

# letters\_60903

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## **TEXAS BAPTIST FORUM: God's chosen people**

I have read with interest your editorial regarding the Middle East peace process and your remarks about Christians getting in the way of the peace process (June 2).

As a completed Jew, I take great exception as to your characterization that perhaps the Jews are not God's chosen people. As one who believes the Bible is inerrant, the fact that God's word states the Jews are his chosen people is enough to satisfy me.

E-mail the editor at

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The bloodshed is not caused by the Jews, rather the Arabs. Their whole bent has and always will be to see to the final and ultimate destruction of Israel and the Jews. We have heard this from many Arab leaders, including Yasser Arafat. You are naive if you believe that any so-called peace will eliminate or even reduce the bloodshed we are seeing. Incidentally, can you name a single instance whereby we have seen "terrorist" attacks on the Arabs by the Jews?

You are terribly mistaken on your understanding and interpretation of God's word regarding Israel and the Jews. You should also know that there is no such thing as Palestinians as far as a people go.

The only point of your editorial that was correct was the fact that the Palestinians had “occupied” Israel for many decades. Occupation meaning it was never theirs to begin with.

Mark Borofsky

Wichita, Kan.

## **People of God**

Speaking at the Israel Embassy, Richard Land (executive director of the Southern Baptist Convention's Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission) virtually declared war on all Arabs and Arab nations, using the Bible as his authority.

He is wrong in his interpretation of who are the people of God; it is not the secular Jewish state of Israel or Jews in general. He preaches an unholy voice of support for a Jewish nation which he and other SBC leaders think must be established before Christ will be able to return. This is accompanied with ill will toward those who do not share this millennial view. This is unfortunate and unbiblical.

The Religious Right seems bent on using the resources of the federal government to protect and promote Israel, no matter what Israel does. This 50-year policy has caused our Arab friends to become very anti-American.

As Israel confiscates-settles-more land, keeps thousands of prisoners in jail and promotes their secular state, we will get the blame, hence more terrorism and ill will.

For SBC leaders to promote this “holy war” against the enemies of Israel is the same as when the pope sent in the Crusades to free Jerusalem from the “infidels.”

Christ said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." God doesn't need our help to create the conditions in which Christ will return—certainly not by supporting brutality and war.

Sherman Hope

Brownfield

## **Criswell offering**

Naming a new SBC seminary offering after W.A. Criswell (May 19) will lend a powerful handle for the average Baptist mind to grasp.

However, in instituting and so naming this new offering, the SBC would effectively delineate the intended course for their newly staffed fleet of seminaries, while open-eyed and aware Baptists who see Christ leading in a different direction should finally be able to make a clean break from the appeal to nostalgia that artificially binds them to this group that once loved them but now merely seeks their finances.

The SBC can go ahead and make the changes Chuck Kelley recommended. They made sense once and still do. They will help the SBC manage its schools better and perhaps some will be saved as a result, even if they won't grow in grace very much in my opinion.

But just as I never expect to be asked to serve as one of the trustees as a result of the SBC's changes, they should not expect to fool me into continuing to support their seminaries with their feigned love for the way things used to be.

John King

Waco

# Creedal people

Thank you for the recent editorial on the movement for required fealty to the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message (May 19).

Rather than a statement of faith, this document is becoming a benchmark for determining those who may be in fellowship and serve within the denominational doors of Southern Baptists.

The sole authority for our faith is Scripture and not a man-made document that denominational bureaucrats have placed on a par with or greater than Scripture. It was this very type of authoritarianism and lack of religious freedom that brought and established Baptists in this country.

As you indeed point out, we are not a creedal people, nor should we be.

Terry McConnell

Henderson, Nev.

# Safe policy

With the published letters in the Standard running about six to one criticizing Jerry Rankin and the International Mission Board trustees, I want to make the point that SBC missionaries have been required to sign a confession of faith in the past.

In "The Baptist Heritage," Leon McBeth writes, "In 1920, the Foreign Mission Board drew up a 13-point doctrinal statement to be signed by all its missionaries."

This was only the action of the Foreign Mission Board. The 2000 Baptist Faith & Message was adopted and approved by the elected messengers from our churches.

What is wrong with our present mission board requiring that our missionaries sign this statement of our faith? Most of our missionaries have joyfully done so.

What the mission board practiced as early as 1920 is still a safe policy for 2003.

Pete McGuire

Shreveport, La.

## **Changing loyalty**

With the results of the recent IMB trustees' meeting, the letters "SBC" can now stand for Southern Baptist Church. The convention is no more. Congregational polity has been replaced by a hierarchy that cares more about orthodoxy than missions.

If one needs proof of this, look no further than the fact IMB trustees fired 13 career missionaries with no one ready to take over on the mission fields for those who were terminated. The IMB trustees did not care about their own missionaries personally, and apparently they do not care about the souls of the people who live on those mission fields, either.

With that in mind-and, having grown up Baptist, it deeply pains me to do this-come this Christmas, rather than contribute to the Southern Baptist Church's Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, I will likely give my year-end gift to the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship's Offering for Global Missions.

Benny Bivins

Williamstown, Ky.

# No signature

Remember when someone told you, "I will take your word on it"? No paper, just two men trusting each other. How honored and energized you felt to be trusted by your word.

Often in the world, contracts and notes require a signature. The purpose of the signed document is that in the event of a default or a failure to perform, a judgment could be rendered to recover monies lost, damages and/or force performance of the original agreement. The signed agreement must have a final arena of judgment, the judicial system.

What is the final arena of judgment for those signing the 2000 Baptist Faith & Message contract?

Is it the court of heaven? I think not, for God knows your heart as well as the number of hairs on your head. A signature would be folly.

Would the court be a worldly kind? Religious judges sitting in chamber? Could the denomination hold the signer in contempt? Could we fine them? Terminate them? Take their homes and property? No!

The last bastion of hope, love and trust is the church of believers. The church shouts with joy, "I take your word on it; no signature required."

For all our missionaries and professors across the globe, this Southern Baptist trusts the confession of their lips and the ordination of their churches. May they go and continue the work.

Tom Wolter

Bishop

# **Differs on confessions of faith**

A recent letter suggested B.H. Carroll, James P. Boyce, John Broaddus and E.Y. Mullins all used confessions of faith in a credal manner (June 2). I beg to differ.

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In the "Centennial Story of Texas Baptists," published in 1939, the editor summarizes 12 Baptist distinctives that have generally characterized Baptists since our beginnings.

Articles 7 and 8 state:

"The right of every believer to read and interpret the Scriptures for himself versus authoritative creeds and dogmas, officially decreed and to be accepted and believed without doubt or denial.

"The religious efficiency and sole authority of the Bible versus the Bible as supplemented and interpreted by ecclesiastical decisions and dogmas."

Baptists have long had statements of faith. They have never been compulsory or authoritative creeds.

Paul Powell, Dean

Truett Theological Seminary

Waco

## **One author of all Scripture**

I notice that a new interpretation of the Scriptures has seemingly been expressed by some in our convention regarding the fact that we are to

adhere to the teachings of Jesus more than the teachings of Paul.

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The Bible is the word of God—all of it. Second Peter 1:20-21 states, "First of all, no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will ... but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God." This means that the Holy Spirit is the author of the Bible. The whole Bible.

The four gospels were written by the Spirit. The same author gave us the epistles of the New Testament. Several books, but one Author.

In 2 Timothy 3:16, we read, "All Scripture is inspired by God." Not just the gospels, but all Scriptures. We must accept them all as valid—and inspired of God.

Ewell J. Humphreys

Fort Worth

***What do you think?*** Submit letters for Texas Baptist Forum via e-mail to [marvknox@baptiststandard.com](mailto:marvknox@baptiststandard.com) or regular mail at Box 660267, Dallas 75266-0267. Letters must be no longer than 250 words. They may be edited to accommodate space. Published letters reflect a cross-section of letters received.

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