

MAY 8, 2013

TATTNALL EVANS BAPTIST CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE

Dear Brethren:

I recently received an informative letter from the TEBA Credentials Committee dated April 22 both by email and postal service. Hagan Baptist Church and her leadership have some urgently serious concerns about the nature and content of this letter.

I read the letter 4 or 5 times to make certain I have all the facts correct which you presented. If I have unfairly misrepresented your statements in this response, I urge you to contact me straightway. I will apologize and seek your forgiveness if I am guilty of any misrepresentation of your statements.

The letter dated April 22 which originated from the credential committee purports to offer 7 reasons why the Sovereign Grace Truth Baptist Church pastored by James Tippins should not be accepted into the TEBA.

I offer the following observations regarding that particular correspondence of April 22.

Since items 2, 3, 4, and 6 are mostly redundant, I will briefly address them at the end. The committee expressed its opinion regarding their personal view and interpretation of what they refer to as "Calvinism" and "hyper-Calvinism". The committee then stated in the concluding remark based on the previous comments that the church in question is not of like faith and order as required by the Tattnall-Evans Baptist Association.

The first item in your letter states that this new work offers only an alternative in doctrine and polity and is located where the population is already well-served by our churches. I cannot understand how any person holding missionary Baptist convictions would ever offer this as a reason to refuse to allow this assembly to co-operate and work within the TEBA. EVANS County and the surrounding areas are filled with hundreds and hundreds of lost souls. There is not enough room in all our present buildings collectively to hold all these potential people. If we had 10 more new sound missionary Baptist works in our area, there would still be an overwhelming need! Have you forgotten the words of our Lord when He said, the harvest is plenty but the laborers are few. People are very mobile and most have transportation. They often drive past some

TEBA churches to attend and serve in another TEBA church. I never feel slighted in the least when people drive by our place of worship to attend another TEBA assembly. That is their privilege. The argument which focuses on the location of Sovereign Grace Truth Baptist Church is petty, insensitive, and seems to beg the question. Furthermore, in point one of your letter, to state that the church offers only an alternative in doctrine and polity minimizes and castigates pastors who endeavor to teach the whole counsel of God. When you brethren attended the church and listened to Bro Tippins expound the Word of God as I am certain all of you did, did he offer a sound exegetical and expositional treatise of the Word of God with practical applications and exhortations to both the lost to repent and turn from sin to the Savior and the saved to remain steadfast in the Lord? Surely you will acknowledge that he did. Do you brethren know if the whole counsel of God is being taught in all TEBA churches? I would be very careful about minimizing and isolating any Baptist ministry because it **"offers only an alternative in doctrine and polity."** Any first semester seminary student knows that doctrine means teaching. Men called of God who are careful and diligent in their handling of the Word of God often present a deeper, richer didactic message than the standard 3 points, 4 jokes and a poem topical sermon. In my opinion there is not enough biblical doctrine and expository preaching of the Word being offered in our pulpits. Hence, Baptist churches are becoming weaker and weaker. When people discover that expository preaching is available, they often gravitate toward sheep food. The sheep of Christ are hungry for the truth. Shame on men with formal training if they do not avail themselves to proclaim the full counsel of God. Regarding your statement on polity, Baptist churches are not required by their Lord and Savior to jump through any hoop to conform to standards assigned by men's rules. If Bro Tippins would ever fall into sin and immoral behavior, rest assured that he would be dealt with by his leadership. That polity is baptistic enough for Hagan Baptist Church. Typical democratic church government where all the nitty gritty items must be brought up and hashed over before the entire assembly is not necessary. That makes as much sense as saying churches of like faith and order must have seven deacons. Church administrators are expected to handle the bulk of these issues. This is what Brother Tippins does. I do the same and I would be surprised if most of the TEBA churches do anything differently. How is this in contradiction to like faith and

order? Missionary Baptist churches are free to operate by diverse polities which often reflect the maturity of the congregation and the trust placed in their church leadership. When men violate that trust, they forfeit their ministry.

Will any you brethren on the committee answer me, "Where is the spirit that guided our Southern Baptist Brethren of previous generations? i.e. "In the main things unity, in the minor things liberty, and in all things charity."

Reason 2, 3, 4, 6 contain statements which reflect a misrepresentation of the position held by those S.B. pastors who believe that salvation is by grace from start to finish. For some reason, I do not think you understand the position Brother Tippins holds regarding sin and the fall of man. By the way do we have any churches in TEBA who believe the account of ADAM and Eve is actually an allegory and not a true historical event? DO they have the liberty to believe that and not be labeled as heretics by TEBA leadership? I believe Adam and Eve were 2 people supernaturally created by God. They were our first parents. Because Adam sinned, are we not then sinners by birth, sinners by choice, sinners by practice, and sinners by nature. Adam plunged the entire human race into sin. We come into this world lost. Perhaps the committee would be well served if they went back to Genesis 3 to be reminded clearly what happened in the fall. Sin affected the mind, the heart, the intellect, the soul, the will, and the affections of Adam and all his race. The only exception is the Lord Jesus who is the seed of the woman. Do not the scriptures teach that Adam came into the world upright? But do we come into the world upright? Do you honestly think that sin has no effect on the faculties of Adam's seed since the fall?

Jesus Christ our master and Lord stated the case in John 5 when He said, Ye will not come to me that ye might have life. And then having said that He further stated in John 6 that no man can come unto me except the Father draw him." How do you deal with the whosoever won'ts of scripture? Ye will not come to me that ye might have life are the whosoever won'ts. Sin causes this attitude and condition, not God. Election has nothing to do with the whosoever wont's.

What business is it of any outside entity as to which Missionary Baptist confession of faith a church adopts? There have always been specific essentials necessary for

Baptist Church fellowship and cooperation. Christ Jesus is the eternal Son of God who took on human flesh and became the only Savior and hope for fallen man. Sinners are saved only through faith in God's once for all sacrifice of His Son. Baptism is to be administered according to proper candidate; ... those who confess Christ as their Savior and Lord; proper mode is immersion, proper design to set forth the death burial and resurrection of Christ and our identification and proper administrator... one who has been scripturally baptized and acting under the authority of a New Testament Church. The declaration of the gospel is necessary to bring people to faith in the Lord Jesus. By the way Brother Tippins believes this. He does not believe as Primitive Baptists incorrectly teach that people are brought to faith without the gospel. He does not sprinkle babies as do Presbyterians I do not and can not have **church** fellowship with Primitive Baptists or Presbyterians but I can have **Christian** fellowship with them and other groups who profess saving faith in Christ. James Bland shares my view here because I know for a fact that he has spoken for "churches"? who believe that a person can be lost after he is saved. One place where Bro Bland spoke had a pastor who believed that a second work of grace should occur after salvation. Such teachings are set forth by the Nazarene Denomination. He has spoken for non Baptist "churches"? where babies are "sprinkled". That is his prerogative. I will not criticize him for that. I would not consider such places New Testament Churches and not even close to being baptistic but we may have Christian fellowship with them. However I will state my disapproval when ministries offered by Brother Tippins are misrepresented because they offer a different view on the doctrine of election.. Brother Tippins is a Baptist and holds to the essential Baptist convictions and beliefs of TEBA.

The accusation of promoting hyper Calvinism, holding divisive doctrines, fellowshipping with Founders Ministries etc is very unkind and places the committee out of harmony with the original intent of TEBA. If James Bland can fellowship with nonbaptist groups which hold views that none of us would teach in our churches, then why would the committee frown upon any pastor for fellowshipping with various Baptist groups, of which many of them are Southern Baptist. The view on election varies from church to church. I read the transcript of the message Brother Bland brought recently at Eastside. What he said regarding election is not biblical. He would not be allowed to teach

that at Southern Seminary in Louisville. Dr. Al Mohler who has spoken at Hagan Baptist Church would not agree with Brother Bland's view and explanation regarding election. Dr W A Chriswell did not agree with James Bland. J.P. Boyce and John L Dagg, early pillars of the SBC, did not agree with James Bland. This can be easily proven. But most importantly what Brother Bland said in his message which I previously cited places him at odds with the Apostle Paul. Does TEBA desire to become a divisive entity singling out those pastors and churches who hold a differing view on the doctrine of election? If what we believe about the doctrine of election scares you, then don't invite us to preach in your pulpits. Accept our contributions and assistance in TEBA projects which our conscience will allow us to support. Speak kindly to us when you see us. And we will surely do the same. If this issue on election is so critical in your estimation, then simply do not attend our church. You are free to go and worship where you please. But refusal to recognize a sister church because of a differing view on unconditional election would be as unkind as unchurching those Missionary Baptists who don't believe in unconditional election. Being wrong on election does not make one a heretic. The attitude expressed toward Brother Tippins and his assembly has a serious smack of isolationist sectarianism and Hagan Baptist Church believes you are wrong to keep Bro Tippins and his assembly from obtaining acceptance in TEBA. We believe you are wrong and sinful to denounce any pastor who holds a differing view on election than you do. We are hopeful you will have a change of heart about the matter. Baptist churches and pastors like James Tippins and Grace Truth Church would be a blessing to TEBA as would any like-minded pastors. They honor the Lord Jesus and demonstrate supreme confidence in God's Word.

Sincerely in Christ

Tom R Sollosi
MA; MS D Min.