



Some Heresies in the Modern Christian Church:

(What jumps out at you? Which of these *heresies* do you think is the easiest to believe, or refute?

Why?

Heresies often thrive because they contain a sprinkle of truth.)

- **Denominations** Post-Reformation, this is the longest lingering schism that has plagued the Protestant movement in western Christianity. It promotes sectarianism, and the practice of “Separate but equal” as an alternative to the “unity” commanded us by Christ. Someone said, “Once you start “schisming,” it’s hard to know when to stop.” (2Pe.2:20)
- **Evangelicalism** Born of judaeo-christianity, advancing political ideologies and other so-called “conservative” advocacy under the guise of God; a re-branding of Christianity; not to be, but meant to be confused with “evangelism”.
- **Five-fold Ministries** First introduced in 1824 by Edward Irving, a presbyterian preacher in Scotland, and later rekindled by the Pentecostal and charismatic movements, claiming it to be the precursor to the ushering of the Millennial Kingdom of Christ on the earth, it is the elevation of clerical authority alongside/above the sole headship of Christ in the church by falsely redefining the meaning and function of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors, teachers referenced by Paul in Ephesians 4; a denial and rejection of the apostles’ doctrine concerning Christ and his church, with false claims concerning the second coming of the Lord.
- **Judaeo-Christianity** A political movement post WW2 in America, claiming affinity between Judaism and Christianity, and claiming Judaism as essential and foundational to Christianity in denial of the teachings of Christ and his apostles; a re-branding of Christianity. Linked to western christian phobia with/towards Israel?
- **Prosperity Ministries** This is the teaching that advocates the pursuit of material wealth as a central / essential God-given right to believers, denying Christ’s own teachings.
- **Forgiving yourself** Promoting self sufficiency in absolving one’s own sin, thereby usurping/denying the sufficiency of God’s forgiveness; it is a feel-good theology, making one a god, and without biblical truth.

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- **Agree to disagree** A central belief and practice in the Baptist Convention and possibly other protestant denominations, a sanction for personal interpretation of scriptures and application, denying the need to adhere to a bible-centric (one faith) doctrine as left us by Christ and his apostles, demonstrated and applied in Acts by the early church. A rejection of accountability, with the related clerical abuse of power and heresy that follow.
- **Numerology** The belief and teaching that numbers have a hidden spiritual meaning and significance other than what scriptures may explicitly state; it is a form of divination prohibited in scriptures.

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Rick Warren's Appeal Letter to the SBC

["An open letter to all Southern Baptists,"](#) by Rick Warren, June 2, 2023 — Warren explained that appealing the SBC Executive Committee ruling to expel Saddleback Church from the SBC due to ordaining women and allowing women to preach was necessary to preserve the very soul of the declining denomination. Despite his appeal, the vote to remove Saddleback was overwhelmingly affirmed.

BNG Editor's Note: Rick Warren published this open letter Friday, June 2, and sent it to various media outlets, including BNG. Rather than write a news story about the letter, we decided to run the full letter as an opinion piece.

KWK Note: This letter is highly revealing to why heresy is in the Baptist church today to stay: it is an allowed choice, not accidental, rather a desirable and accepted way of conducting church ministry.

As a Southern Baptist pastor with multi-generations of pastors in my family, my life has been shaped and nurtured by the SBC.

I'm writing this open letter for two reasons:

First, I'm deeply concerned about our denomination's 17 years of decline and the loss of a half million members just last year. No denomination can sustain that kind of loss.

Second, many have asked me to explain why Saddleback Church is appealing an Executive Committee ruling at our annual meeting in New Orleans in two weeks.

The Southern Baptist Convention is a mosaic of many kinds of Baptist "tribes" who came together to cooperate on the Great Commission. We are general Baptists (the original founding Baptists of 1609), revival Baptists, fundamentalist Baptists, Calvinist Baptists and many other varieties of Baptists.

From the start, our unity has always been based on a *common mission, not a common confession*. For the first 80 years of the SBC, we did not even have a confession because the founders were adamantly opposed to having one. (You can read the founding documents at www.sbcstand.com). They knew we never could get 100% of Baptists to agree 100% on 100% of every interpretation of Scripture.

That's why every version of the Baptist Faith and Message has called itself a "consensus of opinion," and it repeatedly warns us it is not a creed to be used to enforce doctrinal uniformity or exclude members of our denominational family. Your own family members often hold opposing opinions, but you don't disown them for that. You still love them in spite of disagreements.

"Consensus" means "generally agreed on." It doesn't mean "universally or unanimously agreed on."

For example, *none* of the messengers from our churches who voted against the changes made in the revised Baptist Faith and Message 2000 have been kicked out, even though they disagreed with some

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of the statements. That's the Baptist way. We have *never* demanded every Baptist agree on *every* interpretation.

In fact, for 178 years, Southern Baptists have agreed to disagree on dozens and dozens of doctrinal differences so we could cooperate for the gospel.

The current ruling of the Executive Committee will open a Pandora's box of unintended consequences unless we reject it. It will fundamentally destroy four historic Southern Baptist distinctives upon which the convention was organized by our founders.

It will:

1. Change the basis of our cooperation.
2. Change the basis of our identity.
3. Centralize power in the Executive Committee and take away autonomy from the churches.
4. Turn our confession into a creed, which Baptists always have opposed. We all grew up with the slogan "We have no book but the Bible, and we have no creed but Christ!"

Our appeal to reverse the Executive Committee ruling is *not* asking any Baptist to change their theology. *Not at all.* The overwhelming majority of Southern Baptists are complementarian. But we reject the idea that Southern Baptists who disagree are an existential threat to our convention and not true Baptists.

We want to cooperate on the Great Commission. All we're asking is that Southern Baptists *act like* Southern Baptists, as we have for 178 years, and continue to be a fellowship of independent churches who *agree to disagree* on many things in order to *agree* to fulfill our mission together.

This could be Southern Baptists' finest moment. It *should* be the moment where we say "no" to becoming a creedal denomination (like some Presbyterians who have 11 creeds and confessions) and instead reaffirm that it is the Great Commission that draws us together, not doctrinal uniformity in every jot and tittle.

This should be the moment where 47,000-plus autonomous, independent, freedom-loving churches say no to turning the Executive Committee into a theological magisterium that controls a perpetual inquisition of churches and makes the Executive Committee a centralized hierarchy that tells our congregations who to hire and what to call them.

This is a vote to affirm the God-given freedom of every Baptist to interpret Scripture as a Baptist — by saying no to those who deny that freedom. This is a vote to affirm *evangelism* by saying no to *factionalism*. This is a vote to refocus on the Great Commission and say no to a Great Inquisition, which will waste enormous time, money and energy that we should be investing in revitalizing our churches.

This is a vote to continue being the denomination of Lottie Moon and Annie Armstrong — two strong,

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godly women who fearlessly spoke to men and challenged them everywhere about the priority of missions, and to say no to those who would have silenced these Southern Baptist women.

This is a vote to affirm our founding documents which *insist* that our unity is to be based on giving total submission to Christ in our deeds and not based on mental submission to man-made creeds.

Hand me a Bible and I'll sign *that* as my authority. The Bible is Baptist's *sole* authority.

This is a vote to prioritize Baptists working together to heal the hurts of the world in Jesus' name instead of nitpicking at each other over our many differences.

For Southern Baptists, the independence and freedom of our churches has been a great strength. Our rejection of a centralized hierarchy has been a strength. And our rejection of an enforceable creed has been a strength. It was only in the last 17 years, as we moved away from these historic strengths, that our denomination started rapidly declining.

The SBC grew for 80 years — 80 years! — without any statement of faith because our unity never was based on a confession. Then we grew for 90 more years — with a consensus confession that never was used to exclude people on the basis of interpretation.

In our 178-year history, it has only been in the last eight years that the Baptist Faith and Message has been weaponized and turned into a creed for exclusion. That happened through a misguided amendment to the SBC Constitution passed in 2015. Today, our founders are rolling over in their graves.

In U.S. history, when people have realized a constitutional amendment was wrong, the citizens have had the right and responsibility to repeal it. In the same way, Southern Baptists need to *take back* their denomination by repealing the 2015 *un-Baptist* amendment, so we can be true Baptists again.

Southern Baptists know how to humbly correct wrongs. Recently we've just started to do that with victims of sexual abuse in our churches. In 1995, at the 150th annual meeting in Atlanta, there was another historic, Christ-honoring moment when Southern Baptists corrected a grievous historic evil by adopting the "Resolution on Racial Reconciliation."

In that humble resolution, Southern Baptists lamented and repented of the sin of slavery, repudiated racism, apologized to our African American brothers and sisters, and humbly asked for the process of reconciliation to begin. I remember Kay and I sitting next to a Black pastor and his wife who wept as that resolution passed. Since then, thousands of non-white churches have found a home in our convention.

That growth resulted from a correction! We can do it again.

If we don't correct the direction we've been heading for eight years by saying no to the Executive Committee's misguided ruling, and then repealing the un-Baptist 2015 amendment, our convention will continue to grow weaker and smaller. We'll keep having infighting and friction between tribes

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and factions; un-Christlike name-calling; wasted convention time, money and energy; loss of trust and credibility; continued membership decline; and the death of the basis for cooperation upon which this body was founded. That basis — a common *mission*, not a confession — was the founding genius that made the SBC great.

This is why our church is challenging the ruling: Not for ourselves, but for the future and nature of the SBC, which hangs in the balance.

The implications of this precedent cannot be overstated. So, I urge you, friends, to go and vote no at the annual meeting in New Orleans.

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Rethinking the Five-Fold Ministry

(excerpt from Frank Viola – *Beyond Evangelical*)

The Making of a Doctrine

In nineteenth-century England, Christians were ripe to embrace apocalyptic prophecies about the coming Millennial Age.

The upheaval that the French Revolution produced left God’s people wishing for a reign of peace that would set all things right.

In 1824, Edward Irving, a Presbyterian pastor in Scotland, began teaching that “the five-fold ministry” of apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers had disappeared from the church and was in need of restoration.

According to Irving, the restoration of these ministries would usher in the Millennial Kingdom of Christ on the earth.

Irving and his followers began the Catholic Apostolic Church in 1832. Its chief purpose was to restore “the five-fold ministry” and usher in the Millennial Kingdom.

The Church ordained twelve “apostles” who were to be the last days equivalent of the original Twelve whom Jesus appointed. Henry Drummond, a wealthy banker from England, became the leader of the Church. Drummond himself took the highest position—“apostle to Scotland.”

It was prophesied that these “twelve apostles” would be the last apostles to appear on earth before Christ’s return. (This is a throwback to Mani of Persia of the third century who labeled himself the “Apostle of Light”—the very last apostle of Jesus.)

Eventually the twelve apostles of the Catholic Apostolic Church died (the last one dying in 1901). Upon their death, the Church expired in England. In Germany, however, the Catholic Apostolic Church ordained twelve more apostles and took the name, the “New Apostolic Church.”

In 1896, an erstwhile Congregational minister named John Alexander Dowie founded the Christian Catholic Church. In 1901, with five thousand followers, Dowie established the “City of Zion” in northeast Illinois.

In 1904, Dowie announced that he had been divinely commissioned to be the “First Apostle.” He then told his followers to anticipate the full restoration of apostolic Christianity. In 1906, the community of believers in the City of Zion began to break down. Dowie passed away the following year.

Following the famed Azusa Street revival in 1906 in Los Angeles, California, the emphasis on the restoration of “the five-fold ministry” and “a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit just before the return of Christ” reappeared. And a new generation of apostles emerged. Luigi Francescon (“apostle

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to Italy”), Ivan Voronaev (“apostle to the Slavs”), and T.B. Barratt (“apostle to Europe”) were just some of them.

Pentecostal denominations in Wales, New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and the United States elected and ordained colleges of apostles to govern their denominations.

As the years rolled on, the restoration of “the five-fold ministry” doctrine somewhat faded. But it reemerged again with a revival spawned at Sharon Orphanage in North Battleford, Saskatchewan, Canada in 1948.

The “New Order of the Latter Rain” movement, as it was called, was prophesied to restore “the five-fold ministry” to prepare for “the manifestation of the sons of God” on the earth.

But when the waters of revival receded, the restoration of “the five-fold ministry” doctrine faded again until it was resuscitated in the Charismatic Movement of the late 1960s. In the late 70s, the doctrine’s flame began to dim again until a group of men resurrected it with new fervor in the mid-1990s.

In 1996, Peter Wagner led a conference at Fuller Theological Seminary entitled, *The National Symposium on the “Post-Denominational Church.”*

This conference produced a new movement called the “New Apostolic Movement,” which Wagner claims is sweeping the globe with a new way of doing church. The churches that are part of this movement are being labeled “New Apostolic Churches.”

In 1999, Wagner sought to organize the movement under the name “International Coalition of Apostles” with Wagner as the “Presiding Apostle.” The movement claims to be restoring “the five-fold ministry” today.

Parenthetically, the churches in the new apostolic movement are vanilla Charismatic institutional churches replete with the office of modern pastor (often renamed “apostle”), Sunday sermons, pulpit, pews, church buildings, the five hundred year-old order of worship, music led by a worship team, etc. (See [Pagan Christianity](#) for the origin of these religious practices.)

Point: The doctrine of the restoration of “the five-fold ministry” is over 180 years old. And it’s been repackaged from movement to movement.