

INSTRUCTIONS FOR PRINTING BULLETINS

**Note: Print half as many lasers as needed since each sheet of paper has 2 bulletins.
Printing on a light tan or cream colored paper will provide a more historical look.**

If using a printer which prints 2-sided:

Print page 2 on the front side and page 3 on the back side—landscape (horizontal) printing.

If using a printer which prints 1-sided:

Print page 2, then flip paper, place back in tray and print page 3—landscape (horizontal) printing.

After printing, cut printed bulletins in half. A swing-arm cutter works best.

Bulletins are copyrighted material and can only be used for distribution within a church.

For permission to reprint any text or images, please contact:

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CELEBRATING 400 YEARS OF BEING BAPTIST

Baptist Beginnings, 1609

In 2009, Baptists around the world are celebrating the 400th anniversary of the founding of the first Baptist church. English Christians living in Amsterdam, Holland, began meeting for worship in a bakehouse, and sometime in early 1609, the group held its first baptismal service. While planning that service, the group encountered a serious problem. No one in the group had experienced baptism as a believer. They all had been baptized as infants in the Church of England.



John Smyth

The leader of the group, John Smyth, suggested that he baptize himself first and then baptize the other believers. Each person baptized was an adult who had confessed belief in Jesus Christ.

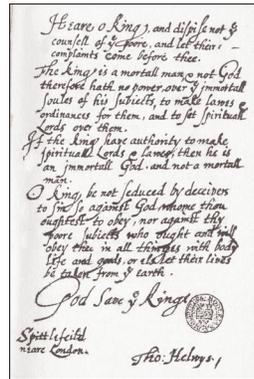
This small group was committed to the belief that church membership should be based on a personal confession of faith followed by believer's baptism. Their radical decision countered the religious expectations of their homeland of England, where in the seventeenth century, all citizens were required to be members of the Church of England. Refusing to adhere to this requirement meant being subjected to fines, whippings, and imprisonments.

A desire for religious freedom and the study of the New Testament led this small band of Christians to reject infant baptism and found a new church. Thus, in 1609, led by Smyth and Thomas Helwys, these religious dissenters became the first Baptists.

In 1612, Helwys and about ten other members sailed home to England, settled near London at Spitalfield, and planted the first Baptist church on English soil. Shortly after his arrival in England, Helwys published *A Short Declaration of the Mystery of Iniquity*, the first document written in English that called for complete religious freedom. Helwys asserted that the king of England had no power to control religious beliefs or practices, but instead each person, regardless of his or her religious beliefs, must have complete spiritual freedom. Helwys also challenged the king to allow individuals the right to read and interpret scripture. Failing to allow such freedom, Helwys noted, would result in the people being kept in "woeful spiritual bondage."

For the past four hundred years, Baptists at their best have continued to affirm and defend the freedoms embraced by our earliest Baptist leaders.

Flyleaf of Thomas Helwys's *Mystery of Iniquity*



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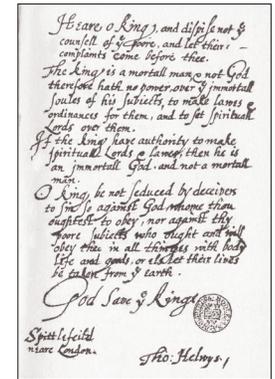
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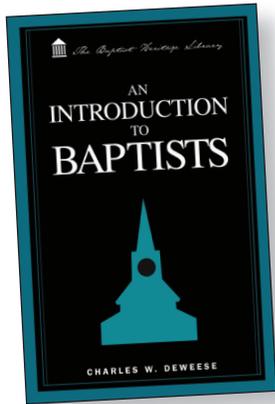
Flyleaf of Thomas Helwys's *Mystery of Iniquity*



BAPTIST HERITAGE RESOURCES

An Introduction to Baptists

by Charles W. Deweese, 24 pages.



SPECIAL PRICE: \$1.25

List price: \$2.50

Price good through
January 31, 2009.

To order this resource,
e-mail pamdurso@baptisthistory.org
or call 678-547-6095.

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Charles W. Deweese, executive director
Pamela R. Durso,
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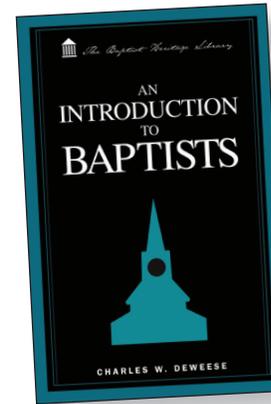
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This bulletin insert is the first of twelve to be provided monthly during 2009 by the Baptist History and Heritage Society and The Center for Baptist Studies. The article was written by Pamela R. Durso, associate executive director-treasurer of the Baptist History and Heritage Society.

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