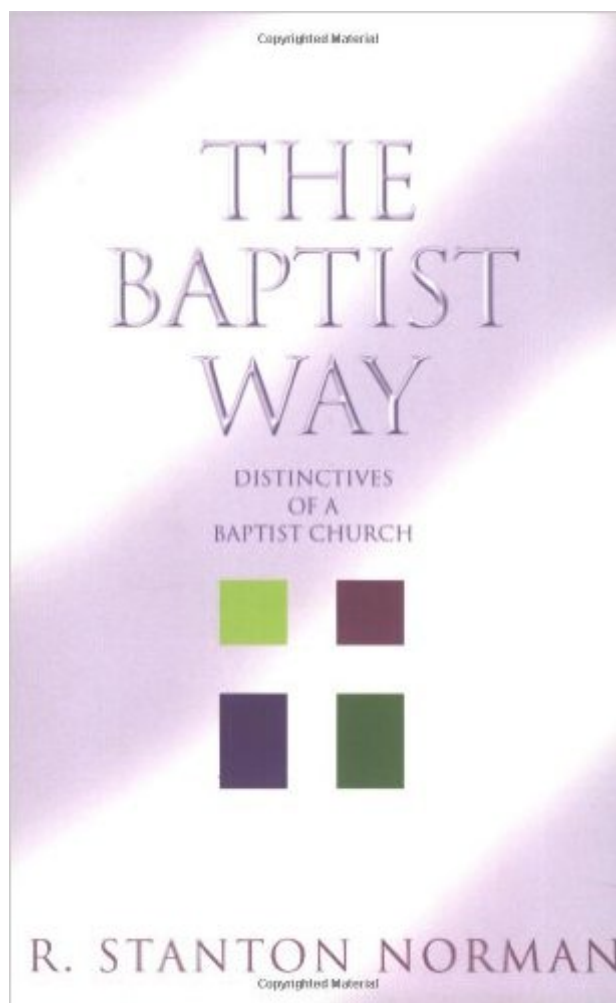


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The Baptist Way: Distinctives Of A Baptist Church



Synopsis

The Baptist Way is an introduction to the principles that distinguish Baptists from other Christians. In some cases these ideas were once peculiarly Baptists, though they are now more widely held among other groups. For Stan Norman, healthy Baptist churches intentionally and diligently adhere to their Baptist distinctives.

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Customer Reviews

I've been a Southern Baptist for over ten years now, but I haven't really explored my denomination's history or distinctives until the last few years. I picked up this book a year or two ago because I thought it would deepen my understanding of what it means to be a Baptist. Overall, it did not disappoint. In the book, Norman lists and discusses eight historically Baptist tenants in detail. His statements are well documented and are almost always supported by Scripture. I've read several other books on the subject, and they all have their good points, but for the reader who is interested in a detailed introduction, this is a good place to start. To put it another way, this book is for the Baptist who wants to know more about their denomination than what a brochure at the church welcome center would provide. Big point: Norman is a very "conservative" Baptist (Is there any other kind, you ask? Well, yes, there is.). I typically don't mind this since I lean to the right anyway. But for some, his language may seem a bit overbearing in certain places. He makes no excuse in his introduction that this book is for Baptists, and he believes that all Baptist churches should openly and visibly manifest these distinctives. You don't have to be a theologian to read this, but you may

need to be at least somewhat familiar with some typically Protestant terms like inerrancy of the Bible, regenerate church membership, congregational polity, and believer's baptism. Might be a good resource for deacons, too.

Love this book! A must have!

The first 4 Chapters are worth the price of the book. Great presentation on the historical position of Baptists toward the Word of God, the priesthood of all believers, and the ordinances. The author is a little weak on understanding the autonomy of the local church (he comes from a strong SBC background) but overall it is a great book.

Unnecessarily polemical.

If Stan Norman's book accurately describes the "Baptist way," then many Christians can be happy to find another. This book reflects the attitude of what someone else has called "the crossest of Christians," one who mistakes meanness for moral righteousness and embraces it as a virtue. The author decries rationalism, but hopes to be taken as logical and reasonable. He decries tradition, but elevates hero stories that suit his purpose as moral exemplars of doctrinal rigor. He declares the essential doctrine of Biblical inerrancy and the use of "biblical teachings" as a yardstick for true faith, but pays little or no attention to issues of canonicity or inspiration. He claims the primacy of New Testament scripture but seems to reflect more an Old Testament brand of righteous judgment. His advice to "regenerate churches" provides a "how to" guide for the narrow-minded "spirit-led" congregation to purge its ranks of any non-conforming members. The appeal to "Baptist distinctives" seems conveniently selective, elevating the 2000 version of the Baptist Faith and Message but ignoring its displaced (and more central) 1963 version. Norman claims to be righting the Southern Baptist church from any tilts toward liberalism, modernism, and neo-orthodoxy; perhaps he inadvertently bares the compassionless bias of recent Baptist fundamentalists toward social and spiritual exclusivism (a charge I suspect the author would be happy to embrace). I thought that the gospels told the story of a man of compassion, who taught love and forgiveness, who sought to heal and bring peace and demonstrate the nature of our heavenly father. Apparently I didn't read them "the Baptist way."

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