

Early Baptist History

Charles Haddon Spurgeon (1834-92)

England's best-known preacher for most of the second half of the 19th century

Baptist Perpetuity

"We believe that the Baptists are the original Christians. We did not commence our existence at the reformation, we were reformers before Luther or Calvin were born; we never came from the Church of Rome, for we were never in it, but we have an unbroken line up to the apostles themselves. We have always existed from the very days of Christ, and our principles, sometimes veiled and forgotten, like a river which may travel underground for a little season, have always had honest and holy adherents. Persecuted alike by Romanists and Protestants of almost every sect, yet there has never existed a Government holding Baptist principles which persecuted others; nor I believe anybody of Baptists ever held it to be right to put the consciences of others under the control of man. We have ever been ready to suffer, as our martyrologies will prove, but we are not ready to accept any help from the State, to prostitute the purity of the Bride of Christ to any alliance with the government, and we will never make the Church, although the Queen, the despot over the consciences of men". (From The New Park Street Pulpit, Vol.VII, Page 225).

"History has hitherto been written by our enemies, who never would have kept a single fact about us upon the record if they could have helped it, and yet it leaks out every now and then that certain poor people called **Anabaptists** were brought up for condemnation. From the days of Henry II to those of Elizabeth we hear of certain unhappy heretics who were hated of all men for the truth's sake which was in them. We read of poor men and women, with their garments cut short, turned out into the fields to perish in the cold, and anon of others who were burnt at Newington for the crime of Anabaptism. Long before your Protestants were known of, these horrible Anabaptists, as they were unjustly called, were protesting for the 'one Lord, one faith, and one baptism.'

No sooner did the visible church begin to depart from the gospel than these men arose to keep fast by the good old way. The priests and monks wished for peace and slumber, but there was always a Baptist or a Lollard tickling men's ears with holy Scriptures, and calling their attention to the errors of the times. They were a poor persecuted tribe. The halter was thought to be too good for them. At times ill-written history would have us think that they died out, so well had the wolf done his work on the sheep. Yet here we are, blessed and multiplied; and Newington sees other scenes from Sabbath to Sabbath.

As I think of your numbers and efforts, I can only say in wonder -what a growth! As I think of the multitudes of our brethren in America, I may well say, What hath God wrought! Our history forbids discouragement."

(Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit, 1881, Vol. 27, page 249.)

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William Cathcart

Baptist Historian and Author, Editor of the Baptist Encyclopedia 1881

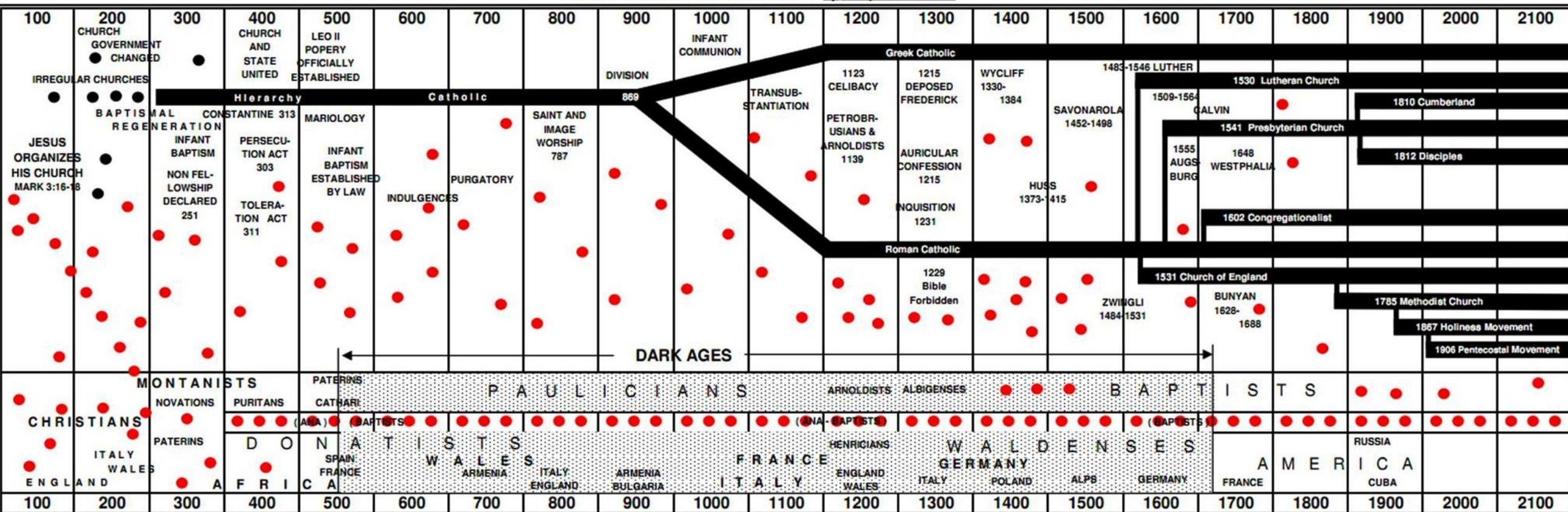
The First Known Baptist Congregations

"The first known Baptist Congregation was formed by a number of these fleeing separatists in Amsterdam, Holland in 1608. It was largely made up of British persons led by John Smyth who along with Thomas Helwys, sought to set up the group according to New Testament patterns. As they saw it, it was important to 'reconstitute' and not just 'reform' the Church. There was emphasis placed on personal conversion and on baptism, which was to be given to individuals who had personally professed faith in Jesus Christ, that is, to believers only and on mutual covenanting between and among believers. Though taking some years to crystallize, the reconstituting efforts of Smyth, Helwys and others gave distinctive shape not only to the group's belief and practice, but the various others which emerged from it. Some affiliated groups started when members of the Amsterdam group went back to Britain and took the name 'Baptist' to identify themselves. This had to do with the distinctive approach to the meaning and mode of baptism.

With the continuing religious and civil disturbances, and with the new awareness in Europe of North America, many persons, including those influenced by Baptists and related beliefs, practices and groups, crossed the Atlantic to build a 'New World'. They sought not only to establish dwellings, but their faith as well. In time the entire continent, but particularly the Eastern section, was affected, Baptist Churches, being among the many institutions, which sprang up in the seventeenth century. All these shaped not only the new American Environment, but eventually impacted beyond it as well.

The American Baptists deny that they owe their origin to Roger Williams. The English Baptists will not grant that John Smyth or Thomas Helwysse was their founder. The Welsh Baptists strenuously contend that they received their creed in the first century, from those who obtained it, direct, from the apostles themselves. The Dutch Baptists trace their spiritual pedigree up to the same source. German Baptists maintained that they were older than the reformation, older than the corrupt hierarchy which it sought to reform. The Waldensian Baptists boasted an ancestry far older than Waldo, older than the most ancient of their predecessors in the Vales of Piedmont. All these maintain that it ultimately reappears, and reveals their source in Christ and His apostles."
(William Cathcart, the Baptist Encyclopedia, 1881, pp. 620-621)

THE TRAIL OF BLOOD By Dr. J.M. Carroll*



EXPLANATION OF THE CHART

By Dr. J.M. CARROLL*

ILLUSTRATING the history of the Baptist Churches from the time of their founder, the Lord Jesus Christ, until the 21st Century.

1. The purpose of this book and chart is to show according to History that Baptists have an unbroken line of churches since Christ and have fulfilled His prophesy -

"I WILL BUILD MY CHURCH AND THE GATES OF HELL SHALL NOT PREVAIL AGAINST IT."

In the irregular churches it is clear to see the growth of Catholicism and Protestantism. Baptists are not Protestants since they did not come out of the Catholic Church.

2. The numbers at the top and bottom represent 21* centuries. The first vertical line is A.D. 1, and the second, A.D. 100, and so on.

3. The horizontal lines at the bottom have between them the nicknames given to Baptists during the passing years and ages - Novations, Montanists, Paulicans and Waldenses.

4. THE RED CIRCLES REPRESENT BAPTIST CHURCHES beginning with the first at Jerusalem, founded by Christ during His earthly ministry, and out of which came the churches of Judea, Antioch and others. The red indicates they were persecuted. In spite of the bitterest opposition and persecution Baptist Churches are found in every age. The first nickname given them was Christian, the next Ana-Baptists, and so on. You will notice that the dark ages are represented by a dark space. Even during this time you will notice a continual line of churches called Ana-Baptists. They were continually

5. THE BLACK CIRCLES REPRESENT CHURCHES INTO WHICH ERROR CAME AND ARE THEREFORE CALLED - IRREGULAR CHURCHES. The first error was in Government - Pastors assumed authority not given them by Christ. Pastors of larger churches claimed authority over other and smaller churches. Thus in the 3rd Century the Roman Hierarchy was established. The Emperor Constantine issued a call in 313 inviting all churches to send representatives to form a council. The red churches - that is Baptist Churches - refused the invitation but the irregular churches responded. The Emperor was made the head and thus the group of churches known as irregular churches became the State Church. The Emperor continued to head the churches until Leo II claimed authority as the successor of Peter. Thus is seen how the error in Church Government developed into Popery.

In the 16th Century the Protestant Churches began to come out of the Roman

6. It was in the year 251 that Baptist Churches declared nonfellowship with the irregular churches. They refused to accept Baptism administered in infancy or for Salvation and thus came the oldest nickname - Ana-Baptist which means rebaptizers.

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