

**FACTORS UNDERLYING DIFFERENCES IN CHURCH-STATE VIEWS
AMONGST BLACK AND WHITE BAPTISTS**

Elliot Y. Chiu
HNRS-490-030H
Dr. Daniel Dreisbach
May 6, 2009
Honors Capstone

Abstract

This capstone examines the factors underlying the differences in how black and white Baptists in the U.S. have understood relations between church and state. To this end, churches in three Baptist conventions were studied: the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. (NBC, USA), the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), and the American Baptist Churches, USA (ABC). The NBC, USA is the largest and oldest convention of black Baptist churches in the U.S., and the SBC and ABC correspond historically to the white Southern and Northern branches of Baptist faith, respectively. The churches were analyzed with regard to the theological, cultural, political and economic contexts in which they developed. They were compared with one another to determine the factors that plausibly accounted for the differences in their respective notions of church-state interaction. The author found that black Baptists and white Southern Baptists increasingly differed on the nature and degree of church engagement with the state. White Northern Baptists, on the other hand, gradually moved closer to the church-state views held by black Baptists, but this shift did not have its roots in the same circumstances in which black Baptists developed their views. The factors underlying the church-state differences between black Baptists and white Southern Baptists, and black Baptists and white Northern Baptists, were found to be racial (in terms of attitudes), theological, cultural, economic, and political. White racism to a great degree drove the other factors, but the factors were nevertheless all intertwined, contributing to one another simultaneously.

Objective

In this capstone, I seek to analyze the factors underlying the differences in how relations between church and state are understood by African American or black Baptists and Caucasian or white Baptists. My interest in this particular subject stemmed from my general observation that black Protestant churches tend to be much more predisposed than their white Protestant counterparts to support a relaxed separation of and close cooperation between church and state. Furthermore, much observation has been made in the media of the differences between culture and religion in the South, black America, and the rest of America, especially the North—particularly around election season.

As a study of black and white Protestant churches on the subject of church and state would be overly broad and ambitious here, I have chosen to concentrate on one Protestant denomination: the Baptists. The Baptists, despite popular conceptions, are in fact a very diverse group. For reasons which will be explored, they are as varied—if not more—than other Protestant denominations such as the Methodists and Presbyterians. As Bill J. Leonard, Dean of the Wake Forest School of Divinity and a Baptist himself, has observed:

Martin Luther King Jr. was a Baptist. So was Strom Thurman. In symbol and substance those two individuals personified the American conflict over race and civil rights...Baptists are a diverse lot, claiming common and contradictory beliefs and practices. (Leonard, *Baptists in America* 2)

I have chosen the Baptist denomination primarily because the majority of black Protestants—indeed, black Christians as a whole—claim membership in a Baptist church. Just as there are primarily white Baptist church conventions, primarily black Baptist church conventions exist as well. One may ask why I did not choose to study another denomination which also counts among itself indigenous black church fellowships. For instance, why not the Methodists, which boasts

the prominent African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church, or even the Pentecostals, who claim the fast-growing indigenously black Church of God in Christ (COGIC)?

The reasons are threefold. First, the majority of black Christians, from before the U.S. was founded up through the present day, claim Baptist affiliation. Thus, the institution in American society commonly known as “the black church” has historically referred to black Baptists along with AME adherents. If, then, one comes to understand why black Baptists hold to the certain views on church and state they hold to, then one can understand the dominant conception of church and state in the black church. Second, the nature of the Baptist faith and its history in the United States has resulted in a diversity of theology and practice amongst Baptist churches rivaling that in almost any other Protestant denomination. This leads to the third reason: The diversity in belief and practice amongst Baptists has manifested itself racially: black Baptists can hold theological views distinct from their white Baptist brethren even after accounting for the many differences within white Baptist circles. Black Protestants in other denominations, on the other hand, have not developed as nearly as many differences in belief from their white denominational brethren. For instance, the AME and the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. (a black Baptist entity) hold similar beliefs on church-state relations. However, the AME and the mostly white church it separated from, the United Methodist Church, have gradually come to hold similar church-state views, whereas the NBC and its white counterpart, the SBC, did and still do not.

My research question is therefore as follows: What are the factors that may account for the significant differences in church-state views amongst black and white Baptists? I use the word “amongst” here instead of “between” because while there has historically been broad agreement amongst black Baptists on church-state relations, and indeed, amongst black

Protestants in historically black churches, the white Baptist community has not been so ‘fortunate’—hence my study of white Southern and white Northern Baptists.

To research this question, I chose to study Baptist churches in the three historically (and currently) major Baptist conventions. Note that Baptists do not call a group of Baptist churches with ties to one another ‘the _____ Baptist Church,’ as other Protestant denominations do. Given the Baptist belief in the independence and primacy of the local church, which will be discussed later, Baptist churches are not local entities of an overarching or wider church body (Shurden, “Baptist Associations and the Turn toward Denominational Cooperation: 1640s/1707” 71). They are not subject to a higher authority. They come together voluntarily to form various types of cooperative relationships, including conventions, and they enter and leave those relationships at their pleasure by congregational vote. Thus, while approved by delegates, national Baptist convention statements do not speak for a ‘the Baptist Church’ as the statements of, say, the General Conference of the United Methodist Church do.

Because all Baptist conventions are financed *voluntarily* by their member churches, when preparing statements conventions are careful to take stances that reflect the majority view of their constituents. Yet even then, because the independence of the local church is so fundamental in Baptist theology, many Baptist churches do not take much notice of the statements of the convention they are affiliated with—this is especially true at the level of national conventions. Thus, while national Baptist convention statements mostly reflect the views of their member churches on issues (if they did not, there would most likely be a popular backlash), as long as convention statements are not controversial, Baptist churches will generally hear little of them. And because convention statements are nonbinding, they typically do not spur Baptist churches to much action.

Taking into account the unique ecclesiology and cooperative structure of Baptists, I did not make convention statements or resources the majority of my sources. Instead, I chose to focus on the attitudes, views, and actions of churches themselves within a convention. When appropriate, I have discussed statements of or actions taken by the conventions, but the focus of my research has been on what Baptists within those conventions thought and did. It may be asked why I did not choose to study state conventions, which are closer to the local churches, whose statements perhaps correspond better to positions taken by their member churches, and may elicit more action from them. The simple reason is that there are such a plethora of Baptist conventions, associations and societies below the national level—not simply state ones—and given that my study concerns differences amongst Baptists by race and region, studying a number of black and white Baptist groups would only result in confusion and complication.

The three national conventions I chose were the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. (NBC, USA), the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC), and the American Baptist Churches, USA (ABC). The NBC, USA is the largest and oldest convention of black Baptist churches in the U.S.—it is nationwide—and the SBC and ABC correspond historically to the white Southern and Northern branches of Baptist faith, respectively. Each of these conventions counts as members the majority of Baptist churches in the area and/or race towards which they have historically been oriented. They also represent the mainstream of Baptist thought within their region and/or race. Thus, the terms ‘Southern Baptists,’ ‘Northern Baptists,’ and ‘black Baptists’ can be taken safely to refer to the churches within the above three conventions.

Analytical Framework

For any Christian church, the study of church-state relations generally involves two broad and interrelated questions. One, how does the church see its role in society in light of its own

teachings? Two, how does the church resolve its view with that of the society it is in (which in the U.S. has been religious liberty and separation of church and state)? A church's response to both of these questions can be influenced by theological, cultural, political, economic, and other factors. These two questions form the basis of my analysis. In order to understand how any Baptist group answers them, it is necessary to understand several distinct doctrines all Baptists share, which is what I discuss in the first section. Following that, I break my historical analysis of the churches into five time periods: the Colonial era, the Antebellum years, the Civil War Reconstruction, and post-Reconstruction through the 1940s. My discussion of the Colonial era can be taken as an introduction to the three groups of Baptists (Northern, Southern, and black) as I discuss the rise of Baptists in different regions of America, how they impacted the culture of the regions they inhabited and evangelized in, and how each viewed the institution of slavery. Following this section, the structure of the next four sections are relatively similar: For each section, I discuss each Baptist group and at the end offer an analysis comparing the three groups (save for the brief section on the Civil War). The next three sections of the capstone are slightly different. The first of these analyzes how white Baptists largely accepted the evolution of the meanings of religious liberty and separation of church and state in American society, while black Baptists did not. The second is a discussion of my field research—I interviewed one Baptist minister from a Washington, D.C. church in each of the conventions. The final section is my overall conclusion, where I evaluate whether my findings from my field research comport with the conclusions I have derived from existing literature.

* * *

Before we move to consider how the three Baptist groups developed their respective views of church-state relations, we should keep in mind two important points: First, the principle

of separation of church and state can be understood quite differently by various groups in the same time period. Second, the predominant meaning of separation of church and state in America has undergone significant changes since the first English Europeans began settling the Eastern Seaboard. Contrary to what many tend to believe, the meaning of separation has not remained constant since the phrase was first used in the 1600s. The different understandings of this principle will be analyzed in discussing each of the Baptist groups.

* * *

I. Baptist Faith: Proclaiming Religious Liberty from the Onset

In order to understand the differences in church-state views that have evolved between any of the black and white Baptist conventions, an introduction to the fundamental doctrines of Baptist faith is necessary. The Baptist tradition is distinguished from other Christian traditions in its origins, ecclesiology, or theological understanding of the church, and view of church-state relations.

Baptists emerged in the 1600s as a group distinct from other Christians in England primarily for theological reasons and not political reasons. Baptists used the Reformation doctrine of *sola Scriptura* (by Scripture alone) in developing their beliefs. H. Leon McBeth writes that ‘What does the Bible say?’ and ‘Is it taught in the Bible?’ were questions English Baptists “asked of every Christian belief and practice” (McBeth 70). For them, the supreme authority of the Scriptures was taught by the Scriptures, and as such Baptists held to the “priesthood of all believers”: the *believer* (not just any individual) could have direct access to God unmediated by priests, ministers, rituals or sacraments (Kärkkäinen 65). Furthermore, because Baptists read that Scripture itself stated that it was to be read and understood by all, Baptists considered commentaries and other aids to be unnecessary to correctly interpreting the

Bible (Monck 166). All *believers* had the right and the ability to correctly understand Sacred Scripture so long as they accepted its authority. As to how to interpret it, early Baptists did not offer any systematic methods: the Holy Spirit would simply guide a *believer* in arriving at a right understanding of the Word (72). The Baptist belief that all believers had the right to Scriptural interpretation demonstrates their strong belief in the spiritual equality of all *believers*. As ABC Rev. Dr. Hillyer H. Straton wrote in *Baptists: Their Message and Mission*, “In ancient Israel, God appeared to those in high station and low. In the first century it was a group of plain fishermen who fellowshiped with the Son of God in the days of his flesh; and he taught them to speak to God, directly in prayer” (Straton 72).

Straton also stated in his book that Christ’s early followers possessed a “democratic complex”, citing St. Paul’s declaration in Galatians 3:28 that “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (72). Straton’s assertion points to the democratic ecclesiology of Baptist churches. If all individuals are spiritually equal before God, then they must be equal within the church, for the church is not a social communion that is to reflect class distinctions but a spiritual communion reflective of the coming Kingdom of God where all people will sit equally at the table of the Lamb. Baptist churches thus rejected church hierarchies in which ministers were either appointed by bishops or by the state (Humphreys 57). Instead, each Baptist congregation elected its own minister through “common Suffrage,” that is to say, all members of the congregation could vote (Monck 162). Baptist churches were thus independent of one another, with none lording theological or ecclesiastical authority over one another even as they were open to cooperation. Gregory A. Wills writes that Baptist doctrine “gave each church authority to manage its

fellowship and adopt its own constitution, consisting of a covenant, articles of faith, and a decorum” (Wills 20). As the Particular Baptists’ First London Confession of 1644 states,

And although the particular congregation be distinct and several bodies, *every one a compact and knit city in itself*; yet are they all to walk by one and the same Rule, and by all means convenient to have the counsel and help one of another in all needful affairs of the church, as members of one body in the common faith under Christ their only Head. (“London Baptist Confession of 1644”) [italics added]

Who, then, did Baptists consider to be “members” of their congregations? The concept of a “regenerate church membership” is key to answering this question (Straton 67). Regeneration, as Straton writes, “literally means ‘beginning again’,” which refers to the new life that begins in an individual upon having a “definite experience in [his] li[fe] of God’s grace through faith in Jesus Christ” (66). Unlike other Reformed denominations, Baptists maintained that only individuals who *voluntarily* make a profession of faith are truly Christians, and that the sacrament of baptism is reserved for such regenerate individuals (Monck 160). As Baptists saw baptism as a visible sign of one’s faith, allowing individuals who were incapable of making a profession of faith—infants, toddlers—to be baptized would be meaningless. So would baptizing individuals who were forced to make a profession of faith, as that would not be faith at all. This explains why baptism for Baptists is termed “believers baptism” (Straton 66) and also partly explains why Baptists became known as Baptists (McBeth 45-46).

We thus see that Baptists held to the distinct doctrines of the priesthood of all believers, regenerate church membership, and a congregational and democratic church polity. It should not come as a surprise, then, to know that Baptists did not consist of one group of individuals who emerged at the same time and shared all of the same theological beliefs—that is, apart from the above doctrines, to which *all* Baptists subscribe. ‘The Baptist faith’ was in reality ‘the Baptist faiths’—the two theological groups that were first labeled as ‘Baptist’ arose at two different times and places. As Glen Stassen of Fuller Theological Seminary notes, “although Baptists had

their origin in England in 1611, they had a second and independent origin in 1638-1641,” also in England (McBeth 40). The first group of Baptists that emerged on the religious scene was the General Baptists, whom established their first church in 1611. The second theological Baptist camp was the Particular Baptists, who established theirs in 1638 (Baker 19).

The General and Particular Baptists differed most critically over the nature and reach of spiritual salvation. Had God Himself predestined all individuals to either Heaven or Hell, or did God desire all to be saved while simultaneously knowing, by virtue of His omniscience, who would and would not believe in Him? If the former, then individuals have no free will and are led to faith in Christ only by the work of the Holy Spirit acting on them, and Christ died only for those predestined for Heaven. If the latter, then individuals have real free will in deciding whether or not to believe in Christ. Christ therefore died for all and accepts any individual who chooses to believe in Him. The Particular Baptists subscribed to the former Calvinist doctrine while the General Baptists professed the latter Arminian tenet. The difference was not over whether belief in *sola gratia* was necessary for salvation; all Protestants at the time believed this, and as noted above, all Baptists profess believer's baptism. The difference concerned whether an individual's faith came about—at least partially—through his own will, or whether it owed itself entirely to divine decree. (This difference is what led to the groups' respective names.)

Perhaps the most distinct and prominent Baptist doctrine, however, is religious liberty and its “political derivative,” separation of church and state (Shurden, “How We Got That Way: Baptists on Religious Liberty and Separation of Church and State” 2). The concept of religious liberty was the product of other Baptist doctrines and became popularly linked to Baptists as a result of the historical circumstances from which Baptists emerged and endured. During the 1600s (save the short-lived reign of Oliver Cromwell), the Church of England, or Anglican

Church, with its episcopal polity was the established state religion. All Englishmen were required to become members of the Church, and most did so through their baptism at birth. In his Declaration preceding the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church, King Charles I wrote:

We hold it most agreeable to this our kingly office, and our own religious zeal, to conserve and maintain the Church committed to our charge, in the unity of true religion, and in the bond of peace; and not to suffer unnecessary disputations, altercations, or questions to be raised, which may nourish faction both in the Church and Commonwealth. (Gee and Hardy 418)

Charles I may not have been popular for attempting to impose his form of Anglicanism, but most individuals during his time agreed with the basic assumptions in his statement. People “assumed that political stability required religious uniformity, that social cohesion was impossible without religious cohesion,” and that “religion needed the support of the state” (Shurden, “Baptist Freedom and the Turn toward a Free Conscience: 1612/1652” 24). After all, not only did the Anglican kings expect the state to maintain religion, but so did the Puritan Cromwell, who allowed for private religious liberty but maintained public regulations on those outside general Protestantism.

This marriage between state and religion ran directly counter to all four of the Baptists’ distinct doctrines, and as a result the early Baptists suffered greatly during this era for their refusal to conform. Yet the Baptist doctrine of religious liberty did not simply arise out of this persecution. “It was not an accident of history,” as Walter Shurden remarks (28). Even “had Baptists never felt the sting of religious and civil oppression,” Shurden argues, Baptists would still have developed a doctrine of religious liberty. We have observed that Baptists believe in the priesthood of all believers and regenerate church membership. These two doctrines lead logically to a belief in religious liberty, for the former states that all are spiritually equal and the latter that one can only become a Christian voluntarily as being “reborn” is the result of a spiritual, personal decision.

Early Baptists found much in Scripture to support their advocacy for religious liberty. Basing his views on Romans 13, John Smyth in his 1612 Confession of Faith of Certain English People Living in Amsterdam declared that “Christ only is the king, and law giver of the church and conscience” (Lumpkin 111). The individual’s conscience was not, and could not be, subject to any other human, since God was the one who gave all humans conscience. Since religion was a matter of conscience and voluntary belief, Smyth used these two premises to argue for a separation between church and state:

84. That the magistrate is not by virtue of his office to meddle with religion, or matters of conscience, to force or compel men to this or that form of religion, or doctrine: but to leave Christian religion free, to every man’s conscience, and to handle only civil transgressions (Rom. xiii), injuries and wrongs of man against man, in murder, adultery, theft, etc.,... (Lumpkin 111)

John Murton, another Baptist leader, based his insistence on “the separation of civil and spiritual spheres” on Matthew 13:24-40 (McBeth 105). In Murton’s view, this parable of Jesus taught that a determination on who followed true religion and who followed false religion was not to occur until the Last Judgment by Christ. The two categories of persons, Murton wrote, “should be let alone in the world, and not plucked up until the harvest, which is the end of the world” (105).

Baptists also argued for religious liberty based on practical logic, human experience, and even natural rights. Thomas Helwys, a contemporary of Smyth, asserted that, given human nature, persecuting people on account of their religion does not produce religious uniformity or maintain civil loyalty but the exact opposite (Shurden, “How We Got That Way” 6-7). And Leonard Busher, who wrote what Leon McBeth calls “the first Baptist treatise devoted exclusively to religious liberty,” argued that “equality in matters of the heart...was the only path to civil tranquility” (7). In this treatise, entitled *Religion’s Peace: A Plea for Liberty of Conscience*, Busher declared that “it is not only unmerciful, but unnatural...for one Christian to vex and destroy another for difference and questions of religion” (3). John Murton even wrote in

a treatise of his own that “no man ought to be persecuted of his religion, *be it true or false*” (4) [italics added].

The Baptist understanding of religious liberty was more expansive than other Christian traditions. Not only did all individuals possess a divinely-bestowed right to belief in whatever they pleased, but they also had a divinely-bestowed right to practice their belief. Baptists’ view differed from others who allowed for freedom of conscience or belief, but insisted that the state still had authority to regulate outward manifestations of religious belief. Yet ironically, in their more expansive view of religious liberty, the Baptists assumed a limited view of religious belief: it was not to question the legitimacy or structure of the state. During this time period, Anglicans frequently attacked Baptists by associating them with Anabaptists in Germany and other radical Christians such as the Fifth Monarchists in England, all of whom subscribed to religious beliefs advocating an overthrow of the existing political system and social order—and that Christians were authorized by Scripture to carry this out in nonviolent as well as violent ways (McBeth 86-88). Many Anabaptists did not even believe in the validity of civil government (105). Baptists, who clearly did not hold any of these views, were vigorous in asserting that they were loyal subjects of the King and Parliament and not stealthily trying to sow seeds of treason in advocating for religious liberty. They thus restricted religious beliefs largely to what they considered to be spiritual matters and refused to consider as sincerely religious any religious belief that opposed or threatened civil authority. Baptists limited the freedom of one’s conscience to religious belief as well. They were not about to approve of using claims of conscience to refuse to pay property taxes, or, if a prison official, to refuse to whip criminals due to a belief in the inhumanity of such punishment.

Baptists' limited view of religious belief also points to the narrow conception they had of the roles of the church and the state. In a treatise entitled *Persecution for Religion Judg'd and Condemn'd*, John Murton wrote that Baptists "do unfeignedly acknowledge the authority of earthly magistrates, God's blessed ordinance, and that all earthly authority and command appertaines to them;...but all men must let God alone with his right, which is to be lord and lawgiver to the soul, and not command obedience to God where He *commandeth none*" (Goadby 63) [italics added]. It is clear from this statement that Baptists did not envision a situation in which the state takes a position so directly contrary to a Scriptural *commandment* that Christians would be compelled to defy the state. The state had wide latitude in civil matters, and as a spiritual institution the church was expected to focus on mostly spiritual matters. The Baptists probably did not imagine that a state they lived under would ever sanction the killing of innocent human beings, for instance.

Although Baptists made seemingly clear distinctions between the roles of church and state, they did not believe that Christians or Christian beliefs were forbidden to influence the state, as more than a few have alleged. American Presbyterian James Hastings Nichols expressed this erroneous view when he asserted that Baptists believed "the state belonged to the sphere of nature and was to be shaped solely by natural law with no regard for Scripture or church" (Nichols 136). Echoing Martin Luther's doctrine of the two kingdoms, Baptists believed in submitting to state acts as long as they did not attempt to legislate the soul. Yet since civil authority was ordained by God, its acts should—but did not have to—be informed by moral principles found in Christianity.¹ Leonard Busher expressed this belief in his treatise on religious

¹ One may or may not call such principles natural morality, but simply put, people at the time had little contact with any religion aside from Christianity, so principles of natural law were generally extracted out of Christian beliefs.

liberty, after denouncing the profligacy of the Anglican clergy and corruption in the court of

James I:

If the holy laws of God's Word be practised and executed after Christ's will, then shall, neither king, prince, nor people be destroyed for difference of religion. Then treason and rebellion, as well as burning, banishing, hanging, or imprisonment for difference of religion, will cease, and be laid down. Then shall not men, women, and youth be hanged for theft. Then shall not the poor, lame, sick, and weak ones be stocked [put in the stocks] and whipped; neither shall the poor, stranger, fatherless, and widows be driven to beg from place to place; neither shall the lame, sick, and weak persons suffer such misery, and be forsaken of their kindred, as now they be. Then shall not murder, whoredom, and adultery be bought out for money. Then shall not the great defraud and wrong the small; neither the rich oppress the poor by usury and little wages. . . . Then shall not servants be forced from marriage bonds, nor yet be bound to servitude longer than six years; neither shall they be brought up contrary to covenant nor posted from one quarter or one year to another, for their freedom, and in the end be forced to buy it of their masters, or else to go without it too. (Busher, *Religion's Peace: A Plea for Liberty of Conscience*, quoted in Goadby 60-61)

Many of these indignities mirror those condemned in the Old Testament Psalms and books of the Israelite Prophets. While some were no doubt violations of already existing English law (prostitution, murder), others implied that laws curbing them did not exist (orphans and widows not being provided for), and still others implied that certain English laws were unjust (hanging for youth theft, practices concerning treatment of indentured servants). For Baptists, separation clearly did not require that religion sever all moral ties to the state. Nevertheless, English Baptists focused little of their energies on trying to change their society to better reflect Scriptural teaching; they were almost wholly concerned with doctrinal issues and religious liberty.

Busher's poignant words reveal that while Baptists saw separation of church and state to be a logical and necessary consequence of religious liberty, the two principles were not equivalent. For Baptists, religious liberty was and had to be absolute. Baptists accordingly preached a *formal* separation between church and state: the two were not to be linked in any *official* form. This separation, however, did not demand that neither have any contact with the

other. Thus, while the state was not to infringe upon the religious beliefs or practices of individuals, Baptist thinking allowed individuals to use religious arguments in addressing the state and also allowed individuals to urge the state to better conform its actions to religious principles. This understanding of religious liberty as unreserved but separation of church and state as nuanced would continue with Baptists who left England for the American colonies.

One final point to be made about separation: the terms ‘church’ and ‘state’ can themselves be rather ambiguous. While the ‘state’ tends to be the more clear-cut of the two, generally referring to a government entity, the ‘church’ can be taken to mean a number of things. Is it a religious individual? A group of religious individuals? A ‘free church’ in the Baptist sense? A ‘Reformed church’ in the general Protestant sense? An institutional church in the Catholic sense? This question of how to interpret ‘church’ would become very significant for Baptists and other religious groups in America as major social changes began occurring in the U.S. following the end of the Civil War.

II. The Emergence of Regional Baptists in Colonial America

Baptists Impact and Absorb Regional Culture

With our understanding of Baptist doctrines, we now examine how Baptist thought and life diversified into several distinct strands in America. Baptists came to various parts of America in different groups and immediately began to shape their regions, as well as being shaped by them. In New England, the Baptist faith began in the heart of Roger Williams, a former Anglican minister who had arrived in Massachusetts from England (McBeth 126). The Puritan-led government persecuted Williams for his increasingly ‘Baptistic’ beliefs (127-130). Williams was one of the first to advocate for religious liberty in America. Brought before the court of Boston in 1635, he accepted the charge against him (among four) that he had taught

“that the Civill Magistrates power extends only to the Bodies and Goods, and outward State of men” (128). Williams divided the Ten Commandments into duties to God and duties to fellow man (129). He recognized that government possessed authority to punish violations of the latter category, but denied that it had any authority to regulate duties rendered unto God (129). Like those in England, Williams argued that religious liberty was sanctioned by biblical injunction:

This scripture [Romans 13] held forth a two-fold state, a civil state and a spiritual, civil officers and spiritual, civil weapons and spiritual. ... All the power the magistrate hath over the church is temporal, not spiritual; and all the power the church hath over the magistrate is spiritual, not temporal. (Williams, *The Bloudy Tenent* 118, quoted in McBeth 134)

Williams did indeed official become a Baptist, though only for a few months (he became an ‘independent’ Christian afterwards). His vigorous defense of religious liberty—along with the severe persecution Baptists faced across New England—led Baptist churches in that region to emphasize the importance of keeping church and state separate (149).

Baptist beginnings in the Middle colonies (we group these in later sections as part of the North) were markedly different. Because colonies such as Pennsylvania already guaranteed a generous degree of separation of church and state and were not dominated by any one Christian tradition, Baptists in the Middle colonies could give less attention to religious liberty than did their brethren in New England (144-145). Furthermore, ‘Middle Baptists’ (my term) followed the “moderate theology” (i.e. not strict Particular Baptists) of ‘progressive’ Baptists in England. These two factors led Middle Baptists to focus on vigorous evangelism and kept them from frequently dividing over doctrinal and petty issues as their more Particular New England brethren were prone to do (146).

In the South, Baptists faced political persecution for their beliefs or freedom, depending upon the colony they settled in. Virginia, for instance, harshly persecuted all non-Anglicans under the reign of Governor William Berkeley from 1642 to 1679 (Baker 26), while South

Carolina's proprietors enshrined religious freedom for all in the colony's second charter of 1665 (24). The demographics of Southern society at the time also affected the prospects of Baptists. The Anglicans who dominated the elite of most of the southern colonies were largely aristocratic English businessmen who cared little for intellectual pursuits or theological disputes. As such, while they subscribed nominally to Anglican beliefs, they were not exactly moral conservatives (30, 52). And while elite, they were a minority—the majority of Southern settlers were poor indentured servants who, while perhaps nominally Anglican, resented the indifference of the elites to the extreme class differences between them (23). These characteristics made Southern life quite different from the strict religious and intellectually oriented life predominant in New England. Both Particular and General Baptists were nevertheless able to make inroads in the South during the late 1600s, working mostly within the lower and middle classes.

The First Great Awakening Further Differentiates Northern and Southern Cultures

The emerging cultures of Northern and Southern Baptists were greatly affected by the First Great Awakening (1730s-1750s), a theological movement that began amongst the Congregationalists in New England. For Congregationalists, the main question at issue in the Awakening was whether a conversion experience, “a personal experience of [saving] grace through the power of the Holy Spirit,” was consequential in the life of a Christian, or whether baptism as a child and subsequent Christian learning sufficed (Baker 47). Those who insisted upon the former initiated the movement. Impassioned preaching, especially during revivals, could bring about this stark conversion, frequently exhibited through emotional outbursts of weeping and shouting (Leonard, “Baptist Revivals and the Turn toward Baptist Evangelism: 1755/1770” 92). In *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God*, Jonathan Edwards, a key Congregationalist in the Awakening, argued that “the experience of salvation could...affect all

aspects of spiritual, physical, and psychological life” (quoting Leonard) (93). As Congregationalists split and many became Baptists (for Baptists practiced regenerate church membership), the effects of the Awakening spread to the Baptists, causing in turn a division within them. The Baptists involved in the Awakening were not only emotional, but given their desire to spread the gospel believed in “the power of a call to preach without need for education or special training” and practiced “lay preaching” and (94-95).

Baptists who opposed the emotionalism characterizing the conversions and the revivals in they occurred charged the Awakening Baptists with deserting strict Calvinism (a majority of Baptists during this time were Particular) (94). Recall that Particular Baptists believed that individuals did not have free will to decide to be saved and that Christ had only died for an elect. Jonathan Edwards had tried to harmonize the Awakening with Calvinism, saying that at revivals preachers preached the gospel to whoever would listen—“as if all could be saved”—knowing that “God would use such preaching to awaken the elect” (93). Yet this explanation, the non-Awakening Baptists argued, essentially “impli[ed] that all persons are indeed candidates for salvation and have the free will to choose or reject it” (96). That is to say, in theory Edwards’ rationale was acceptable, but in practice it did not play out. The non-Awakening Baptists, or Regular Baptists as they became called, also did not truly believe that the great emotional reaction individuals had upon experiencing conversion was a sign of genuine conversion (94). The Regular Baptists’ fears were actually gradually realized, as the Awakening Baptists, or Separate Baptists, retained Calvinist language but increasingly interpreted their beliefs in an Arminian or General Baptist sense (96). Their practices dramatically increased their ranks wherever they went, and no where did this become more evident than in the South.

The Awakening fundamentally changed the “character and development of Southern Baptists” (Baker 48). In the 1750s, several converted Congregationalists moved to Virginia to spread the Gospel. Following their alienation by Regular Baptists there, they moved to North Carolina and promptly formed a church in Sandy Creek (49). Soon enough, their preaching converted many, and Separate Baptists began to spread like wildfire in the South (50). Associations quickly formed amongst Separates churches in states they were in as well. Generally poor themselves, the Separates preached to mostly poor, common farmers who constituted the majority of the region. Robert Baker notes that in Virginia, many such folk professed “equality in the state, absolute liberty in religion, and freedom of choice in all matters social or political” (52). While Regulars and Separates in Virginia fought for religious liberty, a revival began to “sweep[] both groups” (56). Unions between the two began to occur, and the trend spread to other states to the point where the Separate-Regular distinction was eliminated in the 1780s (56, 80).

Baker writes that the Separate Baptists contributed significantly to American culture, helping to “establish the character of American evangelical Christianity” and making “moral and spiritual preparation for American political liberty” (57). They particularly impacted Southern culture, however, forever shaping the character of Protestantism there as well as “contributing largely to the evangelization of the Negro in the South” (57). The Separate Baptists’ emphasis on evangelism, their associational life, their low-educated lay leadership, church practices, strong reliance on biblical text, and “*self-conscious attitudes*” indelibly stamped the character of Baptist faith in the South (57). This is not to say that the Separates did not influence Baptist faith in the North. However, their impact on Northern Baptist life was certainly less—even less than their overall softening effect on the ‘staid strictness’ of Northern Protestantism. Most Separates were

located in the South, and other Protestant denominations with followings equal to those of Baptists existed in the North. While there were obviously non-Christians and ‘un-churched’ persons in the North, more people in the North than in the South were already well-affiliated with religious groups, and as such there were less people in the North than in the South that could have been direct ‘targets’ of Baptist evangelism. In addition, while the ‘Spirit-led’ practices of Separates were resisted in the North by a religious elite even as they eventually influenced them, in the South, Separates in most areas—a notable exception being Anglican-dominated Virginia—faced little concerted opposition to their practices from other religious groups save their own fellow Regular Baptists, which as mentioned soon dissipated.

Perhaps the most important factor, however, in why Separate Baptists impacted the South far more than they did in the North, lay in the respective cultures of the two regions. Separates were able to decisively shape the religious culture of the South, which was to permeate all of Southern culture, because there had not really been a dominant religious culture in the South before they arrived. The Anglican elite in the South, as noted before, had little real interest in religion or scholarly learning and kept mostly to themselves. This left the masses of farmers, free or slave, with little example of either genuine religious faith or regard for concerns not directly related to their own livelihood. As many of these commoners became Baptists, they essentially had little formative societal influences other than the Baptist faith and the economic situation in which they existed. The Southern situation differed from that in the North, which for long had a dominant religious culture, and culture at large, that reflected the Congregationalists’ serious and stern faith as well as their valuing of both theological *and* secular education. (Ironically, the Congregationalists’ own exclusivism and strict Calvinism gradually decreased partially as a result of their own support for higher education.) Baptists in the North, while disagreeing sharply

with their Christian brethren on church membership and church-state relations, were nonetheless impacted by this Northern culture. Thus, while Baptists in the North did become more evangelical due to the Separates, they did not thereupon escape the influence of general Northern Protestantism and society.

The Peculiar Institution in Colonial Times

As noted earlier, Baptists during the 1600s were still fiercely engaged in the struggle for religious liberty and separation. As such, they did not attempt to make much inroad into converting slaves. This changed, however, with the arrival of the First Awakening. After 1740, “large numbers of traveling Baptist evangelists were working in the Southern states,” with more than a few directing their efforts to reach the slaves (Pelt and Smith 28-29). Slaves who came into contact with Baptist preaching were much more prone to become Christians than they were with Congregational or Anglican efforts. While the latter two emphasized formal recitation of creeds, Separate Baptist preachers, as we noted, were common folk and spoke of conversion by the power of the Holy Spirit (Jones 13). The Baptist preachers’ declarations of a personal God who intervened in individuals’ daily lives appealed to the slaves’ African religious heritage and plight (Raboteau 15). As Pierre Verger observed, for Africans “the heavenly world was not distant...and the believer” was “able to speak directly with his gods and benefit from their benevolence” (Verger 9). Slaves were also given to the emotionalism in Baptist revivals, owing at least partially to the energetic dancing, singing and shouting that characterized African religious rituals (Raboteau 61).

The enthusiasm of the slaves towards the gospel message as presented by Baptists actually made Baptist preachers foes of plantation owners, who feared that their slaves would disturb social peace and begin to clamor for emancipation (Pelt and Smith 29). Owners were

probably not particularly enthused by the Baptists' message that "*all persons*—African or white, enslaved or free, rich or poor, master or servant—stood in equal jeopardy of...damnation and all had equal access to the forgiveness and mercy of a righteous God" [italics added] (Jones 52). Yet even as plantation owners bemoaned the Baptists, indigenously black Baptist churches still began to appear with the support of white Baptists. White Baptists in the Awakening had ordained a number of itinerant black Baptist preachers, one of whom formed the first black Baptist church on a plantation with many slaves (30-31).

Lawrence Neale Jones maintains that during the colonial era, most white Baptists agreed with most other Protestants in seeing the "question of Africans [as] a non-issue" (Jones 12). Even as Baptists did evangelize to slaves, especially in the South where they were concentrated, other theological issues such as the ones unleashed by the Awakening took up greater importance. Moreover, there simply was not much disagreement amongst white Protestants over the existence of slaves and of slavery. Only a very small minority ardently opposed slavery on biblical grounds, and even then, they did not exactly support interracial relations (24-25). The predominant view of slaves in England at this time which carried over to New England was that:

Slavery was contrary to the ideal realm of nature, but was a necessary part of the world of sin; the bondsman was inwardly free and spiritually equal to his master, but in things external he was a mere chattel; Christians were brothers, whether slave or free, but pagans deserved in some sense to be slaves. (Jones 15)

In New England, the Massachusetts General Court had tried in the mid-1600s to establish "a system of slavery that would conform to a model derived from the Old Testament" (Jones 16). Based on the way Hebrew servants were treated in the Old Testament, many slaves were freed after six years of service even as there were no real legal guarantees of their freedom (16). Nevertheless, the system ultimately proved unsuccessful; New England political life, "Africans were [still] accorded dual status. They were both persons and taxable chattel" (16). In the more

irreligious and slave-based South, “slaves were property, pure and simple” (16). Slave masters, especially in the South, were already aware of the potential threat that Christian egalitarianism—especially in Baptist faith—posed to the “security of the master-slave hierarchy” (Raboteau 102). Most therefore were not disposed to expose their slaves to the faith.

Because white Protestants assumed that blacks were beneath them, when discussing the issue of slaves, most searched for a Scriptural explanation of slavery that would look favorably on their actions. There was first the theological question of whether slaves should be evangelized. Some whites answered no, blacks were not full humans, too “brutish” and therefore not entitled to hear the gospel (Raboteau 101). Others answered yes, but the slaves need to be evangelized in such a way that they did not begin to disobey their masters (103). This led to the second theological question: Did God permit slavery? Many claimed God permitted the enslavement of blacks, citing the story of Ham in Genesis 9:25-27 (Jones 24). Others divined that whites were participating in God’s sovereign plan, as the slave trade to America gave these black ‘heathen’ an opportunity to hear the gospel and become ‘civilized’ at the same time (32). Since God was using whites to ‘deliver’ blacks from their ‘ignorance,’ then of course inequality in social relations would exist—and that was fine.

Slaveholders, however, then questioned whether allowing their slaves to be instructed in the faith would force them to release their slaves. This stemmed from the European tradition that Christians could not be enslaved; yet what if a heathen slave converted? (6). To alleviate their concerns, several colonies enacted laws stating that slaves who became Christian did not thereby become free (63). Clearly, even as whites supportive of slavery accused those sympathetic to slaves of tampering ‘true’ religion with political beliefs, the theological bases they gave for slavery were dependent upon political and economic concerns (Raboteau 98). Slaveholders only

became open to evangelizing their slaves if the government agreed to intervene and protect their economic power—and even then, many slaveholders still prevented their slaves from hearing the faith because that took away from slaves' time to work (99). Slaveholders were more than a bit hypocritical in using political means to buttress their claim that religion was simply a personal and spiritual matter.

The majority of black Protestants, regardless of denomination, voluntarily accepted orthodox views of the Christian God and the authority of the Bible (Anyabwile 64, 36-37, 144-145). Black slaves were aware, however, that the gospel their masters gave them was adulterated, and that their masters' lives did not accord with their beliefs (66). Nevertheless, as most blacks had not yet been evangelized during this period, the holistic importance of the black church in the black community would not become prominent until the Antebellum period.

Baptist Involvement with the Revolution

Baptists in both the North and South supported the colonial side in the Revolutionary War against Great Britain largely to obtain religious liberty through political liberty. In Virginia, Baptists were so continually harassed by the Anglican Tory establishment that they came to believe that only through obtaining political liberty would they be able to secure religious liberty (60). Some Baptists also supported the colonial side out of indignation over increasing royal control over their colonies, which was the reason most colonists had for opposing the British. After the Revolution, Baptists continued their efforts to advance religious liberty. This was particularly the case in Virginia, where Baptists had been active in such efforts before the War. For instance, in 1785, the Virginia General Assembly was considering to pass a law that would levy a tax for the support of Christian ministers or teachers and places of worship (70). Every person (for every person would be taxed, irrespective if they belonged to a church or not) would

be able to “designate the denomination which receive his tax” (70). While most Protestant denominations had no problem with this, the Baptists strongly opposed it; they protested that “it [would] be destructive to religious liberty” were the “legislature assume the right of taxing the people for the support of the gospel” (60). The Virginia Baptists were also prominently involved in working to enshrine religious liberty in the U.S. Constitution. John Leland, a well-known Baptist minister originally from Massachusetts, critically enabled James Madison to introduce in Congress what became the First Amendment. Thus, by the 1800s, Baptists had become well known as patriots and defenders of religious liberty.

* * *

During the colonial era, Baptists played a significant role in the development of distinctive religious and societal cultures in the North and South. They themselves began to become differentiated in their theological emphases as a result of their interaction with their region’s culture (or lack thereof). As Baptist churches in both regions concentrated on saving souls and fighting for religious liberty, they continued to hold to the earlier English Baptists’ understanding of religious liberty and separation. The churches had not really gotten involved with the issue of slaves and slavery; many Americans even thought that slavery was “economically unprofitable” and would soon die out (Baker 76). Nevertheless, by denying their slaves religious liberty, white Baptists were already betraying the principle of religious liberty even as they fought for it. As slaves, most black Protestants were not politically articulate enough to talk about their oppression in terms like ‘religious liberty’ or ‘rights,’ but they knew well enough that their masters did not ‘walk the talk’ and denied them the dignity all humans deserved.

III. Religious Liberty in the Antebellum Years

Southern and Northern Baptists

During the antebellum period, the economic impact of the cotton gin caused the South to move decisively to a plantation economy (Baker 75-76). This caused slavery to rapidly expand, leading the question of its existence “to assume political proportions” (Baker 76). Northern and Southern Baptists, whom by 1814 had formed a national convention, the Triennial Convention, for the purpose of missions, debated whether or not the Convention should allow slaveholders to serve as missionaries (Leonard 92). Baptists recognized that a difference existed between opposing slavery and simply asking Baptists not to engage in slavery, and opposing slavery and calling for its legal abolition—the former merely concerned Baptists, the latter addressed the state. Northern Baptist conventions and societies increasingly supported the former position (Barnes 20-23), but were divided over the latter (26). Southern Baptists responded by associating the two positions. For instance, the Alabama Baptist Convention declared in 1840 that “abolitionism was unscriptural, was against the national constitution, [and] was against the peace and prosperity of the churches” (quoted in Barnes 23). The Home Mission Society (HMS) of the Convention pledged to remain neutral on the slavery question, but when the Georgia Baptist Convention requested the Convention to appoint a slaveholder as a missionary to the Native Americans, the HMS declined to appoint him (Barnes 25). This incident in 1845 caused the breakdown of the Convention, as most Southern Baptists departed to form the Southern Baptist Convention (26).

Southern Baptists charged their anti-slavery Northern Baptists with adding to the gospel and injecting political concerns into Baptist beliefs, but they did not claim that churches had no right to speak out on social and political issues. After a 3,000+ strong coalition of Northern Protestant ministers (including Baptists) presented the following memorial to Congress:

The undersigned...do solemnly protest against the passage of the...Nebraska Bill...We protest against it as a great moral wrong, as a breach of faith eminently unjust to the moral principles of the community...

one Southern Baptist responded in a treatise, writing that “the question is not, whether clergymen have the same rights, politically, as other citizens; this no one denies; but their indulgence in political preaching...presents a subject for prudential consideration alone, as it affects their usefulness among those amidst whom they labor” (quoted in Hamburger 245). Indeed, Southern Baptists were not opposed to becoming involved with social and political issues; when they did, they simply portrayed the issue as a moral one, just as their Northern brethren did (Flynt, *Alabama Baptists* 108). They blatantly engaged in ‘viewpoint discrimination’ on the issue of slavery—their support for it was moral; those who opposed it were politicizing religion. The editor of the *Alabama Baptist*, for instance, argued that “as a question of morals, it [slavery] is between us and God—whose word does not condemn it—and as a question of political economy, it is with us alone, as free and independent states”—and of course, he used his moral view of slavery to defend the legality of slavery in his state (108).

Aside from slavery, Southern Baptists became concerned with other social problems as well. Following in their Northern brothers’ footsteps, beginning in the 1840s Southern Baptists “formed temperance societies, passed resolutions against the sale of alcohol, and excluded church members for drunkenness or for making and selling ‘ardent spirits’.” (94) Southern Baptists argued that their opposition to alcohol stemmed from it being a moral issue that had taken on societal proportions. Again, they claimed that they were not trying to be political. The editor of the *South-Western Baptist*, for instance, claimed to “eschew all connection with politics” and vowed to “carefully avoid all interference with elections” (quoted in Flynt 94). Yet he was still involved in political temperance efforts. Southern Baptists also began to exhibit concern for the illiterate poor in their midst, after heeding biblical injunctions (92-93).

Interestingly enough, however, their response to poverty did not include a political component. Southern Baptists manifested their concern for poor Baptists “in greater benevolence within churches” and their concern for the unchurched poor in funding ministers to preach the gospel to them and also, if possible, tend to their physical needs (92-93). Southern Baptists refused to get involved in issues such as women’s equality, however, as they associated it with Northerners, who were also promoting abolition (94).

Aside from the primary issue of slavery, another controversy greatly affected the spiritual and ecclesial outlook of Southern Baptists. This controversy, unlike that of slavery, was purely theological, but it would increase the provincialism already developing amongst Southern Baptists. The controversy, called “Landmarkism,” actually had its roots in rural New England but had its greatest impact in the South (Brackney, “A Turn towards a Doctrinal Christianity: Baptist Theology, a Work in Progress” 80). Landmarkism had begun to impact Southern Baptists beginning in the 1820s. By 1850, having endured defections to other denominations and the breakdown of the Triennial Convention, the movement had gained much strength. The purpose of Landmarkism was to “defend and preserve ‘historic’ Baptist doctrines under attack from enemies of the faith or neglected by ill-informed Baptists” (Stookey 179). James R. Graves, a Tennessee minister originally from Vermont who became its leading proponent, observed that Baptist associations and conventions were increasingly accepting as valid the baptisms of non-Baptists, inviting non-Baptist ministers into their pulpits, and recognizing non-Baptists at meetings (179).

In 1851, Graves questioned his Southern Baptist brethren how Baptists could insist that believer’s baptism and the autonomy and primacy of the local church were fundamental principles directly taken from Scripture, yet simultaneously recognize as true Christian churches

other denominations which refused to share either of those principles (180). He argued that “the church is a visible institution,” and “the church is a...single congregation” (181). There was no such thing as ‘the invisible church’ that all Christians were in, and as such, one could only speak of ‘churches’—local congregations. Graves swiftly began to challenge the existence of program boards (such the HMS), claiming that they were robbing churches of their Scriptural autonomy (Baker 216). The strength of his side and the ensuing controversy almost sundered the new SBC (217-219).

After the Civil War, in the interests of Southern Baptist unity (through local autonomy), Graves ceased his aggressive activities against the SBC and turned towards encouraging a modified form of Landmarkism within the SBC. Landmark Baptists “came to identify the SBC as the repository of true New Testament churches, helping foster an intense denominational loyalty among Southern Baptists” (188). Landmarkism would elevate an insistence on doctrinal orthodoxy to a high position in Southern Baptist churches, causing them to look negatively on those who did not share their views.

Black Baptists

Baptist slaves typically attended white churches with their masters, although there were increasing numbers of independent black Baptist congregations (Pinn and Pinn 68-70). Black Baptists during this time followed their white brethren in maintaining Calvinist creeds and orientation (Wills 78). They linked, however, the Calvinist doctrine of depravity to an anthropological view of humanity in opposition to those of whites who refused the natural equality of all peoples. Thabiti M. Anyabwile gives the example of the Northerner Jupiter Hammon (1711-1806), regarded as the founder of African American literature. Hammon “began his anthropology and soteriology with the equality of men *in sin*” (Anyabwile 104). “Man,” he

said, “was prone to evil, as the sparks fly upward” (104). Lemuel Haynes (1753-1833), another Northerner and black Calvinist minister, took Hammon’s argument on the universality and innateness of sin in humans a step further (106). If the inclination to sin—to do as one pleases—was common to all humans, then so was the desire for liberty. Like whites, Africans bore this drive for liberty, as a testament to their sinful nature, so they were just as human as whites were (108). Haynes wrote in an essay that “God has been pleas’d to distinguish some men from others, as to natural *abilitys* [sic], But not as to natural *right*, as they came out of his hands” (108).

Uneducated slaves, on the other hand, could not make such articulate arguments, but once exposed by whites to even a half-true gospel, they knew that what white Christians told them about the nature of God and humanity were deceitful. Sarah Ford, a slave, noted that “Uncle Lew,” a slave preacher, preached in a sermon that “De Lawd make everyone to come in unity and on de level, both white and black,” causing his master to throw him back out into the fields (Raboteau 232). Slaves insisted that white Christians misunderstood the concept of spiritual equality, even if they did not approach it from the same angle as educated Northern blacks like Haynes did. Blacks simply knew they were humans with the same natural capacities whites had (Anyabwile 112). Because of that, blacks knew they were entitled to live out as *full and free* a life as whites did. For that reason, black Baptists had faith that God would deliver them spiritually as well as socially and politically. During the Civil War, Brother Thornton, a freed slave, addressed fellow freed slaves on God’s deliverance of the Israelites from the Egyptians. He spoke of how the Israelites believed in God even when they saw no way out:

We have been in the furnace of affliction, and are still, but God only means to separate the dross, and get us so that like the pure metal we may reflect the image of our Purifier...I am assured that what God begins, he will bring to an end...If we would have greater freedom of body, we must free ourselves from the shackles of sin, and especially the sin of unbelief. We must snap the chain of Satan, and educate ourselves and our children...” (quoted in Raboteau 320)

Thornton's speech clearly showed that for black Christians, society was not divided into spiritual and secular domains. Since the whole realm of society was under the Lordship of Christ, *any* societal issue, whether social or political, was a spiritual and moral issue (Washington 34). Thus, black Baptists did not 'rank' societal problems in importance according to whether they were 'spiritual' or 'social' in nature; there was no such dichotomy. They also were not concerned theologically or politically about whether they crossed a 'line' separating church and state in addressing social issues. God's Word was relevant to all issues and to all sectors of society. This can be seen in a resolution passed by the American Baptist Missionary Convention, a black convention founded in 1840 and a precursor to the NBC, USA:

Believing an efficient gospel church to be the only sovereign and effective remedy for the many complicated evils which are the result of sin, therefore—
Resolved, That we, the members of the Convention, will put forth our united efforts for the abolition of Slavery, the annihilation of the A. C. [American Colonization] Society, the removal of Intemperance and all other kindred evils, endeavoring thereby to promote the salvation of the world—God being our helper. (*The American Baptist Missionary Report*, 1853, p. 9, quoted in Washington 40)

* * *

During colonial times, white American Baptists, influenced by democratic ideals, had moved away from the early English Baptists' belief that religious liberty was compatible with an authoritarian government (the monarchy). Now, they were moving away from their traditional view that the church was to be concerned only with spiritual and moral matters, by 1) regarding the social and economic spheres as spheres deserving of Christian attention, and 2) directing Christian attention in those spheres towards the political realm. Both sides nevertheless shied away from characterizing their newfound social concern as a shift in how they traditionally viewed the church's role in society; they simply insisted that social issues like slavery, alcohol consumption, and poverty were at heart spiritual and moral issues. However, as seen in the Northern Protestants' memorial to Congress, in their socio-political action Northern Baptists

were beginning to emphasize the importance of divine moral principles that governed society, whereas Southern Baptist socio-political action tended to heed Scriptural moral teaching only as it directly affected prospects for personal salvation. Indeed, Southern Baptists saw their Northern brethren's opposition to slavery as distracting them from preaching the pure gospel (through slavery, God had allowed blacks to be exposed to his salvation).

While white Baptists in both regions maintained their colonial understanding of religious liberty, they were pushing the bounds of their historic reasoning for religious liberty and separation: that church and state had distinct roles, the former concerned with the spiritual and the state concerned with the temporal. While Baptists never argued that the church had no right to comment on temporal matters, for most of their history they steered clear of injecting themselves into social and political issues. This clearly began to change during the Antebellum years. Black Baptists, on the other hand, gave little attention to church-state relations. With their spirituality informing all aspects of their lives, God could use any societal institution to help deliver them—government or non-government.

IV. The Civil War

Southern Baptists

Before the Civil War, Southern Baptists, the majority of them in the SBC, saw the increasing condemnations Northern Baptists and other Protestants expressed towards them as an attack on both their religion and their way of life—cultural and economic. Southern Baptists considered calls by Northern Baptists and other Northerners for the ending of slavery and other perceived injustices wrought by Northerners in the mission field as a deviation from orthodox Christianity: Northerners were diverting Baptist attention away from the primary mission of Christianity to preach the gospel to the unsaved. They also saw Northern Baptist actions as an

attempt to impose upon them religious beliefs which with they opposed. As abolitionism gained a following amongst Northern Baptists (Eighmy 11), Southern Baptists linked their abolition-minded Northern brethren with Northern political abolitionists who were calling for the federal government to outlaw slavery. This, in their minds, was an outright attack both on their religious liberty, for the federal government would be outlawing a practice (slavery) that had been ordained by God and that sustained their livelihood (5-6).

Southern Baptists—along with the majority of Southerners—felt that the North was essentially trying to destroy their religion and their homeland. The religious component behind Southern Baptists' active support for the Confederacy reflected their emphasis on personal salvation: Northerners, they alleged, were effectively interfering with their ability to preach the 'unadulterated' gospel. This mentality foreshadowed Southern Baptist interactions with the state following the War: they would tend to concentrate on social issues that impacted access to personal salvation, with the hypocritical exception of the 'race issue.' Many Southern Baptist-supported laws aimed at blacks would have little to do with personal salvation for blacks.

The unashamed full-fledged support that Southern Baptists showed the Confederacy is yet again a clear example that Southern Baptists did not regard the separation of church and state as implying that churches were to stay silent on societal and political issues. Southern Baptists did not simply support the Confederacy over slavery but over states' rights, evidence that Baptists did not simply care about religious liberty but had strong views regarding the structure and operation of civil government. Mirroring the actions of virtually all state Baptist conventions (Baker 227), the SBC in 1861 authored a report that seemed more fitting for political convention. It appropriated language from the Declaration of Independence and further stated that:

In vindication of their sacred rights and honor, in self-defence, and for the protection of all which is dear to man, the Southern States have practically asserted the right of

seceding from a Union so degenerated from that established by the Constitution...
(Proceedings of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1861, p. 62)

During the War, Southerners were ironically given a dose of their own religious repression towards blacks as entering Northern armies had forbidden many ministers “of Southern sympathies” to preach, presumably to prevent further sedition and rebellious instigations among Southerners (Barnes 58). Those who transgressed such orders were fined, jailed or punished in other ways (58). This was quite similar to the antebellum efforts of Southern Baptists in alliance with their state governments to legally restrict black ministers from preaching as much as possible, for fear that they would incite slaves to revolt. The SBC responded to Northern prohibitions on their ministers preaching with a statement that declared the preeminence of freedom of conscience and then “expressly disavowed any disposition to interfere with political affairs, and have regard solely to the question of religious liberty” (58). Yet unless by not “interfer[ing] with political affairs” the SBC meant that it was not permitting its ministers to disobey Northern orders on purely civil matters, such a disavowal was rather disingenuous, given the SBC’s track record of unequivocally supporting the War and the formation of the Confederacy. Little else but white Southern racism, whether rooted in tradition or theology, could explain for this complete hypocrisy.

Northern Baptists

Northern Baptists also viewed the war as a fight for religious liberty, albeit for different reasons, in addition to being a fight for the preservation of the Union. A belief in the common humanity of blacks, which made them entitled to religious liberty, which in turn entitled them to at least some measure of political liberty, was a principal reason for their support of the Union. Along with other Northern Protestants, during the War Northern Baptists eagerly sent increased numbers of missionaries and other workers to assist and minister to the newly emancipated

blacks in the South. In 1863, after the Emancipation Proclamation, the American Baptist Home Mission Society (ABHMS), Northern Baptists' vehicle for missions, declared that:

Resolved, That, as the African variety of man, though likely to be soon freed from the bondman's chain, is still threatened by pride, prejudice and folly, with the trammels of caste, it is the duty and solemn purpose of this Society to proclaim as the will of God, that the African...must be held and treated as a "*man and a brother.*" (*ABFMS Minutes*, 1863, p. 15-16, quoted in Washington 57).

Black Baptists

Black Baptists in the North ardently supported the War less for its stated principal objective and more for their belief that it would emancipate the slaves. Black ministers wrote to President Lincoln in 1863, requesting the opportunity go down with the Union military and "minister to their brethren there" (Pelt and Smith 70). Their request was swiftly granted. Many blacks had been told by their masters that, in the words of Rev. Lewis G. Jordan, a former slave, the "Yankees" were "dreadful ogres to be shunned at all costs. I firmly believed it all." (75) However, upon meeting and being freed by Union soldiers, blacks eagerly took to supporting the Union.

V. The Reconstruction Era

Southern Baptists

With their defeat in the Civil War, Southern whites, whom had already become regionally self-conscious due to the Baptist and political controversies over slavery, came together and solidified 'Southern' identity (of course, not including blacks in the South). Because Southerners saw the 'War of Northern Aggression' as attacking both their faith and way of life, they responded to their defeat by becoming even more entrenched in their religion and culture. Furthermore, because Southerners defended their support for the Confederacy through religion, "defeat...required a religious explanation" as well (Newman 3). Historians have termed this explanation as the "Lost Cause" (3). Baptist ministers preached that "the Confederate defeat did not mean that the Almighty had abandoned the South, rather it was part of God's plan, 'a form of

discipline,’ that would prepare southerners for a more glorious future, if they maintained Christian-Confederate values” (3).

While Baptists—both black and white—had by this time become quite Arminian, they nevertheless clung to the Calvinist doctrine of the sovereignty of God in all areas of human existence. Whatever happened in whatever sphere, then, was God’s will, even if the event or action in question seemed odious to the affected person or persons at the time. One simply had to accept the will of God. Thus, Southern Baptist ministers even preached that God had “decreed emancipation” even though He had approved of slavery; perhaps God had determined that enough blacks had been converted, who knew? (3). Baptists concluded that a “sanctified, purified white South” would rise up from the ashes to become God’s “last and only hope” in a “modernizing and secularizing nation” (Harvey 22). The language Southern Baptists used might appear to imply that Southerners wanted a sort of centralized theocracy, but this notion is quite erroneous. Southern Baptists desired their faith to impact all facets of life and society, but not through government. As mentioned before, Southern Baptists saw personal conversion as the only possible source of true change (Yance 17). Societal change would occur with a spiritual transformation in individuals, and societal change was only to (and could only) proceed as far as spiritual transformation in individuals proceeded (17). Through the Southern Baptist Convention working with local churches to reach the ‘lost,’ hearts and minds would be changed.

Southern Baptists continued to adhere strictly to the belief that Christians were only equal before God spiritually; the Bible purportedly made it clear that God had never called for the indiscriminate social, racial, or political equality of all people. In 1861, Alexander H. Stephens, a Baptist and Vice-President of the Confederacy, in his famous ‘Cornerstone Address’ had

declared that the Founding Fathers' beliefs that slavery was contrary to natural law and morality was "fundamentally wrong" (Fitts 229). He continued:

They rested upon the assumption of the equality of races. This was an error. It was a sandy foundation, and the idea of a Government built upon it was a wrong—when the "storm came and the wind blew, it fell." (Stephens)

Anticipating success, Stephens said that the Confederacy would cause the principle of the natural and moral inferiority of blacks to be applied "throughout the civilized and enlightened world" (Stephens). After the South's defeat, Stephens' sentiments were shared even more strongly by Southern whites. Even into the 1940s, a former Governor of Texas and SBC President declared in an address:

But if this great country will look to the South land, where democracy is purest, where Anglo-Saxon blood is purest, and take its direction from the Southern Baptist Church, it will not default again. (Yancey 10, quoting Harold E. Fey's report in *The Christian Century*, May 31, 1944, p. 672-8)

The united Lost Cause culture of the South created such a degree of unity amongst local Baptist churches that this governor had no qualms with calling Southern Baptists "The Southern Baptist Church."

During Reconstruction, white Baptists also frequently debated whether blacks were to remain in the same churches as whites (Newman 3). No longer willing to be second-class Christians in their biracial churches, blacks themselves decided to leave white churches by the thousands; eventually whites came to see this as an inevitable blessing, even helping blacks at times to create their own churches (3). E. T. Winkler, pastor of the Citadel Baptist Church in Charleston, South Carolina, preached that "a respectful subordination on the one side, a condescending kindness on the other, and virtue and religion on the part of both, will enable them [blacks and whites], each in his own sphere, to contribute to the happiness of all" (Harvey 40-41). Southern Baptists railed against Reconstruction governments and united to "block the final civil rights proposals floating in Congress" (Harvey 24).

Northern Baptists

During the War, the ABHMS had quickly realized the difficulty of attempting to evangelize “homeless, hungry, and uneducated black refugees without giving immediate attention to their bodily needs” (Washington 54). With its limited funding, the ABHMS could not meet all of these needs. So it concentrated on meeting the “spiritual and educational needs” of freed blacks while calling on the government to meet their bodily needs (54). At the War’s conclusion, Northern Baptists, in the words of ABC Dr. Lawrence T. Slaght, “responded splendidly” to the educational needs of freed blacks by helping them establish educational institutions and providing them with educational materials (Slaght 64). Some Northern Baptists, however, were uneasy with the idea of the ABHMS moving into generally educating blacks, and after a meeting, the ABHMS resolved to simply engage in as much instruction as would “enable them to read the Bible and become self-supporting and self-directing churches” (Washington 54-55).

Northern Baptist activity amongst freed blacks “reached a peak” immediately after the War and then began to decline (Montgomery 189). Southern Baptists made it clear that they were distressed at the attempts of Northerners—whether in the religious or secular fields—to help bring them out of their societal devastation. The Northern American Baptist Home Mission Society (ABHMS), for instance, offered to financially aid Southern state conventions to increase their missionary efforts (Barnes 66). While appreciating such overtures, given the continuing bitterness over the South’s loss and anguish over its theological import, the SBC was not disposed to cooperate much with Northern Baptist societies (68-69). Northerners, increasingly ineffective in the South, gradually pulled out, and by the end of Reconstruction only a handful of ABHMS missionaries were left (Montgomery 189). Not wanting to ‘needlessly’ further

antagonize their Southern brethren, Northern Baptists were willing to sacrifice much of their earlier concern for blacks in hopes that their Southern brethren would eventually reunite with them (53). The secretary of the ABHMS, for instance, was “reluctant to advocate the idea of black social equality, especially if it stood in the way of reunification with Southern Baptists” (Washington 56).

Northern Baptists also increasingly lost interest in the plight of blacks because they increasingly ignored realities and assumed that once freed, blacks would eventually be able to get themselves off of the ground. During this time, the philosophy of “rugged individualism” was gaining acceptance in American society (52). This philosophy maintained that if one worked hard and was resourceful, one had the chance to become successful. Of course, it did not take into account societal discrimination as a very real barrier to many. Thus, while Northern Baptists knew that freed blacks were impoverished, uneducated, and without much job skills, they eventually assumed that Reconstruction and ‘self-help’ would enable them to get on their feet. This attitude conflicted with Northern Baptists’ reluctance to see blacks as social equals with whites. While they supported some level of political equality for blacks (at least on an abstract level) out of their belief in blacks’ full humanity, Northern Baptists still held many discriminatory views of blacks and black culture. They were wary of “free social intercourse between races” and came to consider the goal of social equality amongst the races to be an “impossible social dream” (56). This explained why most Northern Baptists were not of the mindset of the Radical Republicans, who demanded complete political equality between blacks and whites. Finally, Northern Baptists became increasingly occupied with achieving unity within their own ranks, further distracting them from continuing to assist blacks spiritually and educationally.

Black Baptists

Blacks across the country were overjoyed for their newfound civil freedom with the Emancipation Proclamation. The ‘on-time’ God had finally delivered them. Many blacks hoped that the religious and political liberty they now possessed would have “the same social, political, economic, and religious results” as they did “for whites” (Jones 239). At the same time, they were very conscious of the new societal reality they now found themselves in: a white South seething with hostility towards them and their Union liberators. Several black Baptist laymen revealed to the federal government’s Joint Committee on Reconstruction the severity of the freedmen’s situation (Fitts 238-237). Alexander Dunlop, a black trustee of the First Baptist Church of Williamsburg, Virginia, testified in 1866 to the Joint Committee:

My purpose was to let the government know our situation, and what we desire the government to do for us if it can do it. We feel down there without any protection....We feel in danger of our lives, of our property, and of everything else....I have suffered in the war; I was driven away from my place by Wise’s raid; and so far as I, myself, am concerned, I do not feel safe; and if the [Union] military were removed from there I would not stay in Williamsburg one hour, although what little property I possess is there...[In case of the removal of the military], “Nothing shorter than death”; that has been promised to me by the rebels [Southerners]. (Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction at the First Session Thirty-Ninth Congress, p. 56, quoted in Fitts 239)

Edmund Parson, a deacon of the same church, testified that when the Union forces first arrived, he and his wife felt “perfectly secure,” but after some began to leave, he said regarding the house he had been living in for twenty years:

“A lawyer there [in Williamsburg] went and got the provost marshal to send a guard and put me out of my house. They broke my things up and pitched them out, and stole a part of them.” (Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction at the First Session Thirty-Ninth Congress, p. 60, quoted in Fitts 240)

Leroy Fitts writes that for the emancipated slave, everything he had—his cabin, the land he worked on, the tools he used—all belonged to his former master (Fitts 240). When the slaves

were freed, Union Major General Christopher C. Andrews testified before the Joint Committee to “damned if you do, damned if you don’t” situation blacks were placed in after emancipation:

It was a common thing for the masters to say to the blacks, “Now, you are made free; you are free and can go wherever you please. Go, if you choose, *immediately*; but if you remain with me you must remain and do just as you have done heretofore, and I will treat you just as I have heretofore...”...There was [further] an understanding among those who had formerly been slave owners that the colored people should not be employed without the consent of their former masters. (Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction at the First Session Thirty-Ninth Congress, p. 148-149, quoted in Fitts 240)

Madison Newby, a Protestant and freed female slave in Surrey County, Virginia, testified that while Southern whites did not wish to give blacks any real employment opportunities (Report of the Joint Committee on Reconstruction, from Fitts 354). Whites would only let blacks for around 6 dollars a month even as many black families had several children (354). In her own county, whites were even tying up and suspending black men by the thumb to force them to contract to work for such a pittance (354-355).

During slavery, blacks had no other *institution* to speak on their behalf save the black church. Now, it should certainly be noted that during Radical Reconstruction, many of the candidates Southern blacks supported and elected to state constitutional conventions, state legislatures and Congress were blacks from “an elite group of businessmen, professionals, skilled craftsmen, and landowning farmers” (Montgomery 162). One would expect these individuals to speak out aggressively on behalf of their common brothers. The black elite did agree (at least in theory) with the average freedman that blacks and whites were to be political equals, but they were separated from the freedmen by social and economic class (163). As a result, elected professional blacks tended to represent the socio-economic interests of the elite rather than those of their poor and oppressed freed brethren (163). The elites were prone to form alliances with conservative white Republicans on issues like voting rights, taxes and property (163). Eventually

however, black elites came to realize that their own interests still depended on the overall advancement of their race, and came to support the Radical Republican program of “political, social and economic reform” (163).

The black clergy, on the other hand, were more representative of the freed slaves. Most had been slaves themselves, were bivocational, were not much better off economically than their congregation, and had limited education, though perhaps more than their congregation (Harvey 167). Their interests overlapped those whom they served, who probably trusted them just as much, if not more, than the black elites, most of whom had not been Southern slaves. The majority of blacks, whether lay, clergy, or un-churched, shared the traditional “holistic view” of the black church’s role in the black community (Montgomery 163). As a result, black ministers entered quickly into the political fray. There was not too much of a difference between how black clergy of different denominations (mostly Baptist and Methodist) viewed the role of the black church—if it was to be a voice for the voiceless, then it was to be so in all realms—spiritual, communal, and political. It was understood that if black churches were *merely* concerned with spiritual matters, Christianity would end up having little practical import for the average black person. This is not to say that ministers saw spiritual improvement irrelevant to daily living, but that all realms were relevant to the life of black folk. As such, black churches were deeply involved in politics; William Montgomery notes that “the churches served as venues for political rallies and Republican party meetings, and many ministers preached the message of the party about as often as the gospel of spiritual salvation” (163). Churches became so politicized that one minister remarked, “politics got in our midst and our revival or religious work for a while began to wane” (163).

Given the “general expectation that they would be political leaders,” black ministers were evident in the makeup of all sorts of political entities. Blacks elected them to serve at the county and municipal levels, represent them as delegates to state constitutional conventions (part of the process whereby the Southern states rejoined the Union), in state legislatures, and even in Congress (178). Most ministers, even while underpaid, could spend more time on political issues since they received their pay from their congregations, while ordinary lay blacks could rely on only themselves (178). Because black minister-politicians tended to be middle-class and educated, however, they tended to accept the social values of “white middle-class society” (184). They simply wanted to allow blacks to have equal opportunity to attain those social values as well. Thus, for instance, they worked to provide public education for both races, but submitted to white demands for segregated schools (184). William Montgomery has observed that “church leaders were notably aggressive only on the issue of civil rights” (184).

While black minister-politicians moderated their views to gain standing and cooperation with whites, those who were solely ministers were more aggressive. William H. Banks, pastor of the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Wilmington, North Carolina, declared that it was imperative for “preachers, newspapers, and every other [political] machine to do as much as possible to repair wrongs when they see them” (Washington 118). Clearly, Banks did not limit ministers to talk only about certain kinds of topics or refrain from talking about political issues—in 1870 he wrote in the *National Monitor*, a black Baptist publication, that “the evil ones begin to try to kill his [a minister’s] influence and usefulness as a minister of the Gospel, by charging him with preaching politi[c]s in the pulpit” (117). Nevertheless, these ministers still focused on racial political injustice like their minister-politician brethren. Rev. Rufus Lewis Perry of Brooklyn, New York wrote in the *American Baptist* that “when congress shall by appropriate legislation secure to all

citizens of the United States, irrespective of race, color or previous condition, such equal rights and privileges as are peculiar to a republican form of government,” would the nation truly possess “undisputed claims to civilization, honesty and Christianity” (115-116).

* * *

During Reconstruction, black Baptists quickly came to recognize the limits both white Southern and Northern Baptists placed on religious liberty. Southern Baptists further reinforced their belief that having religious liberty did not necessarily imply the possession of other liberties—perhaps it did for whites, but it absolutely did not for any other race. Northern Baptists, continued to see that religious liberty implied at least a level of political and other civil liberties for all humankind. The underlying disagreement between these two views continued to center over the humanity of blacks: During meetings in 1868 between the Northern ABHMS and the SBC over the possibility of “cooperative support for Negro missions,” both sides quickly concluded that “basic disagreements over the social status of the freedmen” would prevent any effective cooperation between the two bodies” (Eighmy 33-34). While Southern Baptists had at least progressed to the point of recognizing that blacks were fully human, they still refused to consider the possibility that humans are equal by virtue of their common humanity.

While less overtly racist than their Southern brethren, Northern Baptists still did not take the step of seeing that religious liberty implied racial equality in social relations. In the interests of Baptist unity and other factors, they gradually retreated from their attempts to help advocate social equality for blacks and turned their more of their attention to society as a whole. Black Baptists shared with Northern Baptists the belief that political liberty was inextricably tied to religious liberty. In keeping with their tradition of seeing human existence comprehensively, however, they recognized that these liberties would amount to little for the average freed black if

he was kept in complete social and economic subjugation. Concluding that they could not rely on support from an openly hostile white society that was to dominate governments again following Reconstruction, black Baptists resolved to uplift their race themselves, not only spiritually but socially and economically as well.

VI. The 1880s to the 1940s: Baptists Address Social Christianity

Southern Baptists

In the previous section on Reconstruction, we noted the South's entrenchment into a 'sacred society' rooted in white superiority, personal conversion, and rural regional identity. During the 1880s, Southern Baptists cautiously expanded their limited form of socially concerned Christianity. The primary factor in this wary change was the extreme poverty of much of the South. Southern poverty had always existed, of course, but after the literal destruction of Southern society and economics in the Civil War, poverty increased dramatically. John Lee Eighmy, author of *Churches and Cultural Captivity*, has argued that Southern Baptist churches did expand their view of socially concerned Christianity in this time, but that the churches were too tied to Southern culture to be able to accept the Northern Social gospel (Eighmy 202). Eighmy's thesis is true on a broad level, but it does not take into account the many subcultures within the larger Southern culture. Southern Baptists did share basic theological views, but their views on the proper nature and extent of religious social activism also depended on their socio-economic background, their jobs, and their location—rural or urban.

Wayne Flynt has showed that different Southern Baptist churches "appealed to quite different classes, espouse different theologies, and serve different social needs" (Flynt, "Southern Evangelicals" 34). Flynt argues against seeing denominational newspapers or ministerial conference or convention reports as resources that reflected the views of most Southern Baptists,

because such newspapers and reports generally reflected the thoughts of educated ministers of wealthy Baptist churches (36). Such reports also tended to be hypocritical, for they would castigate their poorer brethren for engaging in politics even as their wealthy or politically connected members themselves engaged in politics. The main difference between the political involvement of middle-class and poor Baptists centered on the nature of the issue. Middle-class and more mainstream Baptists continued to emphasize social sins that arose from individual sin. In Birmingham, for instance, Baptists lobbied actively for “Sunday blue laws and antigambling and antisaloon legislation” (Flynt, *Alabama Baptists* 273). Impoverished white Baptists, on the other hand, were much more concerned about labor issues that affected their congregations—unjust mill or mine contracts, unfair agricultural practices, and unionization efforts—none of which could be directly traced to individual sin (Flynt, “Southern Evangelicals” 43-44). (Middle-class Southern Baptists in Alabama enabled the passage of a law banning child labor, though, so overlap did exist.) (Flynt, *Alabama Baptists* 280-281, “Southern Evangelicals” 42).

Despite the increased social and political action amongst Southern Baptists, almost none, whether poor or middle-class to wealthy, saw their efforts as ones of social transformation. Wayne Flynt observes that “for most state Baptist leaders, the issue was keeping social Christianity subordinated to evangelism, not whether the gospel required the reconstruction of society” (Flynt, *Alabama Baptists* 280). Thus, Baptists tended not to engage the state on social issues that were not rooted in sin but whose resolution would facilitate the spreading of the gospel. This was the case with education; the lack of education was a problem not because it was due to sin, but because it kept people from reading the Bible. Beginning in 1898, the SBC formed a project by which Southern Baptist ministers would work amongst the mountaineers in impoverished Appalachia by helping them build schools, training some to become ministers,

educating mountain youth to basic educational levels, and even encouraging some to attend college (Harper 76-78). On the other hand, Southern Baptists were wary of engaging in reforms simply meant to make society more progressive. If it was not related to a biblical imperative, Southern Baptists were averse to expending their energies on it. The words of one Publicity Superintendent of the Home Missions Board of the SBC are revealing:

Consider the amazing sweep of social service propaganda in recent years, and what it means that many a pulpit is becoming a more expert voice on a moral and physical clean-up program, than it is on men's hopelessly sinful nature, God's holiness, and Christ's sacrificial love. Consider how the devil took social service, a good thing, and made it more damaging to real spirituality than bar-rooms and brothels, by getting good people so busy with secondary benefits, that they forgot to hold up the God-appointed and only availing source of all spiritual good. (Masters 142-143)

When the issue at hand concerned social relations between race, Southern Baptists were quite active. Rev. Winkler's quote in the previous section reflected a philosophy that had emerged in the post-Reconstruction South: the idea of "placeness" (Harper 90). Keith Harper writes that "regardless of age, sex, or race, everyone had his or her own place within society" (90). "Satisfactory social relations, therefore, depended largely upon one's knowing and accepting his or her place" (90). Of course, Southerners expected that they would help blacks "find" their "place"—there were to "lead blacks into a white-defined socioeconomic role" of subservience (90, 103). Southern Baptists approached this 'mission' as they did with other social problems (this being 'the Negro problem'); they "saw individual conversion as the first step in uplifting blacks (103). After becoming saved, blacks would be able to learn their "place" through "white example" and accommodative black church leadership (103). This mission would include both church 'outreach' to blacks as well as using the political process to keep blacks disenfranchised and out of power.

Northern Baptists

As noted in the section on the Antebellum era, Northern Baptist churches, cherishing the Baptist tradition of localism, mainly cooperated with one another on missions work through various missions-focused societies. By the 1890s, this attitude had begun to change, and in 1907, representatives of churches, associations, and state conventions in the North as well as the West joined the three major societies to which Northern Baptist churches contributed, to form the Northern Baptist Convention (Leonard 94). Nevertheless, the spirit of localism remained, and the societies retained their “individual autonomy” and were termed “cooperating organizations” (94) or “program boards” (McBeth 565). Michael Utzinger notes that the NBC included traditionalists, modernists, and fundamentalists (Utzinger 186). Traditionalists shared with fundamentalists a distrust of strong centralization, but valued the modernists’ attempts at “organizational efficiency” because they wished for the various Baptist societies and agencies to succeed (185). Fundamentalists were doctrinally orthodox (that is, evangelical), modernists were theologically liberal, and traditionalists were doctrinally conservative but tolerated other views, focusing on the “success of denominational enterprises” (185).

During this time period, as alluded to earlier, a movement called the “New Theology” arose in European universities and seminaries. Lutheran and Reformed professors began to use a method entitled “higher criticism” of the Scriptures, that is to say, the use of other scholarly disciplines in analyzing the Scriptures (Brackney 81). They taught that “historical theology” had priority over “systematic thought,” stressed “the humanity of Christ,” considered the atoning sacrifice of Christ for sins in moral terms, prioritized the ethical teachings of Jesus over His miracles as recorded by His apostles, and saw that the kingdom of God could and would be fulfilled on this Earth (81-81). The University of Chicago, founded by a Northern Baptist society, was greatly impacted by the New Theology, as were other Northern Baptist and Protestant

seminaries. Shailer Mathews, dean of theology at the school, coined the term “modernism” to describe what was happening in Baptist and Protestant universities like Chicago. Adopting much of New Theology, modernism was the pursuit of religious questions through science, “critical methods of Bible study” in the hopes of ending “authority” religion and “primitive” ideas like “revealed truth” (84). Mathews’ modernism, however, was simply antithetical to most lay Baptists and preachers in the North (84).

The modernist belief that the mankind would bring about the kingdom of God on Earth rose to prominence in America with the teachings of Walter Rauschenbusch, a Lutheran-turned-Northern Baptist minister (1861-1918). In his seminal 1907 work *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, Rauschenbusch promulgated a version of the Social Gospel that was more radical than those of most Social Gospelers (his work was nevertheless exceedingly popular in the North). Rauschenbusch had grown up in privilege, but was forever changed after witnessing the deprivation and degradation of urban life during his pastorate of a Baptist church in the Hell’s Kitchen section of New York City (Smucker 17). He went to Germany afterwards, studying “the New Testament and sociology,” (17-18) and while there, became deeply influenced by Anabaptist theology. Anabaptists were a 16th century movement of Reformers who reinterpreted Lutheran ideas on spirituality and applied them to the social and political realms. The Anabaptists believed that the Christian life was entered into not by personal conversion but by imitation of the life of Christ (Smucker 55). While in Europe, he examined the practices of the Salvation Army and cooperative movement in England (17-18). Rauschenbusch concluded to combat social injustice, “the welfare-relief service approach was not enough,” and after studying Fabian socialism, required “far-reaching social change and reconstruction” (18, Rauschenbusch 349). Rauschenbusch echoed the Anabaptists, arguing that “the essential purpose of Christianity

was to transform human society into the kingdom of God by regenerating all human relations and reconstituting them in accordance with the will of God” (Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis* xiii).

There is a dispute as to whether Rauschenbusch truly even believed in the traditional concept of individual sin and salvation (Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* 247). If he did, it was no more important than his belief that Christ had called the church to ‘redeem’ the ‘world’—literally. To quote Richard Ely, an Episcopal layman whose writings Rauschenbusch read, “The Gospel of Christ is both individual and social. It proclaims individual and social regeneration, individual, and social salvation” (Ely 148-149). Unlike personal salvation, which was immediate, the redemption of the world was a process demanding major changes in the societal relations between individual people and groups of people. Ushering in the kingdom of God necessarily involved the participation of both Christians and non-Christians, whereas personal salvation changed non-Christians into Christians. An example of where social relations had gone wrong, Rauschenbusch wrote, was in capitalism: Capitalism—especially in its form at the turn of the 20th century—was creating massive social inequality, and could soon cause class warfare (Hinson 247). With the onslaught of capitalism, the preacher who truly “follow[ed] the mind of Christ” would “take the side of the poor in most issues” (Rauschenbusch, *Christianity and the Social Crisis* 361). The other important aspect of the Social Gospel was its belief that living out the gospel was a fundamental part *of* the gospel itself. As Rauschenbusch wrote, “I don’t believe that believing any doctrine will do a man any good except so far as it is translated into life.”

Fundamentalists were predictably alarmed at the New Theology and Social Gospel. They felt that the modernists were abusing the principle of the individual’s spiritual freedom by

forming interpretations that clearly revealed neglect for the principle of Scriptural authority. Because of this, they argued, the modernists were causing Baptist seminaries and missionaries to eschew from teachings Baptists had traditionally believed, such as miracles and the bodily resurrection of the dead (McBeth 573). Leon McBeth notes that a majority of fundamentalists had also by this time come to include premillennialism as part of biblical orthodoxy (577). Premillennialism is the belief that upon his Second Coming, Christ will literally and physically remain on Earth to establish his millennial kingdom. This would also help to explain why fundamentalists were so opposed to the idea that the kingdom of God would simply be gradually realized on Earth through human effort. In 1922, William B. Riley, a fundamentalist Baptist minister, moved the NBC to adopt the 1833 New Hampshire Confession of Faith, one widely accepted by Baptists in the North and West (Utzinger 198-199). The 1922 *Annual of the Northern Baptist Convention* addressed this controversy, arguing against its adoption. It called the parties to remember that “we have no body of delegates with power to impose upon our churches a confession of faith or a creedal statement” (1922 38). To adopt the confession would “come perilously near to abandoning one of our fundamental principles”—interestingly enough, the list did not include the authority of the Bible (39).

Riley’s motion was defeated resoundingly, however, in favor of a motion expressing a simple declaration of faith: “The Northern Baptist Convention affirms that the New Testament is the all-sufficient ground of our faith and practice, and we need no other statement” (Weaver 294). The defeat of Riley’s motion, however, was not necessarily evidence that Northern Baptists disagreed with traditional Baptist teachings. C. Douglas Weaver writes that most Baptists did accept the fundamentalists’ conservative theology; they were simply continuing the strong Baptist tradition of aversion to “intellectual assent or conformity” to creeds (293). Persistent

tensions in the NBC over the doctrinal orthodoxy of missionaries and Sunday School literature (McBeth 574-575) caused many fundamentalists to leave in 1933, and again in 1947 (Weaver 294). The NBC was left largely with modernists and traditionalists, and as a result, “modernists with traditionalist inclinations” continued to create “centralized denominational structures to usher in with efficiency the kingdom of God on earth” (Uttinger 210).

It is clear that the NBC placed great emphasis on the principle of local church autonomy. Northern Baptist churches and associations joined the NBC because it placed great value on that principle (along with others), and also because they felt that the efficient and effective discharge of mission work and production of Baptist education materials required a body allowing for intrachurch collaboration (McBeth 564-565, Weaver 292-293). Henry Morehouse, a frontier pastor who later became an NBC executive in 1911, stated that the NBC was built upon “the right to private judgment in matters of faith” [quoting Weaver], “the authority and sufficiency of the scripture, as against imposed creeds,” and democratic church government (Weaver 293). Furthermore, as the years passed, the concept of “mission” in Northern Baptist faith was expanded through the work of Social Gospel proponents. As Rev. Hillyer H. Straton wrote in 1941,

At the turn of the present century a wider social consciousness began to come into the Christian church. Far-visioned Christian leaders saw that they must do more than clean up the wreckage after the crash, that they must move against the economic and social conditions that breed crime and evil. (Straton 126)

This change in mindset was quickly manifested in the focus and character of NBC ministries, which reveals that the majority NBC churches were coming to agree with the change (given that local churches finance their conventions). This would not have been a major surprise, as the North was becoming more urbanized and more NBC churches were forming in urban areas, where degradation was rampant (*Annual of the Northern Baptist Convention, 1916* 215). In the

NBC's 1908-1918 Manual, Charles L. White, Secretary of the ABHMS (now within the NBC), wrote that "Every national problem, whether educational, social, economic, or spiritual, is a home mission problem [referring to the ABHMS]" (*A Manual of the Northern Baptist Convention* 51). The NBC asked, in its 1916 annual meeting, for its churches to "lay renewed emphasis upon the great fundamental principles of the Scriptures, especially in their relation to social, political, and international life" (*Annual of the Northern Baptist Convention, 1916* 171). At the same meeting, the Social Services Committee reported that it had created a course of Sunday School lessons on "The Bible and Social Living," and "most heartily commend[ed] this course to all adult classes as a worthy beginning in social service lessons" (1916 167-168). The Committee had divided itself into several departments, the names of which are revealing: Prison Reform, Rural Communities, Immigration and Foreign-Speaking Peoples, Temperance and Social Hygiene, Social Education, Industrial Problems, The Home and the Child, International Peace and National Security, and The Lord's Day (1916 166-167). The Committee's report in the NBC's 1922 Annual stated that for its function of representation, it represented Baptists in the field of "temperance work, social reform, and international relations" (*Annual of the Northern Baptist Convention, 1922* 218). Both annuals even mention rights such as "the right of labor to deal with capital on the basis of collective bargaining" as well as its right to "social insurance" (1916 215, 1922 224).

The NBC had clearly begun to speak out forcefully on all manner of societal issues, from traditional concerns that directly affected personal morality (temperance) to labor rights, war, and even "humane work" to children and animals (1922 227). And it was not only speaking to its church members or civil society, but to the political authorities as well. On the issue of "racial justice," however, the NBC's statement was relatively tepid (1922 183). It stated:

All good citizens north and south deplore lawlessness in the form of lynching and mob violence in the treatment of Negroes, and all un-Christian as well as illegal discriminations of race against race. We favor all legislation which helps to remedy these conditions. Much can be accomplished by interracial conferences to consider plans for the betterment of relations between the Negroes and the whites, both north and south. (1922, p. 183)

Rauschenbusch, one of the heads of the Industrial Problems Department, had identified “six sins, all of a public nature, which combined to kill Jesus” (Rauschenbusch, *A Theology for the Social Gospel* 248). Institutionalized racism was not amongst them (257-258). His time in Hell’s Kitchen had clearly raised his social conscience, but he never left ‘the white world’ as his congregation was comprised of German immigrants (Smucker 25).

Black Baptists

By the 1880s, Black Baptists had already formed their own associations, but the desire to unite into one denominational entity was great. In 1886, Rev. William J. Simmons, a former slave, sent a letter to leading black Baptists, suggesting that a national convention of the black Baptist denomination be created (Pelt and Smith 89). The reasons Simmons gave reveal much about the role that the black church had by then assumed:

1. To promote personal piety, sociability, and a better knowledge of each other.
2. To be able to have an understanding as to the great ends to be reached by the denomination.
3. To encourage our literary men and women, and promote the interest of Baptist literature.
4. To discuss questions pertaining especially to the religious, educational, industrial, and social interests of our people.
5. To give an opportunity for the best thinkers and writers to be heard.
6. That, united, we may be more powerful for good and strengthen our pride in the denomination. (Pelt and Smith 89)

Rev. Owen D. Pelt, Historiographer of the NBC, USA in 1960, wrote that “the Church was, in many stances, the only activity in which Negroes were able to exercise their full native talents and abilities” (Pelt and Smith 90). Other professions in society were almost entirely unavailable to blacks. Pelt observed that black church leaders “had held only menial jobs before blossoming

in their ministerial roles” (90). Pelt’s use of “Church” is instructive; in capitalizing it he clearly considered all black churches of whatever denomination as sharing united opinions about its holistic role in the black community at large, as seen also in point 6. Indeed, as point 5 on Simmons’ reasons shows, “the Church also provided a potential for intellectual, artistic, and cultural expression among both clergy and laymen that was not yet available in any large degree in society” (90). Finally, Pelt noted the Church’s important role in “preparing the Negro for full participation in the life of American democracy” (90). As points 4 and 5 show, “the Church inevitably served...as a meeting place in which broader problems of the race’s progress could be discussed in a framework of morality” (90).

Black ministers and leaders tended to see the problems holding back the black race in two related categories. First, the depravity of slavery had left the black community in moral and social disarray (Paris 62). Given that whites resisted uplifting them to full equality, blacks were to unite and work for the moral and social improvement of their race themselves. Blacks were not about to simply submit to white Southerners and allow them to help blacks “find” their “place”; i.e. remain powerless and poorer and more ignorant than whites. Second, blacks continued to be held down in their social life by discriminatory laws and the non-enforcement of laws when doing so would protect blacks. This required blacks to mobilize and speak out prophetically against such abuses. Linking the two categories, Peter Paris notes that “blacks viewed education and civil rights as necessary conditions for economic development” (Paris 70). Black Baptists’ views on the root of their social problems and their socio-political demands are well expressed in this excerpt from “The Annual American Negro Keynote Address” delivered by Rev. James Bryant of Atlanta at the NBC, USA 1921 meeting:

The Negro has tried (1) Religion; (2) Education; (3) Acquisition of property; (4) Participation in diversified business; (5) Toleration of submission under protest....There can be, there will be, there ought not be any permanent solution of

our human problem until all men regardless of race, color or nation will acknowledge in theory and practice the Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the equality of the human race, and the Golden Rule as the universal law and conduct in all our relationships as man with man.

- (1) Such a course will guarantee absolute freedom and equality before God and under the law of men.
- (2) Symmetrical education to all our youth.
- (3) Impartial participation in all affairs of government.
- (4) Civil and political equality to the private citizen as well as the professional politician.
- (5) Social justice and equality, but not social intermingling, nor intermarriage. Each race group in its solidarity, individuality and separation has a distinct contribution to make to the civilization and Christianization of the world.”
(Paris 72-73)

* * *

As the 20th century arrived, significant differences arose in the ways Northern, Southern and black Baptists saw the mission of the church and the degree to which interacting with society furthered its mission—which in turn stemmed from differences in how each regarded the origins of societal problems. These differences led Northern, Southern Baptists and black Baptists to focus on different types of issues when engaging the political realm.

Northern Baptists increasingly considered Protestant ignorance of the two-fold nature of salvation to be behind the problems of the nation. If Christians would see that God desired societies to confess their corporate sins and transform their inequities, then America’s problems would begin to be eradicated. In *Christianity and the Social Crisis*, Rauschenbusch argued that as a result of historical and cultural developments, Christians had long misinterpreted the Scriptures. If they were to remove the veil of these developments, they would see that their mission was to effect societal transformation. Now, it is almost certainly the case that Rauschenbusch and his contemporaries believed in racial equality, and it is easy to see how this concept would fit right into the idea that the kingdom of God is “always but coming” on Earth (Rauschenbusch). As such, their failure to 1) address racism and 2) see racism as a corporate sin

in their own theory was most likely due either to a lack of interaction with blacks or an all-too idealistic belief that social salvation would lift blacks equally up out of their miseries, or both. In contrast, Southern Baptists held fast to the traditional Baptist belief that the social problems of the nation were due a lack of internal conversion on the part of individuals; the more saved, the better the society. They did increase their overall level of religious social action, but largely focused only on issues that impacted individual spiritual life.

Black Baptists approached social transformation from a different history and vantage point altogether. Black Baptists agreed with the historic belief that individual sin lay behind society's problems. However, the root of their race's social problems was due not only to that but to white refusal to recognize in practice their common humanity in denying them "full and equal citizenship rights" (Paris 71). Moreover, unlike Northern Baptist thinkers in the mold of Rauschenbusch, Black leaders generally accepted the economic principles that underlay the U.S as a country; they engaged in social and economic self-advancement on American terms. Blacks simply believed that the political leadership of governments at all levels were discriminatorily passing and applying laws, which caused the economic principles to be distorted when applied to blacks. Blacks did not see 'capitalism,' for instance, as unjust in itself as Northern Baptists like Rauschenbusch increasingly believed. It was racist laws, such as Jim Crow, that kept institutions like the free market from benefiting blacks. While black Baptists did support reforms such as increased labor rights, they focused on issues with a racist origin. In an age of segregation, black Baptists knew all too well that their only advocates would have to come from within their own race; while many would advocate for labor, none else but themselves would advocate for blacks.

Examining the three groups' social and political involvement, I conclude that culture, socioeconomic condition, and race impacted the nature of and degree to which they interacted

with the state. Northern Baptists, with their new belief in social transformation, would appear to support a high degree of church-state interaction. However, four factors kept them from this: First, because of the Social Gospel's view that both Christians and non-Christians could work together to usher in Christ's kingdom, Northern Baptists' social action was religious in motivation but had less and less of a religious component. Thus, even though Northern Baptists were the ones acting, they did not see their actions as 'religious interference' towards the state. Second, because of their historic emphasis on religious liberty and separation, Northern Baptists could aggressively lobby their governments, but they were averse to ministers actually serving in political positions. Third, there was little need for ministers to directly go into politics because Northern society was, compared to the rest of America, educated and progressive, and such individuals were in all sorts of fields. So Northern Baptist ministers did not have to become politicians themselves; they could simply lobby those who had similar inclinations to begin with and were also knowledgeable in the issues they were concerned with. Fourth, because a variety of institutions existed in Northern society that dealt with social matters, religious groups or individuals did not have to be the only ones advocating for social reform.

Southern Baptists, on the other hand, rejected the Social Gospel and existed in a conservative and relatively uneducated society that had great levels of inequality between average folk and the vested elite. If any aggressive social action beyond that of churchly social concern was to take place, few other social institutions apart from government existed to do it. However, Southern Baptists made up the majority of Southerners, and given their theological reticence for religious involvement in political social reform to simply better society, Southern governments did not pursue social transformation.

As the voice of their voiceless communities, black Baptist ministers had little issue with getting involved in politics to advocate on behalf of their people; this occurred but it ended largely with Reconstruction. What separated them from their poor Southern Baptist ministerial counterparts was also largely race. The latter could focus on economic injustice without having to worry about racism, while the former had to address issues such as lack of political rights and Jim Crow laws, which were seen by most whites not as matters of social reform but as expressions of divine ‘place’ and order. Black Baptists were not, of course, opposed to fighting economic injustice, but they knew they would not share the benefits of increased economic justice until the racist laws against them were weakened. Nevertheless, black Baptists still supported reform in many of the same causes that their white brethren did: “prohibition, temperance, sexual laxity, gambling, smoking, dancing, [and] divorce” (Paris 44).

VII. The Changing American Conception of Religious Liberty: Implications for Baptists

While both Southern and Northern Baptists continued to hold to their respective views on the implications of religious liberty (or lack thereof), they unconsciously began to initiate a momentous change in the way they had historically understood the principle itself. In his work *Separation of Church and State*, Columbia Law Professor Philip Hamburger shows historically how Baptists, alongside other Protestants, gradually went from seeing religious liberty and separation of church and state as linked but still distinct concepts, to “perceive[ing] their religious liberty as a separation of church and state” (Hamburger 193). The Baptists’ historic understanding of separation (which had by this time largely become the American conception of separation as well) and religious liberty became significantly altered by the early 20th century. As should be a familiar refrain by now, this change was the result of various factors. Beginning in the late antebellum years, this change accelerated in the post-Civil War decades and caused

ramifications on white Baptist views on church-state relations far into the 20th century, including some unintended ones which white Baptists did not foresee. Black Baptists would not be much involved in this redefinition of religious liberty, given the pressing social needs of blacks and the lack of civil rights that blacks continued to endure.

During the Antebellum era, some Protestants had begun to develop an “antiecclesiastical perspective,” one that discounted the importance of creeds, churches and clerical statements in favor of spiritual individualism (194). While most Protestant denominations, including the Baptists, retained creeds or confessions—even if they were simple—a minority of Protestants increasingly felt that their “individual liberty...require[d] a freedom not only from government but also from their own purely voluntary religious societies [that is, denominations” (195). Northern Baptist minister Samuel K. Lothrop observed that such Protestants declined to distinguish between “internal” and “external” religious liberty (195). External liberty, he said, was the liberty “which the individual claims of the government as a civil right, and relates to the extent of his exemption from penalties, privations or disabilities, on account either of his articles of faith, modes of worship” (195). Most Protestants before the Civil War equated separation with external liberty alone.

Internal liberty, on the other hand, referred to the liberty of a religious group-affiliated individual to form his own religious opinions on issues while still remaining affiliated with that group. Lothrop described it as “the liberty which the individual claims of the church or ecclesiastical body, and relates to his freedom to form and express his own opinions of religious truth, without loss of religious privileges and fellowship, on account of those opinions” (195). An example of those who advocated internal as well as external liberty were the Unitarians. When the Congregational Church was still established in Massachusetts, Unitarians, who were

still members of the Church but had altered principal Congregational doctrines, feared that the Church authorities would try to take control of their church buildings and property as a result (196).

As time passed, however, some Protestants began to ask “whether the creeds of even *voluntary* religious societies should be feared as threats to liberty” [italics added] (196). In 1877, Northern Baptist minister George Lorimer of Tremont Temple in Boston reflected sadly that “there is a tendency...to complain that articles of faith cramp intellectual liberty, and that the laws and rules of religious communities unduly restrict inclination and action” (197). Protestant clergymen in all denominations were receiving criticism for emphasizing adherence to doctrinal orthodoxy. With each passing decade, though, this characterization was becoming less accurate. American Protestantism had for long possessed a certain tension between maintaining doctrinal orthodoxy through confessions and allowing the individual believer freedom in biblical interpretation (freedom of conscience). Already in the 1800s, some Protestant thinkers had begun to shift strongly in the direction of the latter, having been influenced by the individualistic nature of American culture. Congregationalist Leonard Bacon’s 1845 statement that “Protestantism is the love of Spiritual Liberty” exemplified this spirit (204). The idea of internal liberty really began to make headway in the late 1880s though, when American Protestant seminarians began traveling to Europe to study the rationalist movement that was revolutionizing mainline seminaries there (Brackney, “A Turn toward a Doctrinal Christianity: Baptist Theology, a Work in Progress” 82). These seminarians returned with a much more expansive view of the traditional evangelical gospel message and the mission of Christians in this life; some even began to see the idea of ‘social salvation’ as having precedence over individual salvation. With theological diversity on basic Reformation doctrines increasing amongst the clergy themselves, more

ministers who did not hold to all the traditional views of their denomination but still desired to stay within the denomination began to support the idea of “internal liberty.”

The increasing presence of Roman Catholicism in America, however, was the major catalyst which caused the majority of Protestants and eventually the general public to equate religious liberty with not only external but also internal liberty. During the 1840s, Catholics from Europe began to immigrate to the U.S., and by the late 1800s, their numbers were increasing dramatically. English and Scottish-blooded Protestants in America complained of these immigrants’ customs, character, and religion, and it was not long before Protestant theological liberals, moderates and conservatives united to ‘defend America’ against the Catholic ‘onslaught’ (Hamburger 203). Protestants alleged, and Catholic hierarchs themselves agreed, that the Catholic Church insisted it alone had the right to interpret the Bible and demanded from the faithful complete adherence to its beliefs and interpretations (211). (When Catholics refer to ‘the Church’ in matters regarding interpretation, they are generally referring only to the Vatican and not to lay Catholics.) Protestants saw this as a gross violation of individual freedom of conscience, given the added facts that Catholics were generally forbidden from reading Scripture and were told to simply accept uncritically the teachings of their bishops. Catholic declarations such as the following one published in the St. Louis Catholic *Shepherd of the Valley* paper mortified Protestants: The Church was “of necessity, intolerant,” “she alone has the right to be intolerant,” and that if and when Catholics gained “an immense numerical superiority,” the Church would strive to “end” religious liberty (210). Notwithstanding the fantastical nature of such declarations, and the fact that they were not shared or even noticed by most Catholics, many Protestants still contemplated with alarm their potential reality.

Protestants were increasingly fearful that Catholics could one day either “subvert representative government” or convert enough followers to “impose religious tyranny by democratic means” (206). As such, they overwhelmingly subscribed to the argument used by the English in the 1600 and 1700s that “to prevent Catholics from capturing free, Protestant government and imposing a union of church and state, Catholics had to be denied equal civil and political rights unless they first renounced their allegiance to the pope,” who was at that time still an influential temporal ruler (206). (A more familiar example of this reasoning concerned the Communists in America; in the 1960s conservatives argued that because Communists’ beliefs threatened the very principles underlying American government, their civil rights had to be restricted.) Protestant hostility compelled the Catholic hierarchy in America to be very careful with taking stances on political topics even as they defended their right to speak publicly on all issues. Protestant clergy, on the other hand, needed not tread so carefully—as clearly seen earlier, Protestant ministers took positions on all sorts of questions, having moved from directly supporting political parties in the early 1800s to preaching their views on societal issues or proposed government actions (243-244).

The changing Protestant and Baptist understanding of religious liberty can be seen in their change in understanding separation. Justin D. Fulton, a popular Baptist and nativist writer, argued that religious liberty clauses in the federal and state constitutions expressed “two fundamental principles: first, that there shall be no connection between church and state; and secondly, that religious liberty, the rights of conscience, and freedom to worship...are guaranteed to the citizens of the United States” (247). Consider Fulton’s use of “church.” During colonial times and the early Republic, “church” was taken to mean a religious institution, whether it was a local Baptist church, a Presbyterian synod or ‘The Protestant Episcopal

Church.’ As Protestant churches increasingly emphasized the autonomy of the believer in spiritual matters, Protestants thought of themselves less as church members and more as individuals who had thought critically about religious beliefs before accepting them—and then joined churches. However, Catholics, they alleged, did not critically choose their beliefs but simply imported them from the Vatican and did not voluntarily join their church. Protestants felt threatened by the perception that when Catholics were called to vote on something, they voted *en masse* and in the same way. Protestants therefore increasingly thought of the term “church” as referring to an *institutional organization* that refused their members freedom of conscience (278)—not coincidentally, only the Catholic Church fit this bill! Protestants, in contrast, presumed that they already conformed to separation since their churches did not dictate their thoughts.

Protestants thus considered their use of religious views in informing their political views to be acceptable (since their views were individually and critically arrived at), but saw the same action by Catholics to be dangerous (since Catholics simply accepted what they were told). Fulton’s use of the words “no connection” then makes sense as well, for he, like most other Protestants, staunchly opposed any conscience-dictating church to have a voice in a democratic political realm. Baptists and other Protestants, as Hamburger states, thus came to distinguish between “a church” and “the religion of Protestant individuals” (284). The former was to have nothing at all to do with government, whereas the latter posed no threat to government because it consisted of free-thinking religiously-informed consciences (282). For Baptists and others, religious liberty increasingly referred to internal as well as external liberty; if consciences were not to be influenced by a ‘church,’ then neither should the state. Thus, due to fears of the Catholic Church, the majority of Baptists by 1940 had come to regard religious liberty as a

separation of institutional, conscience-oppressing churches and state. In framing separation this way, the *state* became the entity that had to be protected. But it did not have to be protected from Protestants' religious beliefs, because Protestants freely arrived at their beliefs and did not seek to 'take over' the state with their churches. Protestants had no problem with a general civil religion that reflected Protestantism because *mainline* Protestantism was becoming more about method than result—the freedom to read the Bible, for instance, was more important than what the resulting interpretation was, given the spiritual equality of believers. This is why the NBC did not see itself as violating separation when it stated in its 1922 Annual that

We favor the removal of the disability in certain States that prevents the reading of the Bible in public schools and recommend such reading, without comment, as a helpful agency in the training of our young people in the principles and practises of morality. (*Annual of the National Baptist Convention, 1922*, p. 183)

Catholics, on the other hand, were about result than process; after all, the hierarchy were the interpreters of the Bible, and what they said was the truth. Thus, if a Catholic ever attempted to have the catechism read in the public schools, Protestants would have created an uproar.

Thus, ironically, with religious liberty being expanded to encompass both internal and external liberty, the application of separation came to depend upon the nature of the church in question. These definitions significantly deviated from the historical Baptist understandings of religious liberty and separation.

Unlike their white brethren, black Baptist churches did not partake much in the Protestant hysteria over Catholicism. While white Baptists were worrying about Catholic threats to the nation, black Baptists were worrying over continued threats to their race. Black Baptists thus rarely contemplated the possibility of a church that would become more powerful than and even overtake the state. If they were whites, by the 1880s they would not have had to fear the state anymore since governments in the U.S. no longer persecuted Protestant dissenters. But, of course,

they weren't, and their continued oppression made black Baptists all the more certain that the state was always the more powerful of the two. Black Baptists thus maintained the historical Baptist belief that separation protected the church from the state and not vice versa. Moreover, because black Baptist churches spoke with one voice on social and political issues more frequently than did their white brethren, and were also at the center of black life and thought, it may have been the case that if they spoke out vigorously against the Catholic Church, they could have incurred charges of hypocrisy. And black Baptists were not about to limit the prophetic nature of their pulpits. Thus, they shied away from discussing separation altogether, as seen in the following 1889 American National Baptist Convention (not yet the NBC, USA) statement:

Our political leaders are few, and even those we have cannot reach the people; therefore it becomes our duty to speak out upon all questions that affect our people socially and economically, as well as religiously. (*Journal of the American National Baptist Convention*. Three Sessions, p. 19, quoted in Hamburger 280)

* * *

Because black Baptists did not share much at all in white Protestant America's ongoing religious and social redefinition of religious liberty, they would not be greatly touched by the ascendancy of the Liberal understanding of religious liberty and separation in the 1960s. Focused on the spiritual, societal, and political advancement of their race, all of which were interconnected, black Baptists would not come to separate religious influence from political or social matters as the American public increasingly did after the 1960s. As such, they would not experience the substantial backlash that occurred amongst Southern Baptist rank-and-file as secular liberals increasingly changed America's understanding of separation to imply a separation of *religion* from government (Hamburger 477).

This further change in the understanding of separation caused conservative Southern Baptists to demand that society and the state revert back to the common understanding of

separation as it existed up through the early 20th century—that is, separation of *church* and state. Northern Baptists, on the other hand, did not experience this backlash because their view of society by the 1970s did not allow for much conflict with the state. While Southern Baptists felt threatened by Supreme Court rulings against public school-sanctioned prayer and other historically Protestant civil religion practices, as well as the general societal disorder that was taking place, Northern Baptists, who no longer really saw a strict dichotomy between the church and ‘the world’ or ‘society’ given their Social Gospel orientation, had little use for public Protestant civil religion anymore. Given that both Christians and non-Christians could help usher in the kingdom of God on Earth, Northern Baptists’ interactions with the state focused on social issues, such as discrimination and poverty, which are not intrinsically religious issues like Bible reading or prayer are. As such, they were not greatly disturbed by the Supreme Court rulings against state-sanctioned religious activity. Northern Baptists did *not* believe in a separation of religion and state. However, the issues that their faith dealt with in public life were no longer ones of a strictly religious nature. Thus, while it might appear that their view of separation changed yet again, it did not—it is their understanding of what issues the church should engage society on, that has further evolved since the early 20th century.

Southern Baptists, who maintained that social reform could only happen with personal conversion, perceived the increasing elimination of historically state-sanctioned religious activity in public life as their secular liberal opponents did: a separation of religion from the state and even society. Many rank-and-file Southern Baptists disturbed by the societal changes happening around them were also the same Southern Baptists growing increasingly concerned about what they saw as increasing theological liberalism in the SBC (Leonard, *God’s Last and Only Hope* 133). Finally, in the 1980s, they revolted on two levels. First, they revolted against the SBC

leadership for its perceived social liberalism. Second, they emerged onto the national scene as the Baptists in the Religious Right. These Southern Baptists asserted that they wanted to return separation to its original understanding as fully permitting religious activity and influence in societal institutions such as the state and the schools. However, they overreacted to the confluence of denominational theological liberalism and societal changes, and ended up reverting back to an understanding of separation that was not the historic Baptist view. Their views hearkened back, in fact, to the Presbyterian and Congregational understanding of church and state in the 1800s as prohibiting the government from nothing more than “endorsing one Christian sect over another as the official national church”; a general Christianity could still be favored and churches could even receive funding for various endeavors (Underwood, Early). Southern Baptists who did not participate in the populist theological uprising continued to hold to the view of separation as a separation of *institutional* church and state.

VIII. Pre-Field Research Concluding Analysis

During the colonial era, owing to persecution and missionary impulse, white Baptists in both the North and South held to English Baptist notions of religious liberty and separation of church and state. Religious liberty referred to the right to a free conscience, while separation meant that the state could not regulate spiritual matters but the church could voice its opinion on issues to the state. Baptists were strongly opposed to any institutional relationship between the state and religion, whether voluntary on the church’s part or not— the state was not to promote ‘general’ Christianity, no tax dollars were to fund any church institutions, etc. Moreover, since Christianity in America was relatively unconcerned with social issues during this period, when governments stopped intruding on spiritual matters, the distinction between what the state and the church dealt with were quite clear. While individual Christians on their own surely became

involved in politics and running the country, the churches spoke out only on issues that directly affected themselves, such as laws that jailed dissenters. With no socially-concerned Christianity or what we would call ‘social conscience’ in American society at large, Baptist and other churches left social and economic issues alone and were content to concentrate on converting and transforming the individual. Thus, Baptist understanding of separation could be characterized as strict.

In the years leading up to the Civil War, socially-concerned Christianity began to emerge with increasing Northern Christian opposition to slavery and the temperance movement. During the Revolutionary period, almost all Baptists saw a connection between the preservation of religious liberty and the need for political liberty—this was a step forward from their English Baptist forefathers, who were content to live under a monarchy so long as it granted them religious liberty. Northern Baptists, who recognized the common humanity of blacks, recalled the connection between religious and political liberty in increasingly supporting not only the religious liberty of blacks but their political freedom as well. Southern Baptists, who theologically justified blacks as being of a lower order and thus deserving of slavery, spoke out against the connection Northern Baptists were making between religious and political liberty as ‘politicizing’ religion—even as their fear of slave religious gatherings clearly revealed their belief in this connection as well. The majority of black Baptists, most of whom were slaves in the South, subscribed to the connection between religious and political liberty from the point they became Christians. Baptist churches in both the North and South both spoke out on the topic, marking the beginning of Baptist churches’ engagement with issues that did not directly affect them. The social implications of religious liberty were disputed, and the appropriateness of churches venturing into social issues, especially one as controversial as slavery, was also

disputed. Both Northern and Southern Baptists, however, supported efforts to limit the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages. Where it existed, socially-concerned Christianity during this time concentrated on reforms that addressed individual sins whose practice had grown to have a societal impact. Nevertheless, Northern and Southern Baptists persisted in their shared colonial understanding of separation.

Black Baptists, however, saw the spiritual intertwined with the social, economic, and political—there was no division between spiritual and secular. Thus, they developed their own version of the Social Gospel long before any of their white brethren would. Black Baptists shared white Baptists' understanding of separation, but had a far more expansive view of what *Christianity* permitted churches to involve themselves with: churches were to voice their views on all sorts of matters that white Baptists saw as being purely secular concerns.

The Civil War was a significant marker in Baptist and Protestant views on church-state relations. Baptist churches on both sides actively participated in the conflict; Southern Baptist churches melted their bells for the Confederate war effort, and Northern Baptists worked with the federal government to go down and claim abandoned Baptist churches. During the Reconstruction period, Southern Baptists became further entrenched in the belief that theirs was a 'sacred society' based on white superiority. Southern Baptists resolved to do whatever was necessary to maintain the 'purity' of their religion and the order of their society. To do this, religion was to remain at the core of society, and personal conversion would enable individuals to uplift themselves, all the while submitting to the divine ordering of society. Both Southern and Northern Baptists continued to do missions amongst blacks, but territorial disputes led Northerners to pull out in the interests of white Baptist and national unity. Since all blacks were now freed, Northern Baptists increasingly assumed they could now uplift themselves, and as a

result, racial inequality eventually ceased to be a pressing issue for Northern Baptists. With Southern Baptists hostile and Northern Baptists increasingly indifferent to their plight, blacks were left with little but themselves and the center of their communities: the church. Black Baptist and other black churches cemented their standing as the chief spokesmen of the black race to the wider society and as the institution from which all aspects of black existence would be empowered. The black Baptist view of separation forbade the state to involve itself with sectarian spiritual matters, but had no issue with allowing churches to become involved in social and political advocacy—essentially the position on separation traditionally shared by American Baptists.

The consequences of the political, cultural, social, and economic changes that took place during Reconstruction would combine with the changes beginning in the 1880s to transform the way Northern and Southern Baptists had understood religious liberty and separation. During this period, Protestant seminarians in the North began to apply modernist ideas to the study of Scripture, and increasing numbers believed that transforming the social order was of equal or even greater importance than bringing individuals to salvation. No longer was a socially-concerned Christianity sufficient, for if the kingdom of God were to become manifested on Earth, effecting changes in the entire social and economic order would be necessary—the Social Gospel. Christianity was not only supposed to concern itself with the individual, but its concern extended to all realms of human existence. Accordingly, in theological circles and in congregations that began to welcome the Social Gospel, religious involvement in society increased to a new level—*but this new level was nonsectarian and nonreligious* (being pure social action with no religious component—the social action itself *was* the religious component). Thus, the importance of

religious liberty as historically understood partially gave way to a newfound concern for social and economic rights.

Conversely, Southern Baptists firmly rejected the Social Gospel on theological grounds and out of wariness of Northern culture. Most Southern Baptist ministers concerned themselves socially and politically with social issues only to the extent that their action would enable those affected by it to be more open to receiving the evangelical gospel. A minority of poor ministers did become active in demanding social and economic reforms, but because Baptist churches were of different social classes and because Baptist ministers could be supported by wealthy members, most ministers strayed little from addressing social issues dealing with personal morality.

At the same time this was occurring in the North, Catholic immigration to the U.S. soared. Given the Catholic Church's stance against both external and internal liberty at the time, Protestants in all regions and denominations became alarmed that the Catholic Church could one day succeed in stamping out religious and even political liberty in America. Baptists, with their historical legacy of being persecuted for fighting for religious liberty, were foremost amongst those sounding the alarm. To prevent the Catholic Church from 'destroying' the political foundations of the nation, Baptists and other Protestants began to use separation to describe religious liberty. The term 'church' in separation of church and state was reinterpreted to mean an institutional, external and internal liberty-denying church (read Catholic Church) in hopes of keeping the Church from exerting any influence in the social or political realms. Northern Baptists thus increasingly defined religious liberty as not simply forbidding state intrusion on external liberty but *also sectarian (read Catholic) influence on and relations with the state*. By adding to separation and then equating it with religious liberty, Northern and Southern Baptists

along with other Protestants deviated significantly from their historic understandings of both principles.

Black Baptists continued in the mindset that religion concerned all realms of human existence. However, since black prospects in society depended on a reduction of institutionalized white racism, they knew blacks would only be marginally affected by generally-applied social and economic reforms *that were not coupled with* an impartial application of civil rights. Thus, unlike the Northern Baptists, black Baptist societal advocacy focused on ensuring civil rights for and curbing discriminatory laws toward their people. Black Baptists had their own version of the Social Gospel long before any white Baptists did, but because of racism they had to rely mostly upon themselves and not the state for their own social and economic progress. If black Baptist churches did interact with government on socio-economic issues, it typically took the form of limited social welfare partnerships. As such relationships could be perceived by white Protestants as a sectarian relation with the state, black Baptists did not actively join in the condemnations of the Catholic Church. With more immediate issues to worry about, black Baptists gave little attention to the issue of the religious liberty and separation. They held fast to the historic Baptist view of separation as forbidding the state to intrude on external liberty and did not fall victim to defining religious liberty in terms of separation.

IX. Discussion of Field Research

Methodology

I conducted qualitative field research of my own to see whether my conclusions from existing literature correspond to the thinking of local Baptist pastors today about. Because this capstone seeks to examine the factors *behind* the differences in church-state views amongst black and white Baptists, I did not see it fit to conduct surveys of ministers from each of the three

conventions. Surveys would require respondents to answer yes/no or answer questions from pre-selected answers, which could potentially cause the theological positions and the nuances within theological positions to be left unearthed and unprobed. Instead, I chose to interview one minister at length from each convention to have a real discussion on the issue this capstone deals with. My wariness of surveys proved to be prudent, as the ministers offered insights that I would most likely never have thought to include in survey questions or concluded through survey responses. I used a prepared set of interview questions for each pastor, supplementing or adjusting each of them slightly depending on the convention their church is a member of. A copy of the interview questions I asked for each minister is provided in Appendices A, B, and C.

I interviewed Rev. Dr. Larry B. West, Senior Pastor of Mount Airy Baptist Church, a member of the NBC, USA, Rev. Andy Johnson, Associate Pastor for Discipling and Missions at Capitol Hill Baptist Church, a member of the SBC, and Rev. Amy Butler, Senior Pastor of Calvary Baptist Church, a member of the ABC. I selected these three churches for several reasons. For one, each of the churches is historical in the DC area; Mount Airy Baptist was formed in 1893, Capitol Hill Baptist in 1878, and Calvary Baptist in 1862. (Calvary Baptist was in fact the church where the Northern Baptist Convention (now the ABC, USA) was founded in 1907.) After reading about the churches on their websites, I also felt that each of them stood in the mainstream of thought within their respective conventions. I considered the pastors at each of the churches and felt that their respective backgrounds would allow them to have a substantive discussion with me on this capstone's topic. It is true that the multiple educational degrees each of them possesses are probably not typical of pastors of rural or small churches, many of whom are bivocational. Nevertheless, I considered that their scholarly learning and areas of pastoral responsibility would help in making our conversations meaningful, which proved to be true.

Given the autonomy of the local church, it is reminded that while the pastors expressed views largely within the mainstream thought of their respective conventions, they speak solely for themselves and/or for their own churches.

Mount Airy Baptist Church (NBC, USA)

Before discussing the ministries his church provides, Dr. West stated that “our church certainly is socially conscious. The African American church in and of itself is socially conscious, and it has had to be because of the social stigma that has been prevalent from the days of slavery. The church in the African American community by necessity has always been the center or the *ecclesia* of the community. If things were going to happen in a positive manner within the African American community, then you can rest assured it was going to either be initiated by or certainly, it was going to be going through the church entity. Of course then, the pastors were necessarily involved. So there are certain ministries within our church that are very much socially minded” (West). As to whether these ministries were for the benefit of the church members or for the community at-large, he answered that they were for both. “Primarily the church is responsible for its membership, but in the African American church,” Dr. West noted, “We’re called to serve not only those who are part of the fold but as Jesus says, we have sheep that are not of this fold. So we’re called to serve the entire community and not only the community itself, but we have outreach across the city as well as outreach not only domestically but internationally as well.”

Dr. West said that his church “do[es] not go after government funding for any of its social ministries...That’s not to say that the membership at large has not benefited from some government funded sources. But the church itself does not go after government funds.” As to what he thought of other Baptist churches that did, Dr. West replied that “In the Baptist church in

particular, the church is autonomous unto itself, subject to the governance of itself. There is no hierarchy per se as in the Catholic Church. So I would say, 'to each his own'." The danger of receiving government funding, he said, was that the "that the government [then] looks for you to be responsive to it. The church has been positioned to the point whereby the church needs to be the moral compass of society, which includes the government. And sometimes it becomes very difficult to tell the government that your moral basis is off, if the government is feeding you as well." So you're saying they may have strings attached. "I'm sure they would have strings attached, as is the case with the stimulus package now!" On the question of public prayer, Dr. West stated that its acceptability depended on the person. "If one is going to ask this pastor to pray or this servant to pray, don't try to limit me in terms of who I pray to or what I pray about. In order for any of us to be effective, we have to be who we are. Anytime you or anyone else asks me to compromise who I am, then you've already compromised my effectiveness. I can only be effective when I'm true to who I am. Therefore, if I were to compromise who I pray to or whose name I pray in or what I pray about, then you may as well not allow me to pray, because that prayer won't go where it's supposed to go, and it certainly won't accomplish what it needs to accomplish from a divine standpoint."

Dr. West did not believe that there was a point at which the church decides that an issue is so important it needs to go from simply being addressed to the church members or to society, to the political authorities. He explained that "the church always has to maintain its moral standing, and it always has to be the voice of morality. That voice needs to be spoken to whomever it needs to be spoken to, whether it's the political powers that be or whether it's the social powers that be. That's part and parcel to why I believe the church is in existence today, is so that the society in which we live, again, would have a moral trumpet. The church should not

compromise who she is. She must speak truth to whomever needs to hear truth.” Dr. West explained that “there are no issues that the church should consider taboo. I don’t know that there are any issues that confront people in today’s society and world where the church should just hold back. If the Bible addresses it, from our perspective, the Bible is our governing document, then we ought to speak it. If the Bible does not address it, then perhaps we ought to be quiet about it.” From this statement, it seems clear that Dr. West believed the Bible has something to say about all issues, although it does not mean the church needs to speak on all of them simultaneously.

The most important point Dr. West made in our discussion, however, was that one’s understanding of Scripture and of issues such as religious liberty or separation is always at least partially a function of one’s culture and socioeconomic background. Regarding separation, he said that “the rule is what the rule is, and the rule is what the rule says, and I don’t know if there would be any misunderstandings about the rule per se, but there would again be influence based on our cultural upbringing, and that’s maybe where the difference would lie.” He mentioned the differences between “Eurocentric theology,” “liberation theology,” and even “black liberation theology” were clearly due to culture. “When it came to liberation, freedom, whatever the oppression was,” Dr. West explained, “it had to come out of the oppressed community, as opposed to being initiated from anywhere else.” Dr. West’s following statement speaks for itself:

“The NBC, USA saw a need for advocacy and saw a need of the strength being in numbers and came together to fight to kind of ills in our society at that time. Advocacy has become a part of our being, both in the African American church as well as in the white church. The evangelicals are certainly advocating now, and have been for a while. But again, the advocacy coming from the evangelical church in one man’s opinion didn’t happen because of

real oppression. It came about because of a different diaspora, if you will, because of a different happening. The advocacy in the African American church has come about because of oppression. I wouldn't say that evangelical churches' advocacy is misguided. It's a different perspective, understanding. It comes out of a different culture." And certainly, again, I can't fault anyone for standing up for their culture and working towards and believing in their culture. Or their understanding based on their cultures. So I wouldn't hold it against them at all. Now from the theological perspective, we may have some differences and be able to talk there. But again, I'm impacted by that which I've gone through, and so are they. So we have a natural set of competing ideas and even when I think about Eurocentric theology, we accept the thoughts of the Tillich's of the world and those of the historical theologians. But their thoughts don't necessarily impact where I'm from. It definitely speaks to where they're from. But it doesn't speak at all to where I'm from. Because again, it's a different culture. There's no doubt that theology is influenced by culture, how can it not be?" Dr. West did not think that evangelical white churches were simply concerned with two or three narrow issues such as abortion or gay marriage—this general perception, he said, was perhaps the doing of a media that erroneously sees the representative value of Baptist spokesmen's words as no different from those of Catholic bishops.

With respect to question 19, Dr. West responded as follows: "Some people would say the difference between the Old and New Testaments is that the Old Testament is filled with the "thou shalt nots" and the New Testament is filled with "thou shalls." That the prophets of old spoke in the negative term as you put it, and the prophets in the New Testament or even Jesus spoke in the more positive realm. I don't know if that's the case. I have not explored or deciphered that in my experience in regards to the white church. But in the African American church, I would tend to say that again, if it has evolved into a more positive speech, it again is

because of what we've been through. The plight of African Americans, the historical plight, is so filled with negativity that somebody had to speak some positive inferences and things into the black mindset so that blacks would know that they are not junk. They are not things to be traded, bartered and bought and sold. That they are valuable beings created by God and there is literally no difference other than the color of the skin. That there is no person who is more academically, intellectually superior than any other others—superior in any way.” He was not certain as to whether white churches’ political involvement focused more on individual behavior, but he again mentioned culture as a very important factor.

Dr. West did not agree with telling people whom to vote for—he made a distinction between this and speaking out on laws. Regarding ministers inviting politicians to the pulpit, he gave an interesting answer: “If you’re going to do it for one, then I think you need to do it for all. There ought to be an equilibrium as opposed to having a biased view, because again, people in the church have all sorts of views. You have Democrats, Republicans, Independents, so why would a pastor only want to put up one person who is Democratic and not give an opportunity for the other members to hear those persons who may be from their own [political] persuasions? So I think there should not be any bias from the pulpit when it comes to bringing people to the pulpit. If you’re going to bring a Democrat, then bring a Republican, and if you’re going to bring those two, then bring an independent as well.” Dr. West also said that his church “as an entity speaking out as one voice and body” does not lobby governments, but that members of the church of course do participate in the political arena. “There are times,” he explained, “when pastors who are part of ministerial alliances, ministers’ conferences, or the church is a part of a convention, and you have spokespersons for the convention, for the alliances, the conferences, and sometimes the media jumps on that bandwagon and thinks that its coming primarily from the

church, but quite frankly, it's not the church, it's again the convention or the conference or the alliance that is doing the speaking.

Dr. West stated that his church does not participate with any organizations that advocate for issues at the political level, but that individuals in the church definitely do. "The church," he said, "as an entity is a spiritual institution, and it's directed, guided, and it lives by its spiritual setting." The church does, however, have links with non-Baptist organizations—in fact, Dr. West noted that the church has a partnership with a neighboring school, Walker Jones Educational Center, and even a robotics ministry that teaches youth the intricacies of TV programming and video editing. The church also partners with a local food bank to provide food to people at the church. "They're using us as a vessel to get the food out to people who are in need in this community."

In Dr. West's perspective, "it's a ministry if you are providing for the wholeness of the person. If you're providing a spiritual enlightenment as well as a physical substance, then of course it's a part of our responsibility to not only provide or give people fish but also to teach them how to fish. And that's where the ministry comes in." When asked whether the importance of ministries depended on whether they were more spiritually or socially oriented, Dr. West responded that "every ministry is a spiritual ministry—otherwise there's no need to have it in the church. When we feed the homeless, there's really not a need for this church to feed the homeless if that's all we're going to do, because then we would become something that we're not. We would become a restaurant, and we're not in the restaurant business. The church business is a spiritual one. So therefore we necessarily have to be concerned about more than just the stomach of the person. We've got to be concerned about the soul of that person. If we're funding the hungry or feeding the homeless, you can rest assured that there's some other

component that's going to be involving that person's wholeness, that we're also going to present. It has nothing to do with proselytizing, as some people would like to put it, but it does have to do with being who you are. And again, anytime someone tries to cut you out from being who you are, you're going to lose your effectiveness. That's part of the problem in our society today. Too many people have been trying to be something that they're not. And of course, you lose your effectiveness when you do that."

Calvary Baptist Church (SBC)

Rev. Butler explained her church's mission as follows: "We are multicultural, multiethnic Christian body reaching out to the city with the love of Jesus Christ. We try to keep that very general statement in mind as we determine what it means to be the body of Christ in this place. Our missional expression has a lot to do with our presence in the city and our location here as an urban presence and the individual callings of each of the members of our community of faith" (Butler). She then mentioned ministries that the church was involved in, such as providing for a member of the church to engage in medical work, as well as hosting after-school program for inner-city kids here, a Thursday night basketball league and a Thursday morning outreach to the patients at St. Elizabeth's Hospital. Regarding whom the ministries were directed towards, she explained that "it's a partnership in my mind as the minister. I think most of the members would say we're helping kids, but I would say we're living out our calling and that's a holy honor for us as followers of Jesus Christ. Hopefully the people in this community will be challenged to such a point that they wouldn't live their lives without some kind of involvement going on. So it's a combination."

Rev. Butler considered the action of ministers advocating a political position in the pulpit as "a fine line to walk, particularly...in this city, because politics is on everybody's mind, and

your average Joe in Atlanta, Georgia is not thinking about what's going on in the House of Representatives. But it affects us in very tangible ways. There are people in our community who work in government. There are people who work in nonprofits who are advocating for certain things, there are people who come to our city to march in protests. One week we could have anti-abortion protesters worshipping with us, the next week we could have End the War in Iraq protesters, so being aware of this heightened sense of importance, I think that it is poor leadership to ignore the issue of politics from the pulpit. On the other hand, I am not a politician and I am not promoting a political agenda. I am promoting the gospel of Jesus Christ. When those two intersect, I speak to it. And that's the standard I walk on." 1a: "Absolutely. There are a couple of things that run through my approach to this. One is the separation of church and state. The church does not tell the state how to legislate, and the state does not tell the church how we can run our organization. However, it's the church's mandate to call the state to higher level of accountability because we are holding a higher standard than the state. So, the state cannot tell us to be quiet. That's a very Baptist way of looking at things. Another Baptist element that impacts this is sort of the individual sense of conscience, and we call it the priesthood of the believer. Each person is responsible for their relationship with God. If God is convicting me that I need to speak up on something, then I don't care what the state says, I'm going to do it because it's my religious conviction. So being Baptist is extremely interwoven in this process."

Rev. Butler saw "a distinction between encouraging their members to vote for a candidate or party and advocating or opposing certain laws. I would never advocate for a certain political party or candidate, and I feel very uncomfortable with that—I often get requests from candidates to come and visit when they're campaigning and my answer to that is, you're welcome to come to worship just like anybody else, cause that's what we're doing, we are worshipping God. I had,

in the last presidential election, in fact, we had several people on John McCain's campaign staff and several people on President Obama's campaign staff, and I felt that my job was to create a place where we were not being partisan, where we were worshipping God. I would never have stood up and said, you should vote for either of the two. I think that's an ethical issue but also as a pastor, while most people probably know how I voted, I would never say, I'm going to vote for Barack Obama because I'm aware that I have influence, and I believe that's inappropriate."

Rev. Butler said her church has "absolutely" lobbied the government on behalf of certain issues. The church is "very involved in peace movements here at Calvary and much like our member who's in the Sudan, we have several members of our community who were victims of the civil war in El Salvador. For example, when there was a big uproar for free elections in El Salvador just a few months ago, one of our associate pastors went to the Hill and advocated for that. Also, on issues of immigration as they affect our individual community members, we're going to advocate for that." Question 4: "Yes. We're very involved in the downtown cluster of congregations to advocate for issues in our city. We march every year in peace march, and members of our church do that. We write letters to members of Congress as part of Bread for the World and are part of Sojourner's Mobilization to End Poverty."

I asked Rev. Butler whether she considers her advocacy for something or her church members' involvement in a political activity (marches, etc.) speaking on behalf of her church or just individual members of her church coming together under her leadership. I explained to her that Dr. West did not consider his advocacy to necessarily be speaking out for his church. Rev. Butler replied that she "would agree with him to a certain degree, but especially in the black Baptist church, the pastor's word has a lot of pull. All of these things I told you about are not programmatically imposed by me. They come up organically, so the reason we march in the

peace march is because one of our members is on the board of the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America. So they organize it. One of our members is on the staff of the ONE Campaign, so they organize it. I choose to go to some of them, and I choose to not for others. But even if I'm not able to be at one of these places, I give them my 150% support on every level, because my job is to help you figure out what your passion and calling is, and help you level it out, whatever that is going to be. I don't see it is as, 'the pastor puts her special stamp on this, and in that case, we're all going to do it. That would never fly here.' It's kind of anti-Baptist." Question 5: "Absolutely. We're very involved with the Baptist Joint Committee, and Sojourner's Mobilization to End Poverty, the ONE Campaign, and Bread for the World."

Rev. Butler felt that the question of whether churches should seek out government funding for their social ministries is "a tricky line to walk." She was not opposed to it, but she "wouldn't put it on the very top of my list of potential funding. In theory, state strings and limits attached to the funding would be a worry. In practicality, when you take government money, you have to make all kinds of reports. Churches are not very administratively equipped to deal with that. But on the other hand, I personally feel a little bit more angst about the other side of the coin, which is, I would never want government to be funding religious programming. So if we were going to accept government funds, it would be for purely social justice programs such as feeding or after school programs. I don't feel comfortable with government supporting any religious programming." Question 10: "Given those two definitions [in the question], I would be opposed to faith based initiatives. I would say that with just a little bit of caution, though, because I want the church to have a voice in society, and it's being continuously diminished. The church as you know in history has been a voice for prophetic social change. We cannot be quiet. We have to be engaged in the public debate and in the marketplace and all those things. So I'm

not sure I can make the distinction as clearly as you do, but because it's really a good point that churches and other religious organizations often cannot separate what they do, because our faith really motivates what we do, and that's ok. So I want to be sure that whatever we come up with, we're not excluding the church from the conversation. But, by the same token, we don't have a government church, a state church, and there's a reason for that."

"In general," Rev. Butler was "opposed to state-sanctioned non-sectarian prayer." She elaborated, saying that she is "also opposed to the fact that I have to sign a government document—I am an active agent of the state when I perform your wedding, for example. I would like to see that separated. I'd love to see an arrangement similar to that in Europe, where you go to the courthouse and get married. Then, if you're a practicing person of faith, and having God's blessing on your union is important to you, you have a wedding in the church. You're not legally married unless you go to the courthouse. But it's ridiculous that I do weddings for people who have no faith reference or interest whatsoever, just because the government says a minister has to do it." Question 12: "I think if it was equally represented with other sacred texts as a teaching tool, it would be fine. The Bible informs our culture in many different ways."

Rev. Butler saw the question of whether the state has power to enforce a nondiscrimination statute on church-run institutions such as schools as "very tricky question for me because I'm a woman, and it's been very difficult in Baptist life for women to equal access—well, in religious life in general. That being said, I still think that the government needs to stay out. I think that change needs to happen, but it needs to happen because of what we believe and because of grassroots movement. It doesn't need to happen with the legislation of the state...If you're receiving government funding, however, you need to comply with government standards." Question 14a: "I think it would come down to funding for me. If the government is

funding it, then you've got to adhere to their standards. If you really feel like you can't provide abortions or you don't want to give out condoms or whatever, then you fund your clinic and you make those exclusions very clear. If you're getting money from the government, you have to follow the laws that everybody else has to follow."

Rev. Butler did not see that there exists a 'point' at which the church decides to move from speaking out only to society to encompassing the political realm. "I think churches have the right and the responsibility to speak in the public forum." She explained that she would "sort of frame the question in a different way, because to me, it's not a theoretical question. It's more experiential and organic. For example, I understand in my head that transgender people have a really hard time in our society as a whole, and I think in theory they should have a fair shot at everything that everybody else does. But I confess that I didn't really give much thought to the transgender community until Calvary had a member who is transgender. I got to know her, and her struggle and her pain, and because of the issues that she and her family face, our community has now become compelled to understand this issue in a different way, and it has become not just a matter of social conscience or political policy but a matter of personal religious conviction. Now, we will be there speaking on behalf of the transgender community because God has called us to do that at this time and place. It may be true that there are children starving in the Sudan right now, and of course we hate that and want to stop it, but maybe that's not our calling right at this moment as an individual or as a community of faith. So to me it's a lot less theoretical and a lot more personal related faith. It's less of an issue-based idea and it's more of like an identity and calling question. You'll see this particularly when you go over to Capitol Hill Baptist because they will probably say the same exact thing, but they would be talking about abortion or gay marriage. But they would probably say, 'There are members of our community who really

believe that gay marriage is wrong,’ and we are speaking out of our personal religious conviction. Well, we would say the same thing.”

Rev. Butler said she “would love to make” the “easy distinction” of categorizing issues into social and moral, which she felt that “a lot of our denominational bodies do, because, who’s going to argue with advocating against poverty, you know?” She saw categorization as inadequate, however—it was in fact “a cop-out, because God is always on the side of the oppressed.” Whether the oppressed is somebody who’s committing suicide because they don’t have a safe place to be who they are or whether it’s a person is starving to death—God is always on the side of the people who are voiceless and oppressed.” That’s the bottom theological line for me, and I think the Spirit of God is always pushing us beyond our comfort zone on these issues of inclusion and justice. God is always more loving, more inclusive, more justice-oriented than we could ever hope to be. So the church could just be one little expression of God’s prophetic voice in that direction, then I think we’re going in the right direction. To me it’s about what God is doing in this world and in our lives, and that God’s Spirit is here and in the process of transformation, and we can be agents of that transformation or not. What happens in the political realm is a means to an end, maybe, but it’s so much less significant to me than the larger idea of what God is doing in the world.” Rev. Butler appears to say that because God is always on the side of the oppressed—and the oppressed can be so due to individual or structural sin—addressing the issues of the oppressed clearly involve addressing both moral and social concerns, which prevents basing the decision to address issues on whether they pertain to individual or social life.

Rev. Butler explained that she “would have a very wide definition of oppressed. I would want to talk about it in terms of theological realities, which are, God envisions wholeness, peace

and grace for this world and for all of us, but because of sin, failure, we have been unable to come to that point. So all of us have some kind of oppression. We are always searching for the freedom of God's Spirit and healing. So I think oppression takes many forms. Some of them are institutionally expressed, and some of them are very personal—I'm so depressed I'm thinking of committing suicide.

Rev. Butler concurred with my characterization of “negative biblical commands” and “positive biblical injunctions” in examining the nature of political advocacy amongst Southern, Northern, and black Baptists. On the last question of why she felt white Baptist churches differed in their social and political involvement from black Baptist churches, she offered the following: “There are many factors. Social change, geographical differences, people in the North are more likely to go to college, where are there pockets of immigrants, there are so many factors that may go towards explaining the differences.”

Capitol Hill Baptist Church (SBC)

At the onset of our interview, Rev. Johnson noted that what it means to be Baptist is to believe in “regenerate church membership” and “the authority of the local church” (Johnson). The mission of a church is therefore to primarily be a steward of the gospel message. The church's central mission, then is to maintain biblical clarity and to publicly teach the message of the gospel”—his explanation of the message was the personal conversion message that Southern Baptists have traditionally professed. “Everything else,” then, is “secondary and to a large degree, expendable.” Rev. Johnson stated that regarding his church “actually works very hard not to do anything as a church with social welfare ministries.” However, the church “teaches its members that part of what it means to be a Christian, as a part of their individual discipleship” is for them “to be actively caring for the poor and people they come into contact with in their own

communities.” Rev. Johnson explained that this approach actually “holds their members to a higher standard. We [they] could have a church soup kitchen and have 10% of our members be involved in it, and have others give some money and think, ‘Yeah, I’ve exhausted my duties as a Christian to care for the poor’.” The church therefore has “zero official social ministries—kind of—though if a bunch of our members start doing something, de facto, you would probably think we have social ministry programs.” He then gave examples such as prison ministries, working with crisis pregnancy centers, and mentoring teen and single moms. Nevertheless, it is the members who themselves initiate these efforts and not the pastors or elders. An important point Rev. Johnson made was that the church encourages members who engage in social ministry to get as many other members involved, because the goal of social ministry is to “get into relationships with people so they’d be able to share the gospel with them.” A truly Christian social ministry, then, is one that helps others in meeting worldly needs, but always does so with the aim of bringing them to Christ. Many members of the church are also involved with the Central Union Mission, a traditional ministry in the area that helps folks with job hunting, addiction, and has a homeless shelter.

Rev. Johnson then mentioned that the principle that separation revolves around for Baptists is “the spirituality of the church.” When Jesus said that “my kingdom is not of this world...my kingdom is from another place [paraphrased].” He mentioned Paul’s explanation in Romans 13 on the difference between the roles of the church and the state. “We do not,” Rev. Johnson said, “want to get the church involved with lesser things.” Rev. Johnson then talked about the situation in Acts where deacons first appeared in the church. After a dispute between Jewish and Hellenistic widows over how much financial assistance each group was receiving (or not receiving), the apostles concluded that this was a “secondary distraction” to the church’s

main mission of saving souls (Acts 6:1-7). As a result, the apostles called for a group of individuals to appoint to deal with this matter so that they could continue spreading the gospel, and those individuals were the first deacons. As such, right from the start, the early church placed the fulfilling of social needs such as caring for the poor in a secondary position to the spreading of the gospel.

Unlike some other conservative Southern Baptists today, Rev. Johnson did not agree with the idea of faith-based initiatives for the historic Baptist understanding of separation: allowing the government to get involved with church activities could compromise the church's message—remember that for his church, social ministries inevitably and necessarily have a spiritual component and aim to them. Social ministry is not *simply* activity that 'reflects God's love,' as more liberal churches might put it, but a means to *bring* God's love to those who are being helped by it. Rev. Johnson also was not enthusiastic about public prayer—"I would not go out of my way to stop or start it. It's kind of a reflection of where a culture is, and there are probably good and bad things about it. It reminds people there is a higher reality and appeals to our pluralistic society." Because the prayer is essentially "content-less," he wouldn't really mind if it was taken away, but he would be concerned about the motives of those who are trying aggressively to remove the prayer—they could be "trying to exterminate any influence of Christianity from the public square." Rev. Johnson also considered the situation of a government passing a law forbidding medical personnel from refusing to perform any medical procedures on claims of conscience to be a violation of individual conscience. He maintained this view even if the clinic the medical personnel worked in was funded by the government—"the government is perfectly free to spend its money elsewhere"—the burden of resolving the situation rests not with the medical personnel but with the government.

Rev. Johnson believed that it was perfectly alright for churches to “speak prophetically” to the culture about issues, but it had to be done very judiciously. Churches that make too many pronouncements on social issues, he said, probably cannot concentrate well on expounding the gospel as can churches that normally do not. However, there are “extreme circumstances” where the church definitely have a right to speak out—he gave the example of a hypothetical situation in which the government passed a law calling for the prosecution of homosexuals for being homosexuals, or a law directing the slaughter of a group of people. Rev. Johnson’s church does discuss issues such as homosexual marriage and abortion, but not intentionally—they may be addressed as a result of expounding a passage of Scripture (expositional preaching), but not because the minister wishes to preach a sermon specifically on that topic. When the issue of legalizing euthanasia arose in Oregon, the church merely “obliquely referred to it” in a congregational prayer. Again, because the primary mission of the church is the gospel, Rev. Johnson noted that not only does his church not endorse any parties or candidates, “we would probably even be slow to encourage our members to vote, only because many of our members are not U.S. citizens and some may even not like America. The one thing that unites us is the gospel.” The SBC, he said, does have a sort of lobbying arm in D.C., the Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC), which gives the perspective on social issues held by a majority of SBC churches, but not all. Rev. Johnson himself agrees and disagrees with the ERLC, depending upon the issue.

In response to Question 16, Rev. Johnson said he would not necessarily categorize issues into social or moral categories, which is what I had expected him to say. Instead, he considered issues on the basis of whether Scripture takes a clear position on an issue. “Affordable housing policies? Unclear. Stealing? Clear. Tax reform? Unclear. Abortion? [in Psalms] Clear. Christians

should have a concern for their unbelieving neighbors? Clear. What they should do specifically—what sort of ministries or avenues that should take? Not very clear.” The church thus steers clear of discussing issues that Scripture does not provide a clear teaching on.

On the question of religious liberty and separation (No. 18), Rev. Johnson made an interesting observation. The differences between the SBC’s ERLC and the Baptist Joint Committee (BJC) are not “so much over the philosophy of separation of church and state as it over theological liberalism.” Rev. Johnson then went to discuss how many rank-and-file Southern Baptists were increasingly upset over the growing theological liberalism of the SBC—its denominational entities and seminaries. Even the BJC had begun to profess theology that was unbiblical. In the 1980s, “you basically had a populist rebellion,” and who refused to recant their unbiblical views of Scripture, salvation and other concepts were fired by churches and other Baptist associations under the SBC. However, he was wary of the many Southern Baptists today who in his view have a “redeem the culture, the society,” over-realized eschatology—that Christian action in the world can usher in the kingdom of God on Earth. This is not biblically correct, he said. There are Christians on the Right who think political action can cause society to be more Christian and moral. Rev. Johnson was sympathetic to them on one degree, but to the degree that people think society can truly be reformed through political means rather than “changing people’s hearts,” he did not. On the other end of the spectrum, there are the “redeeming culture through social action—caring for the poor, social justice.” These activities are good, he said, but the larger idea of social redemption is another version of an over-realized eschatology.

Rev. Johnson did not entirely agree with my final question’s analysis of the “negative biblical commands” and “positive biblical injunctions” categories, although he could see how I

could have arrived at that conclusion. The contrast would probably work for churches that are more legalistic and focus on outward behavior. “When you’re focusing on the gospel, however, you are not spending a lot of time critiquing people’s behavior. You are focusing on laying your self down to Christ, and part of what that means is becoming obedient to everything Christ commanded.” Nevertheless, at the end of his response, he did move nearer to my characterization by saying that there could be differences between churches who are concerned more with biblical teachings aimed more at society and biblical teachings aimed more at the individual. Churches who engaged in more of either one of these are not so much differentiated by race, he said, but by whether they are true to the centrality of the gospel or have veered off into theological liberalism. White Baptist churches that have lost the centrality of the gospel tend to be more focused on “external things in society. You’ve got to have some reason for getting together, and if the gospel is not affecting your life individually, then you have to do something! And social action seems like a nice thing to do.” “In general,” Rev. Johnson contended, “black churches to a high proportion have moved into a theological liberalism that has lost the centrality of the gospel. Rev. Johnson did not take to the argument that black churches had failed to have the right focus from the start since they were the only ones that could concentrate on the social as well as spiritual needs of their communities. He referred me to Thabiti Anyabwile’s *The Decline of Black Theology* (Anyabwile was formerly a pastor at his church), which I actually used in this capstone, to see how black churches gradually lost their focus over time. Rev. Johnson agreed that blacks suffered greatly both spiritually and materially through “structural discrimination,” but this was not necessarily the reason for the increasing loss of the centrality of the gospel in black theology.

Referring back to the deacons story in Acts chapter 6, Rev. Johnson said that “there is a responsibility for the church to care for the poor within its own membership as a way of showing the difference between how those in God’s kingdom and those outside it.” This “perfectly legitimate responsibility” of the church may have become the primary emphasis in black Baptist churches, and then it may have expanded to “caring for the wider community.” He was disinclined to believe that there were no other institutions that could have tended to the needs of the black community at large. Concluding his remarks, Rev. Johnson said that his church “has to be more careful than the average Southern Baptist church. A Southern Baptist church in a nice suburb outside Atlanta or in Dallas, Texas—everybody’s a Republican—they’re all sort of conservative. They can just sort of assume stuff that we can’t and don’t want to here. We’ve have members of who worked for Tom Delay and members who worked for Hillary Clinton. I’m historically a Democrat...So we feel especially the need to be cautious about advocating particular political ideas. Other Southern Baptist churches may interact more with the ERLC; we don’t for that reason.”

In response to a final question asking him about his views on those who assert that the duty to care for the poor is explicitly in Scripture, Rev. Johnson replied: “The key to understanding this question as a church is: What poor is being talked about in the passage? Is it talking about the physically poor, the physically poor who are part of the church, the physically poor who are Christians in other cities, or poor unbelievers?” Rev. Johnson said that after a group of elders studied the Scripture on this topic, “We didn’t find any place where the church as a church is commanded to care for the poor outside the church. Individual Christians are commanded to care about the unbelieving poor that exist in the spheres that God puts you in.”

X. Concluding Comparisons

My conclusions from existing literature generally comported with the findings from my interviews Dr. West, Rev. Butler, and Rev. Johnson. Dr. West's responses clearly showed that he shares the historic Baptist understanding of church and state—that the church is to be protected from the state, but the church is not precluded at all from speaking out and getting involved in the political realm. He also shares the historic black Baptist's holistic view of Christian spirituality in everyday life; he considered all social ministries in his church as spiritually and socially oriented. Dr. West's brief words on religious liberty and separation as well as his unfamiliarity with the BJC reflects that black Baptist churches have tended to stay away from the separation question. While I had expected that Dr. West would not have much of an issue with faith-based initiatives, he took a strong stance against government funding for church ministries. This stance, in the context of his other responses, revealed that Dr. West's understanding of separation stems less from a concern of church-state entanglement *per se*, and much more from a practical theological reason: placing restrictions on him or his ministries would compromise his Christian witness and force him to be someone he is not.

Rev. Butler's responses on religious liberty and separation clearly reflected the Northern Baptist historical emphasis on these two distinctive Baptist principles. Her view of the kingdom of God as becoming a reality on Earth also reflected a Northern Baptist understanding of the Social Gospel and undoubtedly informs her views on the degree to which she believes the church is to engage society—that God calls the church to proclaim justice and equality in all areas of life. On the question of discriminatory hiring policies in church-run schools or development corporations (Question 13), because of the church's strong stance against discrimination, I had expected her to respond that the state had an unqualified right to make the church conform. That

she responded differently, saying that the church had a right to be discriminatory if it wanted—as long as it was not taking any government funds—showed that her strict view of separation precluded her from permitting the state from an action whose outcome (nondiscrimination) she would have agreed with. Rev. Butler’s stance opposing state-sanctioned manifestations of civil religion reflects the change in the definitions of religious liberty and separation that Baptists and other Protestants experienced beginning in the post-Reconstruction era up through the 1940s.

Rev. Johnson’s responses revealed that traditional Southern Baptist beliefs such as the primacy of individual salvation in the church’s mission and newer ones such as “biblical clarity” continue to affect Southern Baptists’ views of church interaction with the state. The concept of biblical clarity appears to imply a strict evangelical method of reading the Bible and the belief that the church is to take a stance only on issues of which Scripture has a clear view. This would explain Rev. Johnson’s church’s minimal interaction with social ministries that do not have reaching the lost for Christ as their end aim. It would also explain why the church has a limited view of “prophetic voice” and minimally engages the political realm. Given his church’s location in D.C., I had expected Rev. Johnson to espouse a Baptist Religious Right view of separation, but this was not the case. Rev. Johnson was ambivalent about civil religion and saw the Religious Right and the Religious Left as two sides of the same coin—they erroneously think they can bring about the kingdom of God on Earth through human social or political action. Rev. Johnson’s repeated emphasis on the spirituality of the church drove home the point that this church would not be distracted from preaching the Great Commission.

Dr. West’s stress on the significance of culture and socioeconomic background in explaining the differences between how Christian groups understand separation corresponded with my conclusion from the existing literature. White racism had a lot to do with Southern and

even Northern cultures, and within this white-sanctioned culture of oppression was where the black community developed their culture of religiously-based spiritual, social and political resistance. Rev. Butler mentioned in addition to those factors the likely possibility that geographic location and immigration had effects as well. This comported with my conclusions—especially given the fact that I looked at the differences between white and black Baptists but then differentiated between white Baptists on the basis of region. Rev. Johnson explains that his church's reticence to publicly address a broad range of manner of social issues is, interestingly enough, due to the fact that they would not want to alienate members who may have very different cultural backgrounds and political views but come together because of the uniqueness of the gospel. Nevertheless, Rev. Johnson conceded in his closing remarks that Southern Baptist churches in the South may be more open to speaking about social issues because their members share a similar conservative Southern culture.

Rev. Johnson's church's focus on spiritual conversion may explain why its members to have the most diversity in social and political viewpoints, even as the church is regarded as conservative because it speaks out prophetically on little. Rev. Butler's church membership is also multicultural, yet their members tend to share similar social and political opinions, perhaps nurtured by the Social Gospel tradition of Northern Baptists. Dr. West's church is primarily composed of one ethnic and cultural background, which can explain why his church sees social justice as a spiritual mandate. Our discussions revealed that several factors—racial, theological, cultural, economic, and political—clearly underlie the differences in how each of the three churches understands the role of the church in society and the nature and degree to which it should engage the political realm. The ministers' respective answers to this question in turn affected how they understood religious liberty and separation—particularly separation. Since

each of these ministers spoke at least partially out of their church's ethnic or regional Baptist tradition, I conclude that the findings from my field research confirmed that a variety of factors underlie the ways in which Baptist churches have viewed relations between church and state. The findings corroborated my conclusions from existing literature: The factors the ministers discussed were also the ones I found to have differentiated white Southern and Northern Baptist perspectives on church-state relations as well as the unique perspective of black Baptists from those of their white regional brethren. The factor that drove the differences in views between black Baptists and both groups of white Baptists was white racism. Nevertheless, as has been shown, all of the factors were intertwined and contributed simultaneously to one another.

Appendix A - INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR BAPTIST CLERGY – NBC, USA

Part I. On your church's ministries

1. Can you talk about the mission of your church?
2. Does your church provide any social ministries? If so, what types of services?
3. Are these ministries for the benefit of your church members, any Christian, or for the community at-large (irrespective of their religious beliefs)?
4. What led your church to decide to provide these social ministries? When did they begin?

Part II. On your/your church's beliefs concerning HOW the church can interact with the political realm (methods, ways)

1. What is your opinion on the action of ministers advocating for or opposing certain political programs or laws from the pulpit?
 - a. Is your support partially rooted in your Baptist theology, history; how would you explain the reasons for your view?
 - b. Do your views on church-state relations, as far as you know, differ from the historic position of Baptists or other Baptist groups/conventions today? If so, what explains the difference?
2. How do you feel about ministers encouraging their church members to vote? What about ministers encouraging their members to vote for a candidate, party and/or endorsing a particular candidate for office?
3. Has your church ever directly lobbied a level of government on behalf of an issue, program or service? If so, what level(s) and issue(s)?
4. Is your church involved in encouraging or mobilizing its members to participate in making their voices heard to levels of government? If so, what sorts of activities does your church engage in? (i.e. protests, marches, calling and writing to elected officials, going to board/agency meetings, etc.)
5. Does your church participate in any organizations that advocate for issues at the political level? (i.e. NAACP, Urban League, other issues orgs.) If so, how does it support their efforts?
6. Your church is a member of the National Capital Baptist Convention of the NBC as well as the DC Baptist Convention. Do either of these conventions provide social services or programs, and if so, does your church participate in any of them?

Part III. On your/your church's beliefs concerning WHAT types of issues churches can advocate politically on

7. Has your church sought out government funding for its social ministries or programs? If so, can you give some examples?
8. What is your view on government funding for social ministries or programs run by religious bodies such as churches or religious organizations?
 - a. What if a government stipulation forbade the ministry from talking about Christ to those it served, or providing Christian materials for individuals to pick up?
 - b. Would you see that as restricting the church's ability in carrying out its mission?
9. Some Baptist churches have no theological problem with advocating for increased government spending on social programs, but they are wary of government partnerships with church service organizations as a potential breach of the Baptist doctrine of separation of church and state? What is your view on this?
10. As you may know, faith-based initiatives are government initiatives that provide financial support to entities, such as churches or temples, that cannot or do not separate their social services from religious activity. These initiatives differ from the more traditional method of government giving funds to organizations which are religiously affiliated but include no religious programming.
 - a. What is your view on "faith-based initiatives"? Would you see it as a potential breach of how you would understand the separation of church and state?
 - b. [Is this a measure churches should support or be wary of?]
11. Do you believe that non-sectarian prayer is acceptable in public institutions such as schools, the military, and/or at certain government events?
12. Do you believe that public schools should be able to use the Bible in teaching or discussing morality with students?
13. Let's say that your church operates a development corporation or a Christian school.
 - a. Let's say the government mandates that the school include in its curriculum certain subject matter that might go against your church's Baptist teachings. Would you be alright with such a mandate?
 - b. Let's say the government, at some level, requires that the corporation or school's hiring process abide by a nondiscrimination policy that forbids the school to discriminate applicants on all manner of bases including religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, etc. How would you view this requirement?
14. Let's say that your church sponsors and helps fund a medical clinic open to all people (similar to a Catholic diocese which sponsors and funds a hospital). The state government passes a law forbidding medical personnel from refusing to perform a medical procedure on claims of conscience. This law would require all doctors in the clinic your church sponsors to perform procedures that some of them morally object to and require them to dispense all prescribed medicine, some of which certain doctors also find morally objectionable.

- a. Would you consider this law as government infringement upon religious liberty—of the doctors, of your church, or of both? Would you see it as a measure supporting the rights and practical needs of patients? Or, would you take another view?
 - b. Regardless of what opinion you hold, would you believe that your church has a theological responsibility to speak out on this issue?
15. Is there a point, in your view, where an issue that a church speaks out publicly on becomes an issue that the church should also speak out on in the political realm? For instance, on the issue of marriage, a church could publicly work to support or oppose gay marriage in its convention or denomination, or on the issue of social services, a church could publicly work to press its convention or denomination to expand its anti-poverty efforts.
 - a. At what point would matters like these become a political concern for the church?
 - b. Would it depend upon the issue?
16. In my research, I have found that some churches tend to categorize issues into so-called social and moral categories, with the social issues as ones churches have a theological duty to advocate politically on and the moral issues as ones churches should not get politically involved with. Other churches take the opposite view, while still others see Christian social-political advocacy as a continuum that sees all issues as both moral and social. Examples of so-called social issues would include civil rights, affordable housing, healthcare, education and welfare programs, and examples of so-called moral issues would include “family planning,” sex education, abortion, marriage, and matters of “civil religious freedom” like public morality and prayer.
 - a. Would you place issues such as these into categories, some of which churches should not address politically and some of which churches should, or would you see all of these issues as both moral and social issues churches can and should address politically?
 - b. If you were looking to engage in political advocacy, how would you go about determining what issues would be most pressing, less important, etc?
17. There has been much debate in both religious and political circles over whether and how religion, particularly Christianity, can properly “legislate morality” or apply their faith in public affairs. For instance, on the issue of the legality of abortion, some churches either support or oppose its legality on religious grounds, others support it on non-religious grounds (say constitutional), others have a position but will not advocate for it in the political realm, and still others believe that their members can individually advocate on these issues but that they as a church body should not.
 - a. What is your view on whether churches should address abortion at the political level? If so, how?
18. The National Baptist Convention, which your church is a member of, is a member convention of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty (BJC). Based on Baptist theology and history, the BJC advocates for a strict separation of church and state. It opposes ministers talking about or allowing candidates in their pulpits, supporting a

political party, faith-based initiatives, school vouchers, government-sponsored prayer and religious displays. Black Baptist churches, however, seem to traditionally have had a more nuanced understanding of the principle of separation of church and state. How would you square your church's understanding of this principle with that of the BJC?

19. From my research, it appears that, irrespective of location, black Baptist churches tend to engage in more political advocacy than white Baptist churches in the South or even in the North do.
 - a. Would you agree with this characterization, and if so, do you see any reasons, whether theological, historical, economic, practical, etc., for this difference?
20. From my research, white Baptist churches in the South that engage in political advocacy tend to focus on issues related to "negative biblical commands" such as the commands forbidding murder, adultery, and having no false deities. On the other hand, Black Baptist churches tend to focus on issues related to "positive biblical injunctions" such as injunctions on providing for the needy and deprived and dealing justly with the oppressed. White Baptist churches in the North tend to focus their advocacy on both ensuring that church and state stay separate and on certain positive biblical injunctions as well, though not as much as black Baptist churches do. The so-called "negative biblical commands" are aimed more at individual behavior, while the "positive biblical injunctions" appear to target not only the individual but society at-large and the political order as well.
 - a. Would you agree with this assessment, and if so, do you see any reasons for the differences among these Baptist groups?

Appendix B - INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR BAPTIST CLERGY – ABC

Part I. On your church's ministries

1. Can you talk about the mission of your church?
2. Does your church provide any social ministries? If so, what types of services?
3. Are these ministries for the benefit of your church members, any Christian, or for the community at-large (irrespective of their religious beliefs)?
4. What led your church to decide to provide these social ministries? When did they begin?

Part II. On your/your church's beliefs concerning HOW the church can interact with the political realm (methods, ways)

1. What is your opinion on the action of ministers advocating for or opposing certain political programs or laws from the pulpit?
 - a. Is your support partially rooted in your Baptist theology, history; how would you explain the reasons for your view?
 - b. Do your views on church-state relations, as far as you know, differ from the historic position of Baptists or other Baptist groups/conventions today? If so, what explains the difference?
2. How do you feel about ministers encouraging their church members to vote? What about ministers encouraging their members to vote for a candidate, party and/or endorsing a particular candidate for office?
3. Has your church ever directly lobbied a level of government on behalf of an issue, program or service? If so, what level(s) and issue(s)?
4. Is your church involved in encouraging or mobilizing its members to participate in making their voices heard to levels of government? If so, what sorts of activities does your church engage in? (i.e. protests, marches, calling and writing to elected officials, going to board/agency meetings, etc.)
5. Does your church participate in any organizations that advocate for issues at the political level? (i.e. NAACP, Urban League, Baptist Joint Committee, other issues orgs.) If so, how does it support their efforts?
6. Your church is a member of the DC Baptist Convention. To your knowledge, does this Convention provide social services or programs, and if so, does your church participate in any of them?

Part III. On your/your church's beliefs concerning WHAT types of issues churches can advocate politically on

7. Has your church sought out government funding for its social ministries or programs? If so, can you give some examples?

8. What is your view on government funding for social ministries or programs run by religious bodies such as churches or religious organizations?
 - a. What if a government stipulation forbade the ministry from talking about Christ to those it served, or providing Christian materials for individuals to pick up?
 - b. Would you see that as restricting the church's ability in carrying out its mission?
9. Some Baptist churches have no theological problem with advocating for increased government spending on social programs, but they are wary of government partnerships with church service organizations as a potential breach of the Baptist doctrine of separation of church and state? What is your view on this?
10. As you may know, faith-based initiatives are government initiatives that provide financial support to entities, such as churches or temples, that cannot or do not separate their social services from religious activity. These initiatives differ from the more traditional method of government giving funds to organizations which are religiously affiliated but include no religious programming.
 - a. What is your view on "faith-based initiatives"? Would you see it as a potential breach of how you would understand the separation of church and state?
 - b. [Is this a measure churches should support or be wary of?]
11. Do you believe that non-sectarian prayer is acceptable or appropriate in public institutions such as schools, the military, and/or at certain government events?
12. Do you believe that public schools should be able to use the Bible in teaching or discussing morality with students?
13. Let's say that your church operates a development corporation or a Christian school.
 - a. Let's say the government mandates that the school include in its curriculum certain subject matter that might go against your church's Baptist teachings. Would you be alright with such a mandate?
 - b. Let's say the government, at some level, requires that the corporation or school's hiring process abide by a nondiscrimination policy that forbids the school to discriminate applicants on all manner of bases including religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, etc. How would you view this requirement?
 - c. If you did have an issue with some of the bases it covered, would your position remain the same?
14. Let's say that your church sponsors and helps fund a medical clinic open to all people (similar to a Catholic diocese which sponsors and funds a hospital). The state government passes a law forbidding medical personnel from refusing to perform a medical procedure on claims of conscience. This law would require all doctors in the clinic your church sponsors to perform procedures that some of them morally object to and require them to

dispense all prescribed medicine, some of which certain doctors also find morally objectionable.

- a. Would you consider this law as government infringement upon religious liberty—of the doctors, of your church, or of both? Would you see it as a measure supporting the rights and practical needs of patients? Or, would you take another view?
 - b. Regardless of what opinion you hold, would you believe that your church has a theological responsibility to speak out on this issue?

15. Is there a point, in your view, where an issue that a church speaks out publicly on becomes an issue that the church should also speak out on in the political realm? For instance, on the issue of marriage, a church could publicly work to support or oppose gay marriage in its convention or denomination, or on the issue of social services, a church could publicly work to press its convention or denomination to expand its anti-poverty efforts.
 - a. At what point would matters like these become a political concern for the church?
 - b. Would it depend upon the issue?

16. In my research, I have found that some churches tend to categorize issues into so-called social and moral categories, with the social issues as ones churches have a theological duty to advocate politically on and the moral issues as ones churches should not get politically involved with. Other churches take the opposite view, while still others see Christian social-political advocacy as a continuum that sees all issues as both moral and social. Examples of so-called social issues would include civil rights, affordable housing, healthcare, education and welfare programs, and examples of so-called moral issues would include “family planning,” sex education, abortion, marriage, and matters of “civil religious freedom” like public morality and prayer.
 - a. Would you place issues such as these into categories, some of which churches should not address politically and some of which churches should, or would you see all of these issues as both moral and social issues churches can and should address politically?
 - b. If you were looking to engage in political advocacy, how would you go about determining what issues would be most pressing, less important, etc?

17. There has been much debate in both religious and political circles over whether and how religion, particularly Christianity, can properly “legislate morality” or apply their faith in public affairs. For instance, on the issue of the legality of abortion, some churches either support or oppose its legality on religious grounds, others support it on non-religious grounds (say constitutional), others have a position but will not advocate for it in the political realm, and still others believe that their members can individually advocate on these issues but that they as a church body should not.
 - a. What is your view on whether churches should address abortion at the political level? If so, how?

18. The American Baptist Churches, USA, which your church is a member of, is a member convention of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty (BJC). Based on Baptist

theology and history, the BJC advocates for a strict separation of church and state. It opposes ministers talking about or allowing candidates in their pulpits, supporting a political party, faith-based initiatives, school vouchers, government-sponsored prayer and religious displays. How does your understanding of separation of church and state compare with that of the BJC?

19. From my research, white Baptist churches in the South that engage in political advocacy tend to focus on issues related to “negative biblical commands” such as the commands forbidding murder, adultery, and having no false deities. On the other hand, Black Baptist churches tend to focus on issues related to “positive biblical injunctions” such as injunctions on providing for the needy and deprived and dealing justly with the oppressed. White Baptist churches in the North tend to focus their advocacy on both ensuring that church and state stay separate and on certain positive biblical injunctions as well, though not as much as black Baptist churches do. The so-called “negative biblical commands” are aimed more at individual behavior, while the “positive biblical injunctions” appear to target not only the individual but society at-large and the political order as well.
 - a. Would you agree with this assessment, and if so, do you see any reasons for the differences among these Baptist groups?
20. From your knowledge, how does the social involvement and/or political involvement of ABC churches compare with black Baptist churches? How about white Baptist churches in the South?
 - a. Do you see any reasons, whether historical, theological, cultural, economic, that might account for this similarity or difference?

Appendix C - INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR BAPTIST CLERGY – SBC

Part I. On your church's ministries

1. Can you talk about the mission of your church?
2. Does your church provide any social ministries? If so, what types of services?
3. Are these ministries for the benefit of your church members, any Christian, or for the community at-large (irrespective of their religious beliefs)?
4. What led your church to decide to provide these social ministries? When did they begin?

Part II. On your/your church's beliefs concerning HOW the church can interact with the political realm (methods, ways)

1. What is your opinion on the action of ministers advocating for or opposing certain political programs or laws from the pulpit?
 - a. Is your support partially rooted in your Baptist theology, history; how would you explain the reasons for your view?
2. How do you feel about ministers encouraging their church members to vote? What about ministers encouraging their members to vote for a candidate, party and/or endorsing a particular candidate for office?
3. Has your church ever directly lobbied a level of government on behalf of an issue, program or service? If so, what level(s) and issue(s)?
4. Is your church involved in encouraging or mobilizing its members to participate in making their voices heard to levels of government? If so, what sorts of activities does your church engage in? (i.e. protests, marches, calling and writing to elected officials, going to board/agency meetings, etc.)
5. Does your church participate in any organizations that advocate for issues at the political level? (i.e. Urban League, Baptist Joint Committee, other issues orgs.) If so, how does it support their efforts?
6. Your church is a member of the DC Baptist Convention. To your knowledge, does this Convention provide social services or programs, and if so, does your church participate in any of them?

Part III. On your/your church's beliefs concerning WHAT types of issues churches can advocate politically on

7. Has your church sought out government funding for its social ministries or programs? If so, can you give some examples?
8. What is your view on government funding for social ministries or programs run by religious bodies such as churches or religious organizations?

- a. What if a government stipulation forbade the ministry from talking about Christ to those it served, or providing Christian materials for individuals to pick up?
 - b. Would you see that as restricting the church's ability in carrying out its mission?
9. Some Baptist churches have no theological problem with advocating for increased government spending on social programs, but they are wary of government partnerships with church service organizations as a potential breach of the Baptist doctrine of separation of church and state? What is your view on this?
10. As you may know, faith-based initiatives are government initiatives that provide financial support to entities, such as churches or temples, that cannot or do not separate their social services from religious activity. These initiatives differ from the more traditional method of government giving funds to organizations which are religiously affiliated but include no religious programming.
 - a. What is your view on "faith-based initiatives"? Would you see it as a potential breach of how you would understand the separation of church and state?
 - b. [Is this a measure churches should support or be wary of?]
11. Do you believe that non-sectarian prayer is acceptable or appropriate in public institutions such as schools, the military, and/or at certain government events?
12. Do you believe that public schools should be able to use the Bible in teaching or discussing morality with students?
13. Let's say that your church operates a development corporation or a Christian school.
 - a. Let's say the government mandates that the school include in its curriculum certain subject matter that might go against your church's Baptist teachings. Would you be alright with such a mandate?
 - b. Let's say the government, at some level, requires that the corporation or school's hiring process abide by a nondiscrimination policy that forbids the school to discriminate applicants on all manner of bases including religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, etc. How would you view this requirement?
 - c. If you did have an issue with some of the bases it covered, would your position remain the same?
14. Let's say that your church sponsors and helps fund a medical clinic open to all people (similar to a Catholic diocese which sponsors and funds a hospital). The state government passes a law forbidding medical personnel from refusing to perform a medical procedure on claims of conscience. This law would require all doctors in the clinic your church sponsors to perform procedures that some of them morally object to and require them to dispense all prescribed medicine, some of which certain doctors also find morally objectionable.
 - a. Would you consider this law as government infringement upon religious liberty—of the doctors, of your church, or of both? Would you see it as a measure

- supporting the rights and practical needs of patients? Or, would you take another view?
- b. Regardless of what opinion you hold, would you believe that your church has a theological responsibility to speak out on this issue?
15. Is there a point, in your view, where an issue that a church speaks out publicly on becomes an issue that the church should also speak out on in the political realm? For instance, on the issue of marriage, a church could publicly work to support or oppose gay marriage in its convention or denomination, or on the issue of social services, a church could publicly work to press its convention or denomination to expand its anti-poverty efforts.
- a. At what point would matters like these become a political concern for the church?
 - b. Would it depend upon the issue?
16. In my research, I have found that some churches tend to categorize issues into so-called social and moral categories, with the social issues as ones churches have a theological duty to advocate politically on and the moral issues as ones churches should not get politically involved with. Other churches take the opposite view, while still others see Christian social-political advocacy as a continuum that sees all issues as both moral and social. Examples of so-called social issues would include civil rights, affordable housing, healthcare, education and welfare programs, and examples of so-called moral issues would include “family planning,” sex education, abortion, marriage, and matters of “civil religious freedom” like public morality and prayer.
- a. Would you place issues such as these into categories, some of which churches should not address politically and some of which churches should, or would you see all of these issues as both moral and social issues churches can and should address politically?
 - b. If you were looking to engage in political advocacy, how would you go about determining what issues would be most pressing, less important, etc?
17. There has been much debate in both religious and political circles over whether and how religion, particularly Christianity, can properly “legislate morality” or apply their faith in public affairs. For instance, on the issue of the legality of abortion, some churches either support or oppose its legality on religious grounds, others support it on non-religious grounds (say constitutional), others have a position but will not advocate for it in the political realm, and still others believe that their members can individually advocate on these issues but that they as a church body should not.
- a. What is your view on whether churches should address abortion at the political level? If so, how?
 - b. What would your view be of public funding for so-called family planning, including abortion?
18. The Southern Baptist Convention, which your church is a member of, is not a member of the Baptist Joint Committee for Religious Liberty (BJC). Based on Baptist theology and history, the BJC advocates for a strict separation of church and state. It opposes ministers

talking about or allowing candidates in their pulpits, supporting a political party, faith-based initiatives, school vouchers, government-sponsored prayer and religious displays.

- a. How does your understanding of separation of church and state compare with that of the BJC?
 - b. Do you think the BJC's view of church and state is the same view as what Baptists, at least white Baptists, historically held?
19. From my research, white Baptist churches in the South that engage in political advocacy tend to focus on issues related to "negative biblical commands" such as the commands forbidding murder, adultery, and having no false deities. On the other hand, Black Baptist churches tend to focus on issues related to "positive biblical injunctions" such as injunctions on providing for the needy and deprived and dealing justly with the oppressed. White Baptist churches in the North tend to focus their advocacy on both ensuring that church and state stay separate and on certain positive biblical injunctions as well, though not as much as black Baptist churches do. The so-called "negative biblical commands" are aimed more at individual behavior, while the "positive biblical injunctions" appear to target not only the individual but society at-large and the political order as well.
- a. Would you agree with this assessment, and if so, do you see any reasons for the differences among these Baptist groups?
 - b. Do your views on church-state relations, as far as you know, differ from the historic position of Baptists or other Baptist groups/conventions today? If so, what explains the difference? (As in, how would your views, for instance, differ from those of the American Baptist Churches or Cooperative Baptist Alliance?)

Works Cited

- Anyabwile, Thabiti M. *The Decline of African American Theology: From Biblical Faith to Cultural Captivity*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2007.
- Baker, Howard A. *The Southern Baptist Convention and Its People, 1607–1972*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1974.
- Barnes, William Wright. *The Southern Baptist Convention, 1845-1953*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1954.
- Brackney, William H. “A Turn towards a Doctrinal Christianity: Baptist Theology, a Work in Progress.” *Turning Points in Baptist History*. Ed. Michael E. Williams, Sr. and Walter B. Shurden. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008. 74-89.
- Butler, Amy. Personal Interview. 22 April 2009.
- Early, Joe, Jr. “W. A. Criswell: the Wall of Separation of Church and State and Politics.” *Baptist History and Heritage* June 22, 2008. 14 April 2009.
<<http://www.thefreelibrary.com/W.+A.+Criswell%3a+the+wall+of+separation+of+church+and+state+and...-a0190196741>>.
- Eighmy, John Lee. *Churches in Cultural Captivity*. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1972.
- Ely, Richard T. *Social Aspects of Christianity*. New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., 1889.
- Fitts, Leroy. *A History of Black Baptists*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1985.
- Flynt, J. Wayne. *Alabama Baptists: Southern Baptists in the Heart of Dixie*. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1998.
- Flynt, J. Wayne. “One in the Spirit, Many in the Flesh: Southern Evangelicals.” *Varieties of Southern Evangelicalism*. Ed. David Edwin Harrell, Jr. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1981.
- Gee, Henry, and William John Hardy, eds. *Documents Illustrative of English Church History*. New York: Macmillan, 1896, 418-20.
- Goadby, J. Jackson. *Bye-Paths in Baptist History*. London: Paternoster Row, 1871.
- Hamburger, Philip. *Separation of Church and State*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002.
- Harper, Keith. *The Quality of Mercy: Southern Baptists and Social Christianity, 1890–1920*. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1996.

- Harvey, Paul. *Redeeming the South: Religious Cultures and Racial Identities among Southern Baptists, 1865–1925*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997.
- Hinson, E. Glenn. “Baptists and the Social Gospel and the Turn toward Social Justice: 1898 – 1917.” *Turning Points in Baptist History*. Ed. Michael E. Williams, Sr. and Walter B. Shurden. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008. 235-248.
- Johnson, Andy. Personal Interview. 24 April 2009.
- Jones, Lawrence Neale. *African Americans and the Christian Churches, 1619-1860*. Cleveland: The Pilgrim Press, 2007.
- Leonard, Bill J. *Baptists in America*. The Columbia Contemporary American Religion Series. New York: Columbia University Press, 2005.
- Leonard, Bill J. “Baptist Revivals and the Turn toward Baptist Evangelism: 1755/1770.” *Turning Points in Baptist History*. Ed. Michael E. Williams, Sr. and Walter B. Shurden. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008. 91-101.
- Leonard, Bill J. *God’s Last and Only Hope*. Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1990.
- “London Baptist Confession of 1644.” The Reformed Reader. 10 April 2009. <<http://www.reformedreader.org/ccf/h.htm>>.
- Lumpkin, William L., ed. *Baptist Confessions of Faith*. Philadelphia: Judson Press, 1969.
- Masters, Victor Irvine. *The Call of the South: A Presentation of the Home Principle in Missions, Especially as it Applies to the South*. Atlanta: Publicity Department of the Home Missions Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1918.
- McBeth, H. Leon. *The Baptist Heritage*. Nashville: Broadman Press, 1987.
- Monck, Thomas, et al. *An Orthodox Creed or A Protestant Confession of Faith*. Southwestern Journal of Theology 48.2 (Spring 2006): 133-182.
- Montgomery, William E. *Under Their Own Vine and Fig Tree: The African American Church in the South, 1865-1900*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1994.
- Newman, Mark. *Getting Right with God: Southern Baptists and Desegregation, 1945-1995*. Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2001.
- Nichols, James Hastings. “John Witherspoon on Church and State.” *Calvinism and the Political Order*. Ed. George L. Hunt. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1965.

Northern Baptist Convention. *A Manual of the Northern Baptist Convention*. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1918.

Northern Baptist Convention. *Annual of the Northern Baptist Convention, 1916*. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1916.

Northern Baptist Convention. *Annual of the Northern Baptist Convention, 1922*. Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1922.

Paris, Peter J. *The Social Teaching of the Black Churches*. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1985.

Pelt, Owen, and Ralph Lee Smith. *The Story of the National Baptists*. New York: Vantage Press, 1960.

Pinn, Anne H., and Anthony B. Pinn. *Fortress Introduction to Black Church History*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002.

Raboteau, Albert J. *Slave Religion*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Rauschenbusch, Walter. *A Theology for the Social Gospel*. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1917.

Rauschenbusch, Walter. *Christianity and the Social Crisis*. New York: The MacMillan Company, 1907.

Shurden, Walter B. "Baptist Associations and the Turn toward Denominational Cooperation: 1640s/1707." *Turning Points in Baptist History*. Ed. Michael E. Williams, Sr. and Walter B. Shurden. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008. 63-73.

Shurden, Walter B. "Baptist Freedom and the Turn toward a Free Conscience: 1612/1652." *Turning Points in Baptist History*. Ed. Michael E. Williams, Sr. and Walter B. Shurden. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008. 22-33.

Shurden, Walter B. "How We Got That Way: Baptists on Religious Liberty and Separation of Church and State." The Center for Baptist Studies. October 8, 1996. 9 April 2009. <<http://www.centerforbaptiststudies.org/shurden/howwegotthatway.htm>>.

Slaght, Lawrence T. *Multiplying the Witness*. Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 1941.

Smucker, Donovan E. *The Origins of Walter Rauschenbusch's Social Ethics*. Buffalo, NY: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994.

Straton, Hillyer H. *Baptists: Their Message and Mission*. Philadelphia: The Judson Press, 1941.

- Stookey, Stephen. "Baptists and Landmarkism and the Turn toward Provincialism: 1851." *Turning Points in Baptist History*. Ed. Michael E. Williams, Sr. and Walter B. Shurden. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008. 178-193.
- Underwood, William D. "The Metaphor of the Wall of Separation: Baptists and the First Amendment." *Baptist History and Heritage* June 22, 2008. 14 April 2009.
<<http://www.thefreelibrary.com/The+metaphor+of+the+wall+of+separation:+Baptists+and+the+First...-a0190196736>>.
- Utzinger, J. Michael. *Yet Saints Their Watch Are Keeping: Fundamentalists, Modernists, and the Development of Evangelical Ecclesiology, 1887-1937*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2006.
- Washington, James Melvin. *Frustrated Fellowship: The Black Baptist Quest for Social Power*. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1986.
- Weaver, C. Douglas. "Baptists and Denominational Identity and the Turn toward Creedalism: 2000." *Turning Points in Baptist History*. Ed. Michael E. Williams, Sr. and Walter B. Shurden. Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 2008. 288-301.
- West, Larry B. Personal Interview. 14 April 2009.
- Wills, Gregory A. *Democratic Religion: Freedom, Authority, and Church Discipline in the Baptist South, 1785-1900*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
- Yance, Norman A. *Religion Southern Style: Southern Baptists and Society in Historical Perspective*. Perspectives in Religious Studies Series. Danville, VA: Association of Baptist Professors of Religion, 1978.