

A Common Statement for Baptist Heritage as Taught at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary

As professors of Baptist heritage, we believe the future of teaching Baptist heritage should include both Baptist history and Baptist theology (a.k.a. identity or distinctives). Baptist history and Baptist theology cannot be separated from one another. Baptist history provides the basis for understanding our Baptist identity.

In teaching Baptist history, we are presenting the inspiring cloud of historical Baptist witnesses, which includes both positive and negative examples. Baptist history considers the various Baptist historiographies, the question of origins, as well as movements, confessions, controversies, and theologians. Baptists worldwide should be considered in Baptist history, but the focus should remain upon the Southern Baptist Convention. Consideration of the Southern Baptist Convention should include discussion of its origin, confessional identity, institutions, and the Cooperative Program.

In teaching Baptist theology, we affirm the essentials of Christian orthodoxy while focusing upon those doctrines which make Baptists distinctive from other Christian traditions. The primary Baptist distinctive is ecclesiological in nature; specifically, the regenerate church gathered in a covenanted congregation as evidenced by believers' baptism (immersion). Other Baptist doctrines include those affirmed by the *Baptist Faith & Message* 2000.

2005 Think Tank Session
Center for Theological Research
Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary
