuously functioning body of Christ on earth. This is not Christ’s fault. It’s ours. It’s not Christ’s responsibility. (Don’t you think He’s already done enough?). It’s our responsibility. This is not Christ’s weakness. It’s ours. This is not Christ’s choice. It’s ours. We have given in to Satan, so that Satan has now successfully blown nearly every local church apart, as if with a dismembering bomb, because he does not want the body of Christ locally *assembled*. Satan does not want Christ manifested complete and intact in your street.

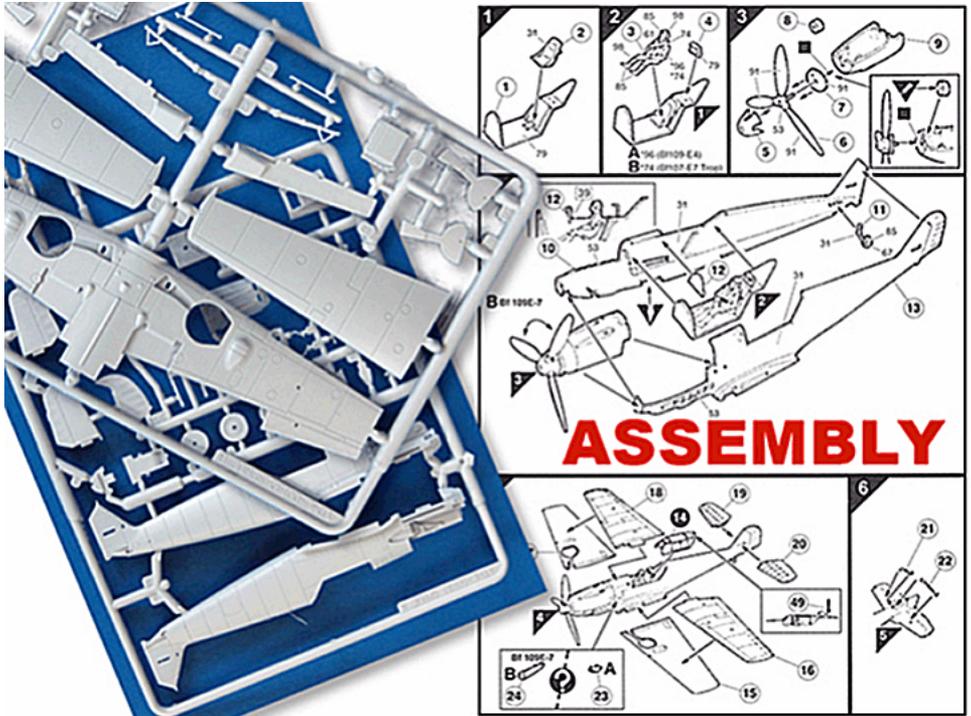
Consider it the opposite way around: That is to say, if there is a town in your nation where there is no church: Is the body of Christ in that

town? No, it is not. The *spirit* of Christ might be there, dwelling in the hearts of dispersed individual Christians. But Christ’s *body* is not there. So we need to assemble a church there. Do you want to go and start it? ‘Church-planting’ is a widely used term. But in fact, it’s completely the wrong terminology. The correct term should be ‘Church-assembling’. When you plant a seed, Christ said, a Christian grows: Not a church. Because churches do not grow from seeds. Instead, a church has to be *assembled*. But liberal theologians and Episcopalians and downright rank Romanistic denominations have hijacked biblical etymology and perverted it and thrown it back at us as world-friendly slogans which promote an incorrect view of the church. That is Satan at work again. Don’t ‘plant’ churches. They don’t grow on their own. You have to *assemble* churches. And *keep* them assembled. The components of the assembly are the Christians who Christ will call to the missionary through God’s word that he preaches.

Do you know why so many local churches have closed down? It’s because they didn’t know what they were. They thought that their church was just a *part* of the Body of Christ (like the wrong picture on the left of Figure 2). They thought they were just a part of something bigger, which could wither away and drop off at no great cost to the whole. So they gave up easily. The Anglican Church of England is like that. In their official prescribed communion supper liturgy, the vicar recites: “The Lord is here! His spirit is with us!” But this is plainly wrong. The correct statement for a local church communion should be: “The Lord is here! His body *is* us!” He is not merely *with* us. He *is* us! “Ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular!”

A correct understanding of the nature of the church will dictate correct strategy and service to God, because when you understand that your church is the complete body of Christ locally assembled in your neighborhood, you will fight harder to keep it assembled. And that means closing the communion table, because closed communion is the most efficient tool for monitoring, diagnosing, gluing, repairing and reinforcing the assembly. But if your communion is open, your assembly will drift apart. It will never be properly cemented. Love is not enough. The local church requires a disciplinary system as well.

*Anyone who has made plastic scale model kits of airplanes and cars and ships when they were young knows that the first word on the instruction sheet is “assemble”, as in “assemble the model thus...” That’s what the word ‘assembly’ means: Putting the component parts together in one place.*



*It isn't a Messerschmitt 109 if it isn't assembled. It's just a box of bits. It isn't a church if it isn't assembled. So must Christians be assembled together, locally, to constitute a complete and functioning local body of Christ, in order to permeate that locality immediately around us with the person of Christ.*

**Backsliders, continued from Page 1**

There are two kinds of "backsliders": those who have done so in their hearts, which is probably the most common, and those who boldly, outwardly backslide!

What do we do with backsliders? We must first consider our limited knowledge of others. We can't see the heart of others. Even people we know and respect in the Church may be *backsliders in heart!* There is an external sign of it, as Proverbs 14.14 reveals. That sign is that they are FILLED WITH THEIR OWN WAYS. But what exactly does that mean?

Charles Bridges gives us this warning and a distinction between a backslider and fallen brother in his commentary on Proverbs:

*“Every mark of sin does not prove a backslider... Backsliding implies a wilful step; not always open, but the more dangerous, because hidden. Here was no open apostasy, perhaps no tangible inconsistency.”*

A backslider is a person who has looked upon the things of God and decided to turn aside. When God condemns Israel for it, it's because they deliberately chose another god and IDOLS! They wanted to live in sin yet still enjoy the zip and bang of being Jehovah's exclusive people!

It is not the open backslider that worries me. I can see him and I can avoid his company (1 Cor 5.9-13). He like a rabid dog or a snake; I see him and give him a wide berth! But the

backslider in heart – he is a Judas, he is an Achan, he is amongst us and we do not even know it! The backslider in heart “*may be looked up to as an eminent saint. But he is a backslider in heart!*” – Bridges.

As a boy I watched films that described the danger of Russian sleeper agents. I remember the film with Charles Bronson called *Telefon* – do you remember it? Near strategic bases here in the states, there were Russian “sleepers” who were programmed to live as peaceful Americans in pursuit of the dream. Until the day they received a call and heard the voice on the other end of the line quote a verse from Robert Frost *The woods are lovely, dark and deep. I have miles to go before I sleep.* They responded immediately, carrying out their pre-programmed sabotage!

The backslider in heart is just that kind of person. Some do just leave the church and go off into some kind of unchristian living, but others stay in the church and no one but they and God know their true status. They sit in church, casting votes, seconding motions, keeping the nursery, folding bulletins, mopping the floors and singing in the choir until they get the ‘call’ and off they go wreaking havoc in the church!

### ***What can we do about them?***

Frankly, there is little that we can do. If they are saved people, we must trust the Lord to use his word on them. Cutting asunder their coldness and breaking them with its divine truth, causing them to see what they have become and how it grieves God’s Holy Spirit. We must warn all men and women in the Lord’s churches against this kind of thing, for we are all susceptible to it.

### ***Isn’t there more we can do?***

That’s the human element isn’t it? We want to do more and more, we want to take control and fix what is broken. But when we do that, we are leaping beyond our ability. To cause a man’s heart and mind to straighten out and be re-warmed, takes the work of God. We must stick to the plan; we must let God do it.

We need to remind everyone that one of the reasons that calamity comes upon people at times may be the Lord saying “Return to me.” Listen to the words of Amos 4.6-12:

*And I also have given you cleanness of teeth in all your cities, and want of bread in all your places: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.*

*And also I have withholden the rain from you, when there were yet three months to the harvest: and I caused it to rain upon one city, and caused it not to rain upon another city: one piece was rained upon, and the piece whereupon it rained not withered. So two or three cities wandered unto one city, to drink water; but they were not satisfied: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.*

*I have smitten you with blasting and mildew: when your gardens and your vineyards and your fig trees and your olive trees increased, the palmerworm devoured them: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.*

*I have sent among you the pestilence after the manner of Egypt: your young men have I slain with the sword, and have taken away your horses; and I have made the stink of your camps to come up unto your nostrils: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.*

*I have overthrown some of you, as God overthrew Sodom and Gomorrah, and ye were as a firebrand plucked out of the burning: yet have ye not returned unto me, saith the LORD.*

*Therefore thus will I do unto thee, O Israel: and because I will do this unto thee, prepare to meet thy God, O Israel.*

***It is obvious that God will use every available means to cause his people to stop backsliding and ‘return unto me’!***

Now, our part of this process is to remind people that this is how the Lord works, he will strike his people to correct them. We must not present God as the ever-present granddaddy in the sky, who, no matter what we do, approves of us – nothing could be more wrong. He wants us to live his way. And, just as he made us want to be saved, he will also make us want to get right.

### ***What about the overt backslider?***

To this backslider, we have a much different responsibility. We do still warn them via the preaching of the word of God. Those of us who are loved ones and close friends to the overt

# Bible Conference

April 24, 25, 26

Thursday 6:00 pm — Friday 9:00 am & 6:00 pm — Saturday 9:00am

Grace Baptist Church

201 N Moore

Claremore, OK

<http://www.gracebaptistclaremore.org>

backslider, I have one bit of counsel. In the words of a pastor friend of mine, “We need to challenge them.” This is not an easy task, nor is it one we relish! Indeed, we need to consider our actual relationship with these people, lest we “take a dog by ear” and get our arm bitten off!

As a husband, father, a son, brother, uncle and cousin, I have an obligation (in my opinion) to speak to my family about these issues because they are my own blood! Not too many people in the world are as dear to me as those who share my same lineage and familial relation. I love them in a way that I do not love others, so I am prone to speak to them with a candor I don’t speak to others with. If I am on the wrong path or am falling away, my family is within their rights and responsibility to say to me “Hey, you’re going astray!” I also have a duty to show my concern for them, they are my kinfolk.

Now in the context of my local church, those who take their backsliding public are to be treated in a very precise manner.

## 1. I must speak to them about it.

From time to time a person in a church may say to the pastor, “Tommy is doing this, with this person and you need to do something about it.”

More than once over the years of my short ministry, people have made accusations against others. It is foolish to act on these. It is not the duty of the pastor or anyone to confront someone *you* know is doing wrong. If you are privy to it, it is your responsibility to address it.

If I am aware of a person who is involved in one the sinful practices of I Corinthians 5.11,

which reads, “if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolator, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner”, then I must speak to them and warn them that they are doing a wrong thing. It is my duty to speak. Not because I’m a lord or master over a brother, oh no, it’s because we have a connection, we are family. Sinful living will destroy everyone who goes that way, and I want to stop the destruction of another’s life!

Consider the words of the Lord in Matthew 18.15, “*Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.*” If there is an issue, deal with it between you two, and the matter is settled.

## 2. What if speaking to them does no good?

Then we must move through the process of Matthew 18.16, “*But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.*”

It is important not to add a witness until you have first sought them out alone. To speak to someone else about an issue before going to them alone, is to sow a seed of discord! We are not out to destroy the reputations of erring brothers and sisters, we are to love them and prove that love by covering over their transgressions.

However, if they are adamant, if they are resolute in their error, then we must get another to go with us, for the protection of all parties involved. Witnesses are needed to see the erring one brought back or to expose an agenda of vilification. It is my opinion that, at this point,

the Pastor should be made aware of the situation. At this stage, you are involving more of the flock and he is responsible for them and their welfare.

**3. If they refuse to hear this ambassage of restitution, the Congregation must be told.**

Matthew 18.17 *“And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.”*

What you have here is an entire congregation saying, “We are not angry with you”, but rather, “We love you and are so concerned for you, that we, as an entire body, are saying that your way of life will bring you harm. We want you to stop because we fear for your future.”

A rebuke is way of showing love, when it is motivated by love not by vengeance! Consider what it says in Proverbs 27.17, *“Iron sharpeneth iron; so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend.”*

Do not shrink back from this Christ mandated work! We need to be held accountable and hold others accountable.

***We now will consider, when to reactivate the backslider in the church?***

Once we’ve spoken to an erring brother, there will be three basic responses to it:

1. Denial, often they have been blinded by sins deceit and are unable to see it because the slide back is normally very gradual. If you leave a ring in the bathtub once it doesn’t seem to be a very bad thing but over time if not wiped away, it will *become set in, established and DIFFICULT to remove!* So it is with sin. It is hard to see ourselves objectively, so we must not be surprised at a brother’s denial of his error. Often this call to attention is enough – they may realize their fault or they may offer an explanation that reveals to us that we are mistaken... or settles it in our minds that we are correct.

2. Anger, they may get upset because they have judged themselves to be *righteous* in their own eyes. We have no idea the level of self-justification that they have reached to get peace in their own mind that what they are doing is okay. Consider Proverbs 21.2a *“Every way of a man is right in his own eyes.”* The self-righteous are tough nuts to crack. The anger of their response is telling, it tells that they have already been convicted by the inner work of the Spirit

and have quenched him. They have entered the path that leads to the searing of the conscience! It will be pretty clear with this reaction the next levels of discipline will be needed to bring to bear the weight of their sinfulness.

3. Repentance, this is the most blessed and joyful of responses. A brother who has lapsed into sin and is under the reproof of the holy One, is propelled into the path of repentance. Their sin has made them miserable and they are happy to get right with God.

***There is only one time and way back for the backslider to be restored:***

**Repentance and Restitution**

If they repent and are sincere in it, then they will offer restitution. What is restitution? It is offering to and making any amends necessary or required by their sin.

Often a public statement of guilt and asking forgiveness will put an end to the matter. This is a wonderful way to put an end to idle gossip and close the matter in a church. Those who dare to bring up this issue again in gossip and tale bearing would themselves be subject to discipline.

Public statements like these give Pastors a fabulous opportunity to re-emphasize that when forgiveness is sought – it is TO BE given, freely and mercifully. And erring and repentant brothers and sisters are given the blessing of being able to live it down. Too often the repentant are forced to offer penance by having their failures and sin rubbed in their nose! This is not the way of the Lord. Yes, certain sins may change a person’s standing in the offices and work in the Church, but the sins are under the Blood and the forgiveness of the Church.

*May these meager words be of help to us all.*

*~ Terry Basham, II*



*Are you visiting Lawton, Oklahoma?  
Visit **Bethel Baptist Church***

Service times:

**Sunday**

Sunday School ..... 9:45 am

Worship Service ..... 10:50 am

Afternoon Service..... 2:00 pm

**Wednesday**

Mid-Week Service..... 7:00 pm

*Stereotypes, continued from page 1*

Here's the problem with stereotypes: they are always created by extremes because it is only the extremes that we hear about. That's also the nature of our brain. We don't hear about normal people, we hear about extremes. When Joe Brown goes to work for his family for the 15,373 consecutive workday it doesn't make news. When Jack Brown goes to the mall and guns down three people it does. So all we know of the Browns is that one of them went on a crime spree and we form a stereotype that Browns are a bunch of crazy criminals. Silly example but it makes sense.

As independent Baptists, two dangerous things happen all of the time. First, we have no interaction with non-IFB Christians, so we depend on stereotypes. Second, we constantly tell stories about the worst cases of non-independent Baptists so we create stereotypes that cause people to think that all non-IFB people are consciously disobedient rank heretics.

Now this is a problem for two reasons:

First, it's not just. There are Christians that love God, that stand for truth and that love God's Word outside of our circles. Forming stereotypes, whether consciously or not, based on the worst cases among them is uncharitable towards the majority in those groups.

If you're struggling with this, let me bring it home. Do you want people thinking of Westboro Baptist Church (the "God hates fags" group), Jack Schaap or Peter Ruckman when they think of independent Baptists? We instinctively say "that's not fair" whenever people do this to us, but then we go ahead and use the same tactics for Southern Baptists or Bible Church believers or whatever.

Second, it's not true. When we instill the thought "they're all a bunch of liberals" in the minds of our hearers, we aren't installing truth. All that needs to happen is for our people to meet one Christian outside of our group that loves God and his Word and we've lost total credibility.

God is a God of justice and truth, He's also a God of holiness. Our quest for ecclesiastical holiness doesn't give us the right to jettison truth and justice.

**Added for clarification:**

I did not intend for this to mean that we should stop "earnestly contending for the faith" or that we should stop practicing ecclesiastical separation. I merely am saying that we should contend with precision and with charity. We

should apply "just war theory" to our contentions meaning we should 1) seek as little damage as necessary and 2) seek only to contend with enemy combatants. We need to stop using A-bombs when a single bullet would do.

*Ryan Hayden is the Pastor of Bible Baptist Church in Mattoon, IL. Before coming to Bible Baptist in 2011, he served as an assistant pastor and camp director in Athens, TN. Pastor Hayden is an active blogger, and blogs on topics of ministry at [www.ryan-hayden.com](http://www.ryan-hayden.com).*

**A SIXTY-SECOND SERMON**

To the world you might be one person, but to one person you might be the world.

Going to church does not make you a Christian any more than going to McDonald's makes you a hamburger.

Real friends are those who, when you feel you've made a fool of yourself, don't feel you've done a permanent job.

A coincidence is when God performs a miracle and decides to remain anonymous.

Sometimes the majority only means that all the fools are on the same side.

I don't have to attend every argument I'm invited to.

Lead your life so you won't be ashamed to sell the family parrot to the town gossip.

People gather bundles of sticks to build bridges they never cross.

Life is 10 percent of what happens to you, and 90 percent of how you respond to it.

Did it ever occur to you that nothing occurs to God?

Life is like an onion; you peel off one layer at a time and sometimes you weep.

Learn from the mistakes of others.

You can't live long enough to make them all yourself.

There are two things I've learned: There is a God—and I'm not Him.

Following the path of least resistance is what makes rivers and men crooked.

Your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God's grace.

Your best days are never so good that you are beyond the need of God's grace.

—Source unknown.

## Why I Am Still a Baptist

I was ordained in 1999 and in the fifteen years since then I've seen many people seem to shift from the identification of being known as a Baptist. I remember well in 2006, I was preparing a sermon about the staying with the identifying denominational name Baptist, I had just finished my sermon and was checking my email. The first email I opened had a picture of the famous independent Baptist pastor from Jacksonville, Florida, it was a MUGSHOT! He had been accused and arrested of child molestation! Sad. Very Sad. I remember adding to my sermon these words, "While some Baptists behave in a way that makes me ashamed, I will fully choose to stay with the name, the identity Baptist."

I have argued many times and probably am thought of at times an anti-Baptist because I don't think it is required that a church call itself Baptist. It is a relatively new term (if a 500 year old title can be called new!) but I do believe and cling to the doctrinal distinctives of the Baptist people. What a church calls itself is not as important as what it believes and teaches.

I do find it very distressing that existing churches remove the name Baptist from their titles in an attempt to become more acceptable to the unchurched, de-churched or even to the lost. If a new church chooses not to use that moniker, it's really their business, but when an established church does it – THAT is deceptive.

I had the blessing of starting out as a Baptist and the reasons why I became Baptist are not the reasons why I'm STILL a Baptist but they are interesting to consider and it maybe that you find your reasons are similar to mine.

These are the reasons I am a Baptist and later I'll tell you the reasons I'm still a Baptist!

1. I was born into the home of a Baptist Pastor.
2. I was reared in a Baptist home.
3. I was saved in a Baptist Church and Baptized in a Baptist church.
4. I married a Baptist Bride.
5. I attended a Baptist college and was ultimately ordained by a Baptist presbytery.
6. I have been a Baptist preacher/pastor for 17 years.

These may seem like silly reasons but they are THE reasons why I am a Baptist. All my

life I have been a Baptist, and in those years I have found plenty of reasons to criticize the Baptist people; and I've found that there are some very good reasons to be a Baptist.

At two times in my life I have given serious consideration to changing to another flavor of Christianity. When I was a teen, I had some friends that were Nazarenes. They were basically good people and I like the way they treated me. They were more relaxed than the Baptists that I knew, and they seemed to enjoy a Christian liberty that I didn't. You may know the doctrinal differences between the church of the Nazarene and the Baptist church, but I didn't then, I just liked them. I think that some people become Baptists for the same reason and people tend to move from being identified as Baptist, Assembly of God, or Methodist, or something else many times because they like the people in those groups. I knew a plumber in Arkansas that attended a United Pentecostal Church; not because he agreed with the church's doctrinal positions, but because he and his wife had good friends who attended there.

Most of the time people move church membership not because of doctrinal reasons, rather for personal reasons. Many times it's because of some Kind of Conflict with another believer or with the pastor.

The Second time that I seriously considered departing the ranks of the Baptist people, was when I was a pastor in Texas. I became a fan of the Free Presbyterian church of Northern Ireland. I examined their doctrinal positions and gave due consideration to seeking an appointment or opportunity in that denomination. My infatuation with them was based largely on their Calvinistic position and their Soul winning zeal. But I couldn't get my head around one of their doctrinal positions: that of Baptism. I couldn't go along with their openness concerning it. I'm a dipper only, and that only after a person has given a credible testimony of salvation.

So, I think that I can say that I have been objective about being a Baptist even though I've such a strong baptistic background.

I wonder why you are a Baptist? Is it because you've operated as one so long that it would be difficult to become something else? Is it because a Baptist church pays your salary? Is it because of your parents? Because you

married a Baptist? Because you found friendship or help in the Baptist church? Why did you become one or are you really one? Your answer to these positions will be very enlightening. Give them due consideration.

Now my friends I want to offer you seven reasons why I'm still a Baptist after all these years:

- 1) Baptism.
- 2) Salvation.
- 3) The Lord's Table
- 4) The Book of Acts and the epistles.
- 5) The Dominance of the Bible
- 6) Soul liberty
- 7) Evangelism

### ***Baptism is one reason why I am still a Baptist.***

Baptism is THE primary issue that created the name Baptist. It seems that no one was ever called Baptist until the 1500's, and then they were called ANA-Baptists because they did not recognize infant baptism. Of all the issues that have driven the Baptist churches, also known as the True Church of Christ, has been baptism by immersion. So I must emphasize that Baptism is a VERY important reason why I am a Baptist.

Baptism is an interesting thing. It has three recognized forms in Christendom, they are: immersion of the whole body in water, sprinkling, and pouring. Baptism is also routinely administered throughout Christendom to infants, to persons of various ages who profess Christ as Savior, and in some cases it is considered to be an efficacious act or saving event.

Baptism is administered sometimes in the name of the Father, The Son and the Holy Spirit and sometimes in the name of Jesus only. There is even a triune baptism, a dip for each person of the Godhead. The Church of the Brethren do this even today and I think it is a face forward plunge. A little known fact is that the only form of Baptism practiced by anyone for any reason was immersion until the 1300's.... And the Greek Orthodox church still immerses infants, in the triune fashion.

But what is it about baptism that makes it one of the reasons that I am a Baptist?

### ***1st Is that Baptists immerse.***

The greek word in the NT is Bapto (long o) and that prefix means to dip or plunge beneath the surface. Every place in the greek text where a baptism is described, preached or explained

it's the same thing Bapto followed by various endings, which all mean the same thing Immersion.

In the NT There are some words that are translated as sprinkle or pour but none of them are Bapto, in fact they are Eckuno, Karranumi for pour and rhandidzo for sprinkle. Not one of these three words appear in a baptism text. You'd think that that would be a real strong blow against those who recognize or use another method.

Then we have some other items like Baptism being a picture of burial and resurrection see Col. 3.12. We have Jesus coming up out of the water in Matt 3.13-17. And in Acts 8.37-39 it's the same thing down into the water so Philip could dip the Eunuch. Immersion is the biblical mode of baptism, any other mode is not a legitimate Baptism, it's not a Christ Like baptism.

### ***2nd Is that Baptists immerse after the right birth.***

It's no secret that we believe in two births. The first birth puts you on the road to the grave, and after that hell. Everyone enters this path at birth. The second birth puts you on a narrow road that will lead you to heaven. Not everyone is on this path, and not everyone will be. Of that there is no doubt.

Some people baptize too soon, they baptize at the first birth, that's the wrong one. Acts 8.37-39, Acts 2.42, Mark 16.15, and Matt 3 show us that people who first believed the message of the preachers were then and only then immersed! Because they were making a public statement of an inward event.

I Peter 3.21 is a good text for that, we are baptized in public as an answer to the good conscience we have toward God as believers. In the vernacular of the day baptism is "going public"! In an interesting aside – the Baptist people do baptize infants. They baptize newborn spiritual babes in Christ!

### ***3rd is that Baptists immerse for the right reason.***

It is because baptism is a formal declaration of our guilt before God, and that we have been forgiven of our sins and are a child of God, and that we are now His, that we confess this before men by our public immersion in water. The old life is dead and the new life is ours.

Baptism has no part in salvation; it does not save or sanctify. I know, Acts 2.38 says some-

thing about being baptized for the remission of sins. Is it to receive the remission, or because we have ALREADY received it? Because we have already received it! The word 'for' can mean 'because of', and that is what it means here in Acts 2:38.

The Roman Church taught the idea of baptismal regeneration, and so does the Church of Christ. Both of these groups believe that Salvation is partly earned, or maintained (which is the same as earned), by strict obedience to the Law of God. Failure to live by this law will (in their view) cost you your eternal salvation.

***4th is the Baptists do not force anyone to be baptized.***

John the Baptist called men to repent and be baptized if they wanted to be. Every one of Paul's converts were baptized IF they wanted to be, and I think there were people who got saved then, just as now, who did not get baptized for whatever reason.

Baptists believe in Soul Liberty – people freely choose to be baptized or not, we do not command or insist that people be immersed. We DO, however, insist that members of the Local church be baptized before becoming members,

because that is what we see in the Scriptures. Baptism is our visible common bond. We've all been immersed in the same Name, by the same Authority and are one people in Christ! Baptism is a testimony to that fact!

Baptists tend to be stingy with administering baptism to just anyone, they must give a credible testimony of salvation that reflects the truths of the gospel.

***5th is that Baptists have been willing to die over this issue.***

What are you willing to die over? What doctrine are you willing to be killed over? In Arkansas in my Sunday School class I asked everyone to make out their own doctrinal statement, we did. I gave them the headings but they did the rest. After we had completed them, we read them and compared what people had written down and we found a common statement agreeable to everyone about the doctrines.

Then, after we had ten major doctrines stated in a concise form, I asked them to tell me which ones they were willing to die for. Only one man said he'd die over believer's baptism, and he was the only man in the class of men and women who said he would die over all of them! It was an interesting thing to see.

To be honest, it was a very sad moment – for Baptists. Many said they would die over salvation by grace and faith alone, but that was all. No one said they would die for the Bible, and no one said they would die over the separation of church and state, except the one man who said he'd die for all of it.

What doctrine will you die for? If you were given a choice to recant your belief in believers baptism or die, what would you do? What if they said we are going to drown your children if you don't recant of your belief that immersion is the only acceptable method of baptism? What if they took you outside and said we are going to burn your home to the ground because you believe that baptismal regeneration is a heresy? What would you do?

The Baptist people, the true Church of Christ, has seen hundreds of thousands of martyrs die because of baptism. How important is it to you?

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~ Terry Basham, II

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The Country Preacher...

## Honest – I'm Just a Preacher

by Pastor Darwin Robinson

I had been pastor at Battlecreek less than a year, when I soon realized I needed a bigger car to pick up some folks for church. So I traded in my pride and joy, my two door '56 Ford hard-top, and took up payments on a four door 1962 Rambler station wagon. I was now a full-fledged 'family man.' My heart still hasn't recovered from that loss. (The 'car,' not the single life!)

While visiting in the Appalachian mountains, many people said they wanted to come to church, but did not have a way. Now I had the remedy to that problem. My wife, Patsy, and I would sometimes make two and three trips picking up folks for the church services. Patsy would usually make the last trip, so I could get things prepared for services. Many times we would already be started before she returned with another load. Now you see why we needed a church bus.

It was on a Sunday afternoon and our first visitation trip with the new yellow station wagon. We began to climb the mountain/rocky trail (not much of a road) to visit the Rector family at the top. I was putting the new car through the test with rocks spewing out the back as it clawed up the mountain. About twenty minutes later, we pulled up in front of the little wooden house. Suddenly in my mirror, I noticed an old run-down pickup had pulled right up to our back bumper. This blocked us in. Four mountain men in overalls got out of the pickup and just stood looking at us. I got out and ask what they wanted. They answered in no soft tone, "Who are you and what are you doing up here?" Now I remembered someone telling me the woods up here were full of moonshiners who didn't cotton to strangers. I responded immediately, "I'M A PREACHER! I'm the new pastor at the Battlecreek church." They gave a hard look at me and the Rector family, who by now had come out on the porch. They got back in their pickup and I never saw them again.

MORAL OF THE STORY: "*Never underestimate the value of an honest answer.*"

*A New Year, continued from Page 1*

By the end of 2014 we want to have our renovation program finished.

By the end of 2014 we want to have announced and hosted a Bible Conference here at Bethel.

In 2014 we want to host a Vacation Bible School in our community.

In 2014 we want to have a regular Bible Study on post at Fort Sill.

In 2014 we want to have digitized and have available the entire Bible Institute of Correspondence.

In 2014 we want to publish at least 4 issues of the Baptist Watchman.

You may say, "You're addicted to activity." While that may be true, we are not here on this planet to wander from conference to conference or to fill our homes with more treasures. We are here to fill the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ! If we don't do anything, nothing will happen, no ground will be gained, no sinners will be evangelized, no churches will be started, nothing will happen! Oh, my friends, do not forget the Lord gave us a commission, a mission to fulfill! It cannot be accomplished by doing nothing: it is a work that must be done!

We set goals because we need marks to shoot at, and even the Lord Jesus gave His people in Matthew's and Mark's gospels a point to strive for! Christ said Preach the gospel to—EVERY CREATURE. There is the mark, the goal, and the objective! It's everybody, reach everybody, and you can't reach everybody by doing nothing. You can reach some by doing nothing, but that is because God works in spite of us. But if we labor and work to reach His goal, then He will work with and through us! Oh, my friends, when the Lord of Glory puts His hand to our hand, when He fills our sails with His holy wind, when He puts His power in our vessels—we are, and will be, profitable, will make advances, and become PROFITABLE, WISE and USEFUL servants.

So my friends, in this new year, let us labor in our fields and we'll collectively have obeyed His command.

~ Terry Basham, II

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