

We are not a Reformed Baptist Church – Colossians 2:6-10a

I. Introduction:

- A. A couple weeks ago, the church received the following poorly worded electronic correspondence:
1. *"Greetings, You are receiving this email because your email address is listed as a Church Email Address for a church listed on **ReformedBaptistChurches.com** and we are looking to the start dates for churches.*
 2. *There is an effort over at **1689seeds.org** which is a directory of households who do not have a Reformed Baptist (1689) church in their local area.*
 3. *You or others who are considering planting a church may want to contact the admin@1689seeds.org to gain access to the private contact information of those listed in that database for church planting purposes.*
 4. *If you could please let folks who are in need of a RB church know about this website, a request to get listed can be made using the submission form: <https://1689seeds.org/submission-form>.*
 5. *Thank you and God bless! **"TO GOD ALONE BE THE GLORY!"***
 6. *Best Regards, **The Worldwide Directory of Reformed Baptist Churches.**"*
- B. *"To God alone be the glory"* is the fifth *"sola"* of the **Protestant Reformation**.
1. And **there** is the problem – the Protestant Reformation.
 2. *"Sola"* is the Latin word for *"alone."*
 3. I can't understand why Protestantism wants to use the language of the Roman Catholic church, but it does.
 4. The other *"solas"* are *"grace alone," "faith alone," "Christ alone,"* and *"Scripture alone."*
 5. In and of themselves these things are fine, but Protestantism isn't completely Biblical in their definitions and explanations of these terms.
- C. I have no idea how this organization found our church email address. I certainly **did NOT** give it to them.
1. I assume that somehow they learned that we believe and preach God's sovereignty in salvation.
 2. After that, they made assumptions and jumped to their own conclusions.
 3. And now I'm in a quandary as to how to proceed.
 - a. I want us to be known as a church which preaches election and the sovereignty of God.
 - b. I would like others in our community to know what we believe about election and the atonement.
 - c. I would like to know people in our area who might be looking for a church like ours.
 - d. But I **don't** want us to be known as a *"Reformed Baptist Church."*
 - e. I don't want to be even indirectly identified with Protestantism. We are not Protestants. We are Baptists.
 4. This afternoon I will try to explain some of my reasons for rejecting this terminology and designation.
 5. Some of you might be able to add to my arguments; please feel free to do so.
- D. I need to do this, because it has become common to think that if a church preaches sovereign grace, while still baptizing believers by immersion, then it is a *"Reformed Baptist Church."*
1. These people arrogantly think that we are one of them; that we have moved up and joined their group.
 2. That is probably why this website wants to know when our church came into existence.
 3. This is just one display of theological arrogance. It is as if they are the standard of doctrinal correctness.
- E. Somehow in recent years, the descendants of the 17th and 18th century churches known as *"Particular Baptists"* are now being called *"Reformed Baptists."*
1. And many of today's Baptists are proud to call themselves *"reformed"* and *"Protestant."* **But I am not.**
 2. I am sorry that I even have to deal with this question and preach this kind of sermon.
 3. But I think that Calvary Baptist needs to be warned.
 4. I do not believe that our doctrines came out of the Protestant Reformation; they **preceded** Protestantism.
 5. There are lines of Baptist churches which never had to divest themselves of Protestant heresies, because they never held to those heresies.
 6. Yes, our forefathers protested against the Catholic problems, but not from **INSIDE Catholicism** – or from **INSIDE** the Protestant movement.

F. As I begin, I will tell you that much of my outline today has come from two sources, **Kenneth Dix**, Chairman of the Strict Baptist Historical Society, and from an article by an Englishman named **Jared Smith**.

II. Let's begin with the beginnings of the Reformed Baptist movement.

- A. Agreeing with the accounts of many others, Doctor Dix traced the origin of England's Reformed Baptist movement to **September 1955**, with the "*Banner of Truth Trust*," its magazine and its first few books.
1. Three of its leaders were **Sidney Norton**, **Martyn Lloyd-Jones** and **Ian Murray** – none of whom were Baptists.
 2. On **July 22, 1957**, as the "*Banner of Truth Trust*," moved to this country & registered as a non-profit charity,
 - a. Its founders declared: "*The object of (this) Charity is to promote ... the better knowledge and understanding of the doctrines of the Christian faith as taught by the Protestant Reformers and English Puritans.*"
 - b. In addition to out-of-print books of the Protestants, the Trust also published some of the books of the Particular Baptists. I have several of both varieties in my library.
 - c. But that Trust was not trying "*to promote the doctrines of the Christian faith as taught by the*" **Particular Baptists**. Their primary purpose was Protestantism.
 3. Yet as I said, like many other Baptists, I bought, read and was blessed by their books.
 4. In reprinting those books the "*Banner of Truth Trust*" has done the world a great service.
 5. Unfortunately, their magazine, now known as "*Reformation Today*" or "*RT*" has been called by one Baptist writer as "*the unofficial organ of the Reformed Baptists.*"
- B. Coincidentally, I am currently reading the biography of the Baptist pastor, **Rolfe Barnard**.
1. This man believed in sovereign grace the way we do. He was used of God to lead thousands of people to Christ, and to ignite revival fires in several places in this country, during the middle of the last century.
 2. This biography, at the beginning of chapter 9 says, "*Rolfe Barnard was a pioneer of Reformed theology in Southern Baptist life in the 1950's.*"
 3. Then five pages later added: "*Oddly, the very movement he birthed he eventually viewed as a monster.*"

III. With that in the background, I'll share a few of the reasons why I am NOT a Reformed Baptist.

- A. I believe that even though the Bible sometimes uses the word in a wider sense, ultimately "*a church*" is a local, visible body of baptized believers.
1. And in our churches we have pastors, sometimes called "*elders*" or "*bishops*," who have the spiritual leadership of the assembly. But it is the congregation which makes other church decisions.
 - a. In other words, we practice a **congregational form** of church government, unlike most Protestants.
 - b. That is, we don't have synods and councils to tell us what to do and what to believe.
 - c. And we determine, under the Lord's leadership, who we would like to have as our undershepherd.
 2. We also believe & practice a restricted communion, offering the Lord's Supper only to our church members.
 3. But generally speaking, Reformed Baptists emphasize the universal and invisible nature of the church, over the local assembly.
 4. And because of that they are much more open in regard to who may receive the Lord's Supper, showing affinity toward their Protestant brethren.
- B. Even though "*Reformed BAPTISTS*" cling to some **baptistic principles**, such as the **immersion** of believers...
1. Their retention of the word "*reformed*" gives a tip of the hat toward those denominations which came out of Catholicism during the 16th century – Lutheranism, Presbyterianism, the Dutch Reformed churches, etc.
 2. But it needs to be remembered that the Reformers, like **Luther**, **Henry VIII**, & **Knox** were attempting to **reform** the Catholic Church & the Church of England. Some never intended to leave their Catholic roots.
 3. These Baptists, by retaining the term "*reformed*" – on some level must acknowledge the Catholic Church as a legitimate Christian organization, simply in need of a bit of cleaning up.
 4. If this is **not** their intent, then they should drop the term which implies that relationship.

- C. The fact is: the *“Reformed Baptists”* actually **emphasize** the Word *“reformed,”* often above the word *“Baptist.”*
1. We can see that even in that simple email that the church received. **But WHY** emphasize **THAT** word?
 2. They seem to be always talking about the **Reformed faith**, Reformed **literature** & Reformed **conferences**.
 3. And then they encourage others to be *“reformed,”* as if there was something special about the word.
 4. But it needs to be remembered that this language **was not common** among the Baptists **until** the **1950s**.
 5. For several hundred years following the Protestant Reformation, Baptists didn't call themselves *“reformed.”*
 6. **And**, it certainly **can't** be found in the **Scriptures**.
- D. The Reformed Baptists love the Presbyterians – people who in days gone by actually persecuted us.
1. They take much pride in the similarities between the Presbyterian's **1646** *“Westminster Confession of Faith”* and the **1689** *“Second London Baptist Confession of Faith.”*
 2. Some of their people would say that if it wasn't for infant baptism, they'd be Presbyterians.
 3. And in this regard, perhaps a better way to look at them is as **Biblical Presbyterians** rather than **Reformed Baptists**.
- E. Despite declaring to believe in *“grace alone,”* *“faith alone,”* *“Christ alone,”* and *“Scripture alone...”*
1. Presbyterians and other Protestants add **baptism** to grace, **works** to salvation, **various priestly ministries** to Christ and **CREEDS** to the scriptures.
 2. Those first three points should be well-known to most of us.
 3. And in regard to the fourth, Biblical Baptists for centuries have had their statements of faith, which they have used to identify and defend themselves.
 4. But, until seventy years ago, they did not turn to those statements and other creeds as their doctrinal authority. **But that is not so** with the *“Reformed Baptists.”*
 5. Did you notice in that email with which I opened, how many times they referred to **1689**?
 6. That is a reference to the *“Second London Confession of Faith of 1689,”* which apparently is more important to them than the King James Bible.
- F. As I've already suggested, the title *“Reformed Baptist”* was **rarely ever used** by Baptists **before 1950**.
1. Only at that point did Baptists itch to align themselves with Protestantism and particularly the Presbyterians.
 2. In the 1700's & 1800's our forefathers tried very hard to separate and distinguish themselves from Protestantism.
 3. As a general rule the Protestants, including Presbyterians, Anglicans, Lutherans and Methodists, hated and often persecuted the Baptists for their literal acceptance and practice of the Bible.
- G. The *“Reformed Baptist”* name is an **oxymoron**.
1. An oxymoron is *“a figure of speech in which apparently contradictory terms appear in conjunction.”*
 2. In my study of history, I have never found any Baptists who tried to reform the Catholic Church or the Church of England.
 3. Our people were persecuted and murdered by the Roman and English Catholics.
 4. To combine the word *“reformed”* with *“Baptist”* eliminates the distinction which makes a Baptist a Baptist.
 5. Why not simply say something like: *“I am a sovereign grace Baptist?”*
 6. Perhaps an even better phrase would be the historic term *“Particular Baptist”* in contrast to the free-will *“General Baptists.”*
 7. The real issue is that most *“Reformed Baptists”* believe they **actually ARE Protestants**, refusing to recognize there were baptistic churches long before Martin Luther or John Calvin.
- H. The *“Reformed Baptists”* are a **new** movement. They have been around only seventy years.
1. That makes them not much different from all the ism's with began a century before them.
 2. The **Mormons**, **Campbellites** and **Seventh Day Adventists** are older than the *“Reformed Baptists.”*
 3. They are about as old as the **Calvary Chapel movement** & some of the other modern Christian deviations.

- I. I notice that Jared Smith, who is more personally familiar with them than I am, says that they display a decided **air of superiority** over the rest of us.
1. He says, *“It matters not from where the Reformed Baptists hail, this spirit of snootiness transcends culture and language.*
 - a. *In my experience, the aggravating factor when conversing with the Reformed Baptists, is not that they promulgate their newfangled teachings,*
 - b. *but that they proceed to make wild claims that their position is supported by hundreds of years of “church history.”*
 2. *As Reformed/Baptists, they have cherry-picked bits and pieces of “church history” to weave their multi-colored coat into a useable garment.*
 3. *And they gush over each other, praising one another’s credentials, and qualifications and incredible insights into the 1689 Confession. The whole thing is quite nauseating and insufferable.*
- J. But *“Reformed Baptists”* seem to reject all *“reforms”* which occurred **after** the **1689 London Confession**.
1. The Presbyterians **are** *“reformed,”* because their **Westminster Confession of Faith** came out forty years earlier – in **1648**.
 2. They love to use the words *“sola scriptura”* (scripture alone), but they actually subscribe to *“sola confessionalis”* (confessions alone).
 3. And rather than using these confessional statements as doctrinal defenses against the Protestants, they have turned them into the foundations upon which they build their denominational castles.
 4. Rather than interpreting these confessions by the teachings of the Bible, they interpret the Bible by their confessions.
 5. The **Presbyterians** believe all **reforms ended in 1646** with their *“Westminster Confession,”* but the **Reformed Baptists** believe all reforms ended in **1689** with the *“Second London Baptist Confession.”*
- K. However, not even the Baptists who signed that 1689 Confession used that document as the benchmark for their faith and practice.
1. For instance, nine years after **Benjamin Keach** signed his name, he drew up an entirely new confessional statement for his own congregation.
 2. Then sixteen years following Keach’s death, **John Gill** was inducted as the pastor of that church.
 3. And after nine years of service, Gill drew up for his congregation a new statement, called the *“1729 Goat Yard Declaration of Faith.”*
 4. These and other *“new”* reforms, like the *“Philadelphia”* and the *“New Hampshire Statement of Faith”* are generally rejected by modern *“Reformed Baptists.”*
- L. There are other things I could say about these people, such as their general rejection of the Bible which those Particular Baptists used and quoted in 1689. They most often use the ESV.

IV. The Bible should be – the Bible is – our standard for faith and practice.

A. We could turn to many scriptures, but I’ve chosen to start and end with **Colossians 2:6-10**.

B. “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him.”

1. We are not to walk in Benjamin Keach, John Gill and certainly not in John Calvin or John Knox.
2. Please don’t think I am saying that the Protestants are all lost men. I am not.
3. All I am saying is that they have doctrinal errors to which I want no connection.
4. We have been saved by Christ Jesus the Lord, and it must be according to His will that we live, serve and believe.
5. Peter and other apostles warn us against believing & following the ideas of men & cunningly devised fables.
6. We are *“rooted and built up in (Christ), and stablished in (His) faith, as (we) have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving.”*

- C. Paul goes on, *“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.”*
1. James Strong, in his concordance, defines the Bible word *“philosophy”* as *“Jewish sophistry.”*
 2. And that word speaks of twisting words and ideas in order to deceive and mislead.
 3. Paul says, beware of receiving the misleading traditions of men, in contrast to the leadership of Christ.
- D. *“For in (Christ) dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, and ye are complete in him...”*
1. Being complete in the Saviour means that we don't need to join the movement – the growing denomination – of the *“Reformed Baptists.”*
 2. You and I have the Bible, which we can read for ourselves.
 3. And we have been placed by God in an independent Baptist church, which tries to teach the Bible, as it is written.
 4. What more do we need?