

Why We Are Not Primitive Baptists

I. The reason for this study.

1. Since the Minneapolis Church is an independent and autonomous church and not part of a denomination or an association, it is difficult in a few sentences to explain to someone "what kind of church" we are.
2. For that reason, we sometimes will tell inquirers that compared to modern denominations or associations, we are most similar to Primitive Baptists.
3. If we identify ourselves as such to someone, then we usually will briefly explain our differences with the Primitive Baptists (PBs) to give the person a better understanding of the doctrine and practice of our church.
4. This outline and accompanying Bible Study recordings serve to explain those differences.

II. An overview of the differences.

1. **The Sonship of Jesus Christ.** Jesus Christ became the Son of God when he was born of the virgin Mary, and not before. We do NOT believe that Jesus was eternally begotten or any such thing. PB churches (at least some) believe that Jesus Christ is the eternally begotten Son of God, meaning He became the Son of God in eternity past by being begotten by God the Father.
2. **Church autonomy and independence.** We are an autonomous, independent, and non-incorporated baptistic church which is a part of no denomination or association. PB churches are part of an association of churches.
3. **Church government.** Each local church is to be ruled and overseen by its own pastor (elder, bishop, steward, preacher, overseer), and its only "rules of order" are the holy scriptures. PB churches are ruled (at least in part) by a board or group of deacons in their local PB church and "denominational bosses" (elders of other PB churches), and meetings and church business are conducted according to the Robert's Rules of Order.
4. **Interchurch communion.** We practice "closed" communion which means that only members of the Minneapolis Church partake of communion together; members of other churches, even churches of like-faith do not take communion with us, nor we with them. PB churches practice "close" communion; members of any PB church can partake of communion with any other PB church.
5. **Pagan holidays.** We do not observe nor celebrate the pagan holidays of Christmas, Easter, and Halloween corporately as a church, nor as individuals. PB churches (at least some) celebrate at least some of the pagan holidays either corporately, individually, or both.

III. Similarities we have with PB churches.

1. We generally hold to the same following beliefs as most PB churches:
 - A. The Trinity and the deity of Jesus Christ.
 - B. Sovereign grace, including total depravity, election, predestination, limited atonement, regeneration before faith, unconverted elect, and preservation of the saints.
 - C. Believers baptism by immersion which adds one to the membership of a local church.
 - D. Baptist church lineage.
 - E. King James Bible as the inspired, infallible, and preserved word of God in English.
 - F. Amillennialism (for lack of a better term).
 - G. Expiration of the sign gifts by 70AD.
 - H. Biblical Creation.

2. We generally observe the same following practices as most PB churches:
 - A. Using unleavened bread and wine for communion.
 - B. Feetwashing.
 - C. Acapella singing.
 - D. Informal training of ministers.

IV. The Sonship of Jesus Christ.

1. Jesus is the eternal God which was never brought into existence (**Joh 8:58 c/w Exo 3:14**).
 - A. In His divine nature, He existed and was with God and was God from eternity (**Joh 1:1**).
 - B. He became the Son of God, not in eternity past, but when “the Word became flesh” (**Joh 1:14**) when he was conceived by the power of God in Mary’s womb (**Luk 1:35**).
 - C. Therefore - 1. For that (thing, act, etc.); for that, for it. a. In various senses of for prep. b. By reason of that; for that reason, on that account:
2. Many PB churches believe that Jesus is the "eternally begotten" Son of God.
 - A. In addition to the above cited verses, the definitions of the words will refute this position.
 - i. Eternally – *adv.* In an eternal manner.
 - ii. Eternal - *adj.* 1. a. Infinite in past and future duration; without beginning or end; that always has existed and always will exist: esp. of the Divine Being.
 - iii. Begotten – 1. Gotten. 2. Procreated. 1597 Hooker Eccl. Pol. v. xlviii. §5 The only begotten Son of God.
 - iv. Gotten – 1. 1. Obtained, acquired, won
 - v. Procreate – 1. a. To beget, engender, generate (offspring). b. *absol.* or *intr.* To produce offspring. c. *trans.* (*transf.* and *fig.*) To bring into existence, produce; to give rise to, occasion.
 - B. Question: How can a being which is infinite in past duration and without beginning be procreated, generated, and brought into existence?
 - C. This heresy of "eternal begetting" or "eternal generation" ultimately means that Jesus in his divine nature had a beginning which necessarily means that he is a begotten or created god. The NASB accommodates this damnable doctrine by translating **Joh 1:18** as "begotten God" instead of "begotten Son".

V. Church autonomy and independence.

1. New Testament churches are not organized as "perishes" in some hierarchical structure as the Catholic Church is.
2. Nor is there any biblical precedent for churches to be organized into denominations, associations, districts, etc. which have elders or officers directing groups of churches.
3. There is not one mother catholic church according to the scriptures, but rather individual *churches* (**Gal 1:2; Act 9:31; Rom 16:16**).
4. Each local church *is* the *whole church*, not part of the whole church (**1Co 14:23**).
5. When Jesus addressed the seven churches of Asia, He addressed them individually and did not chide one for the actions of another, nor commend one for the good behavior of another (**Rev 2&3**).

6. The head of the church is Jesus Christ (**Eph 1:20-23; Eph 4:15-16; Eph 5:23**) and it therefore should not be made a creature of the State by incorporating itself as a 501(c)3 tax-exempt non-profit corporation or association, but should be entirely separate from the State (**Mat 22:21**).
7. The PB churches are members of associations and oftentimes have elders from one or more churches governing another church.
 - A. God warns His people against associating themselves with others (**Isa 8:9-13; Isa 5:8-10**).
 - B. Associate - 1. *trans.* To join (persons, or one person with (to arch.) another), in (to obs.) common purpose, action, or condition; to link together, unite, combine, ally, confederate.

VI. Church government.

1. Each local church is to be ruled by its own pastor (elder, bishop, overseer, steward, preacher, minister) (**Heb 13:7; Heb 13:17**).
 - A. The one who has the rule of the church is the one who speaks the word of God to them (**Heb 13:7**).
 - i. He is the one who labors in word and doctrine (**1Ti 5:17**).
 - ii. It is the elder/bishop/pastor who must be apt to teach (**1Ti 3:2**).
 - iii. It is the elder/pastor that is the feeder of the church (**1Pe 5:2; Act 20:28**).
 - B. The pastor/bishop is the steward of the church (**Tit 1:7**).
 - C. Steward - An official who controls the domestic affairs of a household, supervising the service of his master's table, directing the domestics, and regulating household expenditure; a major-domo.
 - D. One minister can perform all the duties of rule in the church and he doesn't need a board of deacons, elders, or trustees to assist him or control him (**Tit 1:5; Luk 12:42**).
2. PB churches are oftentimes ruled and controlled by deacons, and church business is conducted according to Robert's Rules of Order.
 - A. Deacons were only ordained for one purpose: serving widows' tables (**Act 6:1-6**).
 - i. They were ordained for "this business" (**Act 6:3**).
 - ii. Nowhere in scripture are deacons given the rule of the church.
 - B. The scriptures alone should be used to govern the church, both in doctrine and in practice (**2Ti 3:16-17; Psa 119:105**).
 - C. There are no Robert's Rules of Order in the scriptures.

VII. Interchurch communion.

1. Communion is a local church ordinance.
2. The apostle Paul dealt much with the issue of communion with the church at Corinth.
 - A. The first epistle to the Corinthians was addressed specifically "unto the church of God which is a Corinth" (**1Co 1:2**).
 - B. Paul tells *them* that "ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular" (**1Co 12:27**).
 - i. The body and members under consideration is the local church and the members of it (**1Co 12:12-26**).
 - ii. The description of the body of Christ in 1Co 12:12-26 could not be said of the church of all of God's elect, "the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven" (**Heb 12:23**), as they do not all suffer when one member suffers (1Co 12:26), etc.

- iii. Nor could it be referring to the "church in America", or any other such man made term or organization.
 - iv. Paul was clearly writing this epistle to the members of the local church at Corinth.
- C. Paul gave *them* (the members of the local church at Corinth) instruction on how *they* should observe communion (**1Co 11:20-34**).
- i. He said "when YE come together therefore into one place..." (**1Co 11:20**).
 - ii. And again, "my brethren, when YE come together to eat, tarry one for another" (**1Co 11:33**).
- D. The communion service is a communion of the blood and body of Christ (**1Co 10:16**).
- i. Communion - 1. Sharing or holding in common with others; participation; the condition of things so held, community, combination, union.
 - ii. The bread represents the body of Christ (**1Co 10:17**).
 - a. It represents the physical body of Christ that was broken for us (**1Co 11:24**).
 - b. It also represents the spiritual body of Christ, which is the membership of the local church (**1Co 10:17 c/w 1Co 12:27**).
 - c. The members of the local church are represented as *one bread* and *one body* and they are *partakers of that one bread* (**1Co 10:17**).
 - d. Partaker - 1. One who takes a part or share, a partner, participator, sharer.
- E. Communion and church discipline are intricately connected and cannot be separated.
- i. The bread used for communion was the bread that was used at the Passover which was unleavened bread (**Mat 26:17-19 c/w Mat 26:26 c/w Exo 12:8**).
 - ii. Leaven represents evil and sin (**Mat 16:6,12; Mar 8:15; Luk 12:1; Gal 5:7-9**).
 - iii. Since the local church is "one bread and one body" (**1Co 10:17**), the church should purge out leaven from among them so as to be unleavened (**1Co 5:6-8**).
 - a. This purging of leaven out of the church is done by delivering commonly known sinners out of the church unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh (**1Co 5:1-5**).
 - b. Delivering a person unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh is done by "put[ting] away from among yourselves that wicked person" (**1Co 5:13**).
 - c. Putting away a wicked person from among the church is done by not keeping company with him (**1Co 5:9**).
 - 1) Company - *v.* 1. *trans.* To go in company with, to accompany; to keep company with, have society with. 3. *intr.* To keep company, associate, or consort.
 - 2) Company - *n.* 1. a. Companionship, fellowship, society; galso transf. of things. in company: in the society of others, amidst other people, as opposed to alone; galso, altogether, in all . c. *to keep company* (with): to associate with, frequent the society of
 - 3) Associate - *v.* 1. *trans.* To join (persons, or one person with (to arch.) another), in (to obs.) common purpose, action, or condition; to link together, unite, combine, ally, confederate.
 - d. Not keeping company with a person is not eating at the communion table with him (**1Co 5:11 c/w 1Co 5:8**).

- e. Paul's instruction about not keeping company and eating the Lord's Supper with a commonly known sinner was only in reference to "a brother" (**1Co 5:11**), not every sinner in the world (**1Co 5:10**).
 - f. The local church only judges those who are members *within* their church, not them that are *without* the membership of their church (**1Co 5:12-13**).
 - iv. How could a local church withhold communion from a commonly known sinner in their membership, and at the same time serve communion to a stranger off the street, or even to a member of another church of like faith whom they knew little or nothing about and had no authority over?
3. When Paul and Luke went to visit the church at Troas, Paul communed with them, but Luke did not.
- A. Luke wrote the book of Acts (**Act 1:1 c/w Luk 1:1-4**).
 - B. Luke was with Paul when they sailed to Troas (notice the use of "us" and "we") (**Act 20:5-6**).
 - C. When the disciples at Troas came together to break bread (communion), Paul preached unto "them" and "they" were gathered together (**Act 20:7-8**).
 - D. Notice how Luke switched from using "we" and "us" in verses 5-6 before the disciples at Troas came together to break bread, to then referring to the event by using "them" and "they" in verses 7-12.
 - E. After Eutychus fell asleep and fell out of the loft due to Paul's long preaching, Paul went down to check on him (**Act 20:9-10**).
 - F. When Paul came up again, Luke writes that "he", not "we", broke bread and ate with them (communion) (**Act 20:11**).
 - G. When they left Troas, Luke reverts back to saying "we" (**Act 20:13**).
 - H. Luke was not a member of the church at Troas and clearly did not take communion with them.
 - I. Paul was a minister and had preached the gospel at Troas before (**Act 16:8-11 c/w 2Co 2:12**).
 - i. It is quite likely that Paul started the church in Troas like he did many other churches in Asia.
 - ii. If that was the case, then it is also quite possible that he was still their itinerant pastor before he had ordained a pastor for that church, which would fit since we don't read about there being a pastor at Troas when Paul and Luke got there in Acts 20.
 - iii. Therefore it is clear from Act 20:5-13 that *at a minimum* an ordained minister who is the itinerant pastor of a church can serve communion to that church.
 - iv. This is why Paul could commune with them, but Luke could not.

VIII. Pagan holidays.

- 1. The pagan origin of Christmas.
 - A. "In Roman times, the best-known winter festival was Saturnalia, which was popular throughout Italy. Saturnalia was a time of general relaxation, feasting, merry-making, and a cessation of formal rules. Holly was also considered the key symbolic plant of the god Saturn and festival. It included the making and giving of small presents (Saturnalia et Sigillaricia), including small dolls for children and candles for adults.[7] During Saturnalia, business was postponed and even slaves feasted. There was drinking,

gambling, and singing, and even public nudity. It was the "best of days," according to the poet Catullus.[8] Saturnalia honored the god Saturn and began on December 17. The festival gradually lengthened until the late Republican period, when it was seven days (December 17-23). In imperial times, Saturnalia was shortened to five days [9]." (Wikipedia Article on Christmas)

- B. The Romans held a festival on December 25 called Dies Natalis Solis Invicti, "the birthday of the unconquered sun." The use of the title Sol Invictus allowed several solar deities to be worshipped collectively, including Elah-Gabal, a Syrian sun god; Sol, the god of Emperor Aurelian (AD 270-274); and Mithras, a soldiers' god of Persian origin.[10] Emperor Elagabalus (218-222) introduced the festival, and it reached the height of its popularity under Aurelian, who promoted it as an empire-wide holiday.[11] (Ibid)
- C. December 25 was also considered to be the date of the winter solstice, which the Romans called bruma.[7] It was therefore the day the Sun proved itself to be "unconquered" despite the shortening of daylight hours. (When Julius Caesar introduced the Julian Calendar in 45 BC, December 25 was approximately the date of the solstice. In modern times, the solstice falls on December 21 or 22.) The Sol Invictus festival has a "strong claim on the responsibility" for the date of Christmas, according to the Catholic Encyclopedia.[2] Solar symbolism was popular with early Christian writers[12] as Jesus was considered to be the "sun of righteousness." [13] (Ibid)
- D. "How much the date of the festival depended upon the pagan Brumalia [Dec.25] following Saturnalia [Dec.17-24], and celebrating the shortest day of the year and the 'new sun'cannot be accurately determined. The pagan Saturnalia and Brumalia were too deeply entrenched in popular custom to be set aside by Christian influence....The pagan festival with its riot and merry making was so popular that Christians were glad of an excuse to continue its celebration with little change in spirit and in manner. Christian preachers of the West and the Near East protested against the unseemly frivolity with which Christ's birthday was celebrated, while Christians of Mesopotamia accused their Western brethren of idolatry and sun-worship for adopting as Christian this pagan festival." (New Schaff-Herzog Ency. of Religious Knowledge)
- E. "The well-known solar feast of Natalis Solis Invicti (Nativity of the Unconquered Sun) celebrated on 25 December, has a strong claim on the responsibility for our December date." (Catholic Encyclopedia.)
- F. "*In A.D. 354, Pope Liberius of Rome ordered the people to celebrate on December 25. He probably chose this date because the people of Rome already observed it as the Feast of Saturn, celebrating the birthday of the sun. Christians honoured Christ, instead of Saturn, as the light of the world.*" (World Book Encyclopedia)

2. The pagan origin of Easter.

- A. Easter: "The name is derived from Eostre, the name of a goddess whose festival was celebrated at the vernal equinox; her name shows that she was originally the dawn-goddess." (Oxford English Dictionary)
- B. "Our name Easter comes from Eostre, an ancient Anglo-Saxon goddess, originally of the dawn. In pagan times an annual spring festival was held in her honor." (Compton's Encyclopedia, 1978)

- C. "According to the Venerable Bede, the name Easter derived from the pagan spring festival of the Anglo-Saxon goddess Eostre." (Academic American Encyclopedia, 1982)
- D. "The Easter Fire is lit on the top of mountains (Easter mountain, Osterberg) and must be kindled from new fire, drawn from wood by friction (nodfyr); this is a custom of pagan origin in vogue all over Europe, signifying the victory of spring over winter. The bishops issued severe edicts against the sacrilegious Easter fires....but did not succeed in abolishing them everywhere. The Church adopted the observance into the Easter ceremonies, referring it to the fiery column in the desert and to the Resurrection of Christ..." (Catholic Encyclopedia, art. Easter)
- E. "The Easter hare came to Christianity from antiquity. The hare is associated with the moon in the legends of ancient Egypt and other peoples. Through the fact that the Egyptian word for hare, 'um,' means also 'open' and 'period,' the hare came to be associated with the idea of periodicity, both lunar and human, and with the beginning of new life in both the young man and young woman, and so a symbol of fertility and of the renewal of life." (Encyclopedia Britannica)
- F. "The rabbit is a pagan symbol and has always been an emblem of fertility." (The Catholic Encyclopedia)
- G. "Because the use of eggs was forbidden during Lent, they were brought to the table of Easter Day, colored red to symbolize the Easter joy....The custom may have its origin in paganism, for a great many pagan customs celebrating the return of spring gravitated to Easter." (Catholic Encyclopedia)
- H. "The custom of a sunrise service on Easter Sunday can be traced to ancient spring festivals that celebrated the rising sun." (The New Book of Knowledge, 1978) **(Eze 8:15-16)**

3. The pagan origin of Halloween.

- A. "Halloween or All Hallows Eve, the name given to Oct. 31, as the vigil of Hallowmas or All Saints' Day, now chiefly known as the eve of the Christian festival. It long antedates Christianity. The two chief characteristics of ancient Halloween were the lighting of bonfires and the belief that this is the one night in the year during which ghosts and witches are most likely to wander abroad. History shows that the main celebrations of Halloween were purely Druidical, and this is further proved by the fact that in parts of Ireland Oct. 31 is still known as Oidhche Shamhna, "Vigil of Saman." This is directly connected with the Druidic belief in the calling together of certain wicked souls on Halloween by Saman, lord of death. On the Druidic ceremonies were grafted some of the characteristics of the Roman festival in honour of Pomona held about Nov. 1, in which nuts and apples, representing the winter store of fruits, played an important part. The custom of lighting Halloween fires survived until recently in the highlands of Scotland and Wales." (Ency. Brit.; 14th Edition, vol.11)
- B. "Druidism was the faith of the Celtic inhabitants of Gaul until the time of the Romanization of their country, and of the Celtic population of the British Isles up to the time of the Romanization of Britain, or, in parts remote from Roman influence, up to the period of the introduction of Christianity." (Ibid, vol.7)
- C. Halloween: The eve of All Hallows or All Saints, the last night of October. In the Old Celtic calendar, the year began on 1st November, so that the last evening of October

was 'old-year's night', the night of all the witches, which the (Roman) Church transformed into the Eve of All Saints." (Oxford English Dictionary)

4. The Catholic practice of adopting pagan holidays and customs into Christianity.
 - A. "Do not destroy the temples of the English gods; change them to Christian churches. Do not forbid the harmless customs which have been associated with the old religions; consecrate them to Christian uses." (Pope Gregory to Augustine, 597 A.D.)
 - B. "The most respectable bishops had persuaded themselves, that the ignorant rustics would more cheerfully renounce the superstitions of Paganism, if they found some resemblance, some compensation, in the bosom of Christianity. The religion of Constantine achieved, in less than a century, the final conquest of the Roman Empire: but the victors themselves were insensibly subdued by the arts of their vanquished rivals." (The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Edward Gibbon)

5. The problem with adopting paganism into Christianity.
 - A. God foresaw men's propensity to worship Him like the heathen do and prohibited it in the law of Moses (**Deu 12:29-32**).
 - i. God specifically forbade Israel from serving Him like the nations whom they conquered served their gods (**Deu 12:30**).
 - ii. They were to worship Him exactly how He commanded them and they were not to add to it or take from it (**Deu 12:32**).
 - iii. God elsewhere forbids adding to His word (**Pro 30:6; Rev 22:18-19**).
 - iv. We are to do all things whatsoever Jesus commanded us (**Mat 28:20**).
 - a. If we do all things Jesus commands, we can't leave any out.
 - b. If we do whatsoever he commands, we can't add anything extra.
 - v. We are to keep the ordinances as delivered (**1Co 11:2**).
 - B. God doesn't want His people to learn the way of the heathen (**Jer 10:2-4**).
 - i. What does this sound like to you? A Christmas tree?
 - ii. God says to be not dismayed at the signs of heaven: like seeing the sun die and be reborn at the winter solstice.
 - iii. Worshipping under green trees is forbidden in the Bible (**1Ki 14:23-24; 2Ki 16:4; 2Ki 17:10; Isa 57:5**).
 - iv. This includes artificial trees too (**Isa 40:19-20**).
 - C. Not learning the way of the heathen is a NT precept too.
 - i. We are not to be yoked with unbelievers nor their idolatrous religions (**2Co 6:14-18**).
 - ii. The things that the Gentile sacrifice, they sacrifice to devils and not to God (**1Co 10:20-21**).
 - iii. You can't have it both ways; it's either to devils or to God.
 - D. God will severely judge those who mix elements of His religion with heathen religion and sin (**Dan 5:1-6 c/w Dan 5:22-31**).
 - E. Do-it-yourself religion is not pleasing to God (**1Ki 12:28-33**).
 - F. God warns us against the celebration of holidays (**Col 2:14-17; Gal 4:8-10**).
 - G. Things which are highly esteemed among men are an abomination to God (**Luk 16:15**).
 - H. We are supposed to reprove the unfruitful works of darkness, not incorporate them into God's religion (**Eph 5:11**).

- I. We are hypocrites if we condemn the idolatrous practices of other religions and at the same time incorporate them into our own (**Rom 2:1; Rom 2:21-22**).