

BAPTISTS AND RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

TEACHING GUIDE

The Freedom Road

A BAPTIST DOCTRINE AND HERITAGE STUDY FOR LIFE TODAY

Dennis Parrott

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Baptists and Religious Liberty—Teaching Guide
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About This Teaching Guide

The teaching plans in this teaching guide are designed for teaching the book *Baptists and Religious Liberty: The Freedom Road*. The book *Baptists and Religious Liberty* is one of a series of studies on Baptist doctrine and heritage that BAPTISTWAY PRESS®, the publishing arm of the Baptist General Convention of Texas, is producing annually.

The Writer

Dennis Parrott, the writer of *Baptists and Religious Liberty—Teaching Guide*, is a veteran curriculum writer, having written numerous previous assignments for BAPTISTWAY® Bible study materials. He has wide experience as a Christian educator and serves as a congregational strategist for the Baptist General Convention of Texas.

How to Use This Teaching Guide

This teaching guide is designed to assist leaders who guide the study of the book *Baptists and Religious Liberty: The Freedom Road*. The suggestions in this guide assume that every participant will have a copy of the book to use in preparation and during the sessions. Participants will gain the most if they will study the assigned chapter prior to each session. In addition to use in the current study, this book and the others in this series of studies are designed so that participants can accumulate for their personal libraries helpful resources on Baptist doctrine and Christian beliefs in general.¹ Each church library needs a copy of this book and the other books in this series as well.

Study Options

Eight study sessions are provided in *Baptists and Religious Liberty—Teaching Guide*. Decide the best schedule for your church situation. Consider the following suggestions:

- Sunday night worship service for eight weeks
- Wednesday night prayer service for eight weeks
- A combination of Sunday and Wednesday nights for eight sessions in four weeks
- Study period prior to Sunday night worship for eight weeks
- Other short-term training opportunities

The basic sessions are designed for thirty-five-minute periods but can be expanded by using the additional suggestions. Thirty-five minutes seems most appropriate for use during Sunday and Wednesday night. Lecture is the primary teaching method used in the basic plan, but

other large-group methods are used as needed. The additional suggestions can be used when the schedule allows fifty-five to sixty minutes or when the learning group is small enough to use other teaching methods.

Session Design

Each session (except session eight) is divided into the following four major parts with numbered steps:

- *Introduce the Study*—A three- to four-minute idea to help participants relate to the material to be studied.
- *Guide the Study*—A thirty-minute procedure that leads learners to investigate and summarize the significant content to be studied.
- *Prepare for the Next Study*—A one- to two-minute assignment that encourages participants to read and study the chapters to be considered during the next study.
- *Additional Ideas*—Teaching ideas that can be used to expand the basic teaching plan from thirty-five to sixty minutes.

Session Preparation

Read the entire book prior to the study. Knowing the direction and content of the book helps the leader (you) avoid dealing with material that will be studied in a subsequent session. Preview this teaching guide to allow enough time to prepare materials for each session.

Prepare visuals as suggested for each session. PowerPoint® presentations could be developed if you have the equipment, but overhead cels, marker boards, posters, and other visuals can be used as well.² Remember that learners retain more when they both see and hear information. Reading and underlining material in a book also create visual impressions and cause people to think about the content.

Although the steps in the session plans suggest actions you will take, effective learning always is from the perspective of what the participants will be doing. That is why your actions instruct learners to engage in learning activities such as listening, reading, looking, writing, thinking, answering questions, etc.

No teaching plan will fit every leader. Take the ideas given in this guide and use them to develop your own teaching plans. These ideas are provided to make your planning easier.

Notes

1. See the order form at the end of this book.
2. A PowerPoint® presentation is available on a CD. See the order form at the end of this book or access the BAPTISTWAY PRESS website—www.baptistwaypress.org. Handouts, scripts, and similar items described in this *Teaching Guide* for use in the class session are also available on the PowerPoint® CD.

SESSION *One*

Introduction and Chapter 1, Traveling the Long Road to Freedom

Introduce the Study

1. Have available enough copies of *Baptists and Religious Liberty* so that each participant can have his or her own copy. Since all of the material in the book cannot be dealt with in each study session, it will be important that participants be given the opportunity to read this material on their own.
2. Enlist someone to prepare a visual (PowerPoint® or poster) that illustrates the idea of *The Freedom Road*. This visual can be used for this entire study of *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, with a new road sign being prepared for each of the eight chapters. This “road” can be patterned after a road map or be made to resemble a highway with road signs. Prepare a road sign for the first chapter, “Traveling the Long Road to Freedom,” and attach it to the poster.
3. Prepare fourteen slips of paper to be distributed to some of the participants as they enter the room. Write one of the statements found on pages 9–10 in *Baptists and Religious Liberty* on each slip. (A copy of the statements is available in “Teaching Resource Items” on the PowerPoint® CD.) Number the statements. Introduce these readings with the paragraph found at the beginning of the introduction, page 9, as follows: “People in

the United States enjoy as great a degree of religious freedom as that found anywhere in the world. Knowledgeable people of various nationalities and denominations have praised the Baptist role in providing such freedom.” These statements can then be read in the order in which they are numbered, one through fourteen.

4. Prepare a poster with the following statement: “Religious freedom involves both a freedom *from* and a freedom *for*. . . .” Read the rest of this paragraph on page 11 of the introduction in *Baptists and Religious Liberty* at the beginning of each of the eight sessions to help remind members of the continuing goal of religious freedom.
5. Ask members to remain on the alert for responses to the following two questions throughout the study of *Baptists and Religious Liberty*: “Why have Baptists been praised for their role in the cause of religious liberty? Why have Baptists been in the forefront of the effort?” (See page 11, *Baptists and Religious Liberty*.)

Guide the Study

6. Display the Scripture verse, John 8:36, and lead members to repeat this verse in unison each time you begin one of the eight sessions in this study. “So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”
7. Remind participants of the three stories of persecution found at the beginning of chapter one, pages 13–14. Present a summary of other examples of persecution found throughout history such as the following:
 - a. King Nebuchadnezzar persecuted Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego for not giving up their God-given right to worship the God of their choice (Daniel 3; *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 17).

- b. Herod tried to end the life of Christ at his birth (Matthew 2; *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, pp. 17–18).
- c. The Jewish religious leaders persecuted Christ and his disciples (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, pp. 18–19).
- d. The Roman emperors increasingly brought great persecution on the early Christians (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, pp. 19–21).
- e. The Roman Catholic Church began a time of persecution (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, pp. 26–28).

Conclude this presentation with the following statement, “Uniformity in doctrine, not diversity, was considered a model society, even if such uniformity had to be gained by force” (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 28). Share with members that such efforts at enforced uniformity have always been and continue to be at the root of all efforts to limit religious liberty. Ask for present-day examples.

8. Refer to the paragraph near the bottom of page 15 in *Baptists and Religious Liberty* that begins, “The people of no other nation. . . .” Invite someone to read it. Then ask members to share why they think it took so long for religious liberty to be practiced in America.
9. Comment, *The Bible supports the idea of religious freedom*. Then share the following statements that support this idea:
 - a. “The Book of Genesis makes clear that God created man and woman with freedom—religious freedom” (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 16).
 - b. “From the beginning the Bible indicates that God did not force his will on people” (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 16).
 - c. “Freedom with accountability is a gift from God to human beings” (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 17).
 - d. “Jesus’ earthly ministry emphasized the importance of religious freedom” (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 18). Lead the group to join once again in quoting John 8:36.

- e. Jesus “never coerced anyone to become his disciple” (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 18).

Then ask members to help you name examples of persecution in the Old and New Testament that serve as early reminders that religious freedom is bought with great price. (See pages 18–19 of *Baptists and Religious Liberty* for ideas.)

10. Share a brief summary from pages 19–22 of *Baptists and Religious Liberty* of the persecution that began with Jewish religious leaders, continued with Roman authorities, and resulted in “the entanglement of religion and government in the Roman Empire” (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 22). Lead a brief discussion about how this problem repeated itself throughout world history, even in America. Include such factors as these:
 - a. The influence of Constantine
 - b. The eventual union of church and state
 - c. The development of the Roman Catholic Church
 - d. The efforts of church and state to deny people their religious liberty

Close this discussion by referring again to the second paragraph on page 28 of *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, which begins, “Uniformity in doctrine. . . .”

Prepare for the Next Study

11. Share the paragraph entitled “Conclusion” from chapter one, page 28. Challenge participants to read chapter two in preparation for the next study.
12. Remind members of the goal of this book as shared by the author in the preface, which is, “to encourage and inspire Baptists and others to champion the struggle for religious liberty for *all people everywhere*” (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 8). Close with a time of prayer that God will continue to reveal to

each of us specific ways we can join in the struggles to be found all along the journey down “the freedom road.”

Additional Ideas

Dramatic Readings

Enlist three people to prepare dramatic readings of the three situations found at the beginning of this chapter. After the three presentations, read the paragraph that begins with the question, “Where and when did these atrocities take place?” (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 15). Allow for a time of discussion to allow participants to reveal how familiar they are with early American history.

Statements and Questions

Before reading the bulleted statements in the paragraph immediately following the question at the top of page 15 in *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, ask members to apply the following questions to determine their response to these various freedoms:

- a. Which of the following freedoms have you enjoyed most often?
- b. Which freedoms have you failed to enjoy as often as you should?
- c. Which freedoms have you been tempted to deny others?

SESSION *Two*

Chapter Two, The Beginning of the Struggle for Religious Freedom

Introduce the Study

1. If you are using the road sign display (session one, step 2), prepare and attach a new road sign with the title of this chapter. Ask members to join you in quoting John 8:36 before reading Acts 5:29. Share with members that we will continue to see the tremendous price paid by so many people for their adherence to this verse in Acts. Open with a time of prayer that every person present would not allow our study for today to become a simple overview of history. Pray that it will also serve as a memorial to the lives of so many who died and suffered hardship for the cause of religious liberty.
2. Enlist someone to read the first two paragraphs of chapter two in *Baptists and Religious Liberty* (pages 29–30). Enlist another person to lead the group in singing all four stanzas of the hymn, “Onward, Christian Soldiers.”¹
3. Distribute pencils and copies of the timeline worksheet (step 5) to each participant.

Guide the Study

4. Read the following statement from chapter two: “Major changes occurred during the period in Europe from the 700s through the 1500s that would finally have a positive effect on freedom” (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 30). State that we will use a timeline approach as we seek to summarize the economic, political, cultural, intellectual, and religious factors and people that continued to pave the way for religious liberty in our country today.
5. Prepare a PowerPoint® presentation of the timeline material (or purchase and use the PowerPoint® CD; see the order form). If this is not possible you can use a markerboard or a large poster board. Following is a suggestion of what this timeline chart will resemble after your lecture presentation (all dates are A.D.):

Date	Event	Result
600	Muhammad launches religion of Islam	Confiscated Holy Land. Religious freedom denied Christians and Jews.
732	Battle of Tours	Halted spread of Islam in Western Europe. Pilgrimages to Holy Land.
1095	The Crusades begin	Struggle for control of Holy Land. Islamic forces prevail. Influx of knowledge.
1100–1300	Middle Ages	Change from agriculture-based economy to trade and commerce. Nationalism develops.
1400–1500	Renaissance	Cultural and intellectual changes. Focus on human achievement, ability, learning.
1400s	Open door for scholars	Influx of ancient Greek literature.
	1. Desiderius Erasmus	Greek N.T. and Latin translation.
	2. Johann Gutenberg	Invented printing press. Bible availability led to Reformation.

Date	Event	Result
1300–1400	Roman Catholic Church power challenged. 1. John Wycliffe 2. John Huss	Degeneration of government-Enforced religious monopoly. Translated Bible into English. Taught Christ and the Bible over the pope.
1500s	Reformation 1. Martin Luther 2. John Calvin 3. Ulrich Zwingli 4. King Henry VIII	Break from Roman Catholic Church, but this did not bring religious freedom for all or separation of church and state. Posted 95 theses, which spoke of biblical authority and salvation by faith. Enforced his own approach to Christianity. Preached and taught reform. Established the Church of England.
1500–1600	Radical Reformation 1. Conrad Grebel 2. Felix Manz 3. Michael Sattler 4. Balthasar Hubmaier 5. Menno Simons	Taught religious freedom and separation of church and state. Established a New Testament model church with baptism of adult believers. First Anabaptist martyred by Protestants. Martyred by Catholics. Most influential Anabaptist for religious freedom. Anabaptist, founder of Mennonites, influenced Baptist views.
1600–1700	Baptist Beginnings	Separated from Anabaptists (next study).

You can use this example and refer to each portion of the outline as you move through your lecture, or you can write the response in as you speak. Prepare copies of a timeline worksheet

for members to record this information during the presentation. (A copy of the information is available in “Teaching Resource Items” on the PowerPoint® CD.)

6. Ask members to bring this timeline to the next session and to be prepared to participate in a posttest to determine how well they can remember the information from this timeline. (This activity will be described in “Additional Ideas” for this session.)

Prepare for the Next Study

7. Ask, *Why did Baptists consider themselves to be different from Anabaptists?* After some discussion suggest the following if not already mentioned (see *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 42, for additional help):
 - a. There are differences in our doctrines.
 - b. We object to the concept of baptism reflected in the use of *Ana*, which means *again*. Baptists do not recognize infant baptism as true baptism since it is not believer’s baptism.
 - c. While in agreement about the importance of religious freedom, the road taken by Baptists to achieve that freedom was different from that of the Anabaptists, as will be examined in our next study.
8. Encourage participants to mention any books they may have read recently dealing with American history. Ask those of your group who are interested in American history to suggest some books they have found helpful and interesting, particularly of colonial times and the early days of the United States.

Additional Ideas

Questions

1. Why have some religious groups throughout history felt the need to force their religion on others?
2. What justification can such groups possibly give for their acts of persecution?
3. Why have so many Christians felt the need to give up their lives, if necessary, to preserve religious freedom?
4. How concerned should we be today about the rapid growth of Islam throughout the world?
5. In what way can a focus on the importance of nationalism become both a curse and a blessing for the cause of religious freedom?

Pretest or Posttest

This exercise can be used in this session before the timeline presentation or at the beginning of the next session as a time of review (or both). (A copy of the information is available in “Teaching Resource Items” on the PowerPoint® CD.) Instruct members to fill in the blanks in each of the following sentences (answers are in parentheses):

- (1) Even though the religion of Islam introduced great struggle for early Christians, it did make a contribution to religious freedom by introducing new (*knowledge*) to what region? (*Western Europe*).
- (2) The Middle Ages were marked by a change from an (*agricultural*)-based economy to an economy based on (*trade and commerce*).
- (3) During the time of the Renaissance one of the greatest events to affect the move toward religious freedom occurred with the

invention of the (*printing press*) and the subsequent availability of the (*Bible*) for all to read.

- (4) The Reformation was marked by a general challenge to the power of the (*Roman Catholic Church*).
- (5) Persecution by other (*Protestants*) was as severe as persecution by the Roman Catholics.
- (6) The Anabaptists introduced a movement in the history of the struggle for religious liberty known as (*the radical reformation*).
- (7) Menno Simons led a group known eventually as the (*Mennonites*) who became the early proponents of modern-day (*Baptist doctrine*).
- (8) In the 1600s and 1700s, (*Baptists*) and (*Anabaptists*) were often viewed as one movement by rulers and the general population.

Notes

1. Words, Sabine Baring-Gould; music, Arthur S. Sullivan.

SESSION *Three*

Chapter Three, The Role of Baptists in Bringing Religious Freedom

Introduce the Study

1. If you are using the road sign display (see session one, step 2), write this chapter's title on the third sign and place it on your map. Also, place the destination sign at the end of your map. Write "Religious Liberty for All People" on this sign, and remind members that this is the final destination for our study and for Baptists on the freedom road.
2. Enlist three people to read the following case studies that will demonstrate each of the three religious groups in the 1600s in Europe and America (a copy is available in "Teaching Resource Items" on the PowerPoint® CD):
 - My name is Thomas Gates. I was involved with the first permanent English settlement in America, located at Jamestown, Virginia. It was important to me that the churches in America be as much like the Church of England as possible. That is why I introduced the "Laws Divine, Moral and Martial." I made certain that religious observance was strictly enforced.

- My name is John Smyth. I was involved with a group of people known as Separatists, who separated from the Church of England. I became the founder of the first Baptist church in Europe, but many other Separatists remained committed to the idea of religious freedom only for those who agreed with their doctrines and religious practices. Some of the Separatists eventually founded a colony at Plymouth and another at Massachusetts Bay in America, both of which had church and state in close connection.
- My name is Thomas Helwys. I helped establish the first Baptist church in England and became one of many Baptists who were committed to religious freedom for everyone. Even though we experienced horrible persecution, we continued to worship according to our interpretation of the New Testament. Later on, in the American colonies, Roger Williams developed similar views and established the first Baptist church in America at Providence, Rhode Island.

Guide the Study

3. After the case studies have been read, reveal the following visual (PowerPoint® or markerboard):

Religious Freedom in Western Europe

The Church of England
(King Henry VIII in 1534)

Puritans

Sought reform of Church of England
from within; wanted religious freedom
for themselves, not everyone

Separatists

Separated from Church of England but supported union of church and state based on their belief system; wanted religious freedom for themselves, not everyone

John Smyth

Led Separatist group to Amsterdam from England; studied Greek NT; began first Baptist church

Baptists

Supported religious freedom for everyone and believed in separation of church and state

John Smyth	Confession of 1612
Thomas Helwys	Established first Baptist church in England
John Bunyan	<i>Pilgrim's Progress</i>

Review information in *Baptists and Religious Liberty* (pp. 43–47) on each of these topics to enable your group to gain a good understanding of what each of these groups believed and practiced in its approach to religious liberty. This information will help them understand better the role of each individual and group mentioned in our study with regard to religious freedom in America.

- As you present a lecture on the material in the next three sections of chapter three (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, pp. 47–60), record the following information on a visual (PowerPoint® or markerboard). Also, provide the visual in a handout for note-taking. (A copy is available in “Teaching Resource Items” on the PowerPoint® CD.)

The English Colonies

Little or no religious freedom

Jamestown—1607

Founded on commercial, not religious basis;
Church of England the established church

Pilgrims at Plymouth—1620

Founded on religious basis; religious
freedom only for themselves; church
and state enforced their beliefs

Church-State Union

Massachusetts Bay Colony—1630
Strong enforcement of Puritan
beliefs; “city on the hill”

Church-State Separation

Rhode Island Colony—1638
 (“the lively experiment”)
Roger Williams and Dr. John Clarke

Continued Persecution of Baptists

John Clarke, Obadiah Holmes, John Crandall

Religious Freedom Comes to America

Isaac Backus in New England
John Leland in Virginia
Patrick Henry; James Ireland

Revolution, Constitution, First Amendment

Articles of Confederation
Religious Freedom Omitted from Constitution
First Amendment

Baptist Role in Constitution and Bill of Rights

- John Leland and James Madison
- Fourteenth Amendment made First Amendment applicable to states—1868

Continued Development of Church-State Relations (Chapter Four)

5. After this presentation, summarize the two major themes of thought that prevailed in America in the 1600s as follows (see *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 60):
- “The City on the Hill”—Puritan ideal of a Christian society with laws based on the Bible, enforced by a government composed only of church members
 - “The Lively Experiment”—Religious freedom for everyone, based on separation of church and state

Then ask the group to give examples of how these two philosophies continue to influence our lives today. You may want to use one or more of the following topics to stimulate this time of discussion:

- (1) Legal battles regarding the observance of various religious practices in public schools
- (2) Disagreements in workplaces about the display of religious items or teachings
- (3) Protests to lawmakers regarding various issues related to separation of church and state
- (4) Attitudes toward people with different religious beliefs
- (5) Political advocacy by religious groups

Conclude this time of discussion by asking each person present to determine which of these two philosophies best represents what they would like to see functioning in their community.

Prepare for the Next Study

6. Call attention to the final portion of the chart regarding the focus of our next study. Challenge members to continue to think of additional examples in our day of actions that demonstrate the two philosophies just discussed. Remind them of our Baptist heritage regarding religious freedom for all people, regardless of their religious practices (or lack of them). Encourage everyone to continue to pray that God will deliver each of us from any attitudes or actions that might work contrary to this heritage.
7. Read (or invite someone to read) the two paragraphs in the “Conclusion” section of chapter three (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 60). Then ask members to reflect on the difference between toleration and freedom with regard to the way a society might practice religious liberty.

Additional Idea

Matching Activity

Give participants copies of the following matching quiz, and instruct them to match each name in column one with a statement from column two. (A copy is available in “Teaching Resource Items” on the PowerPoint® CD.)

Column One (People)	Column Two (Activities)
a. Roger Williams	_____ (1) Led his followers to Amsterdam where he formed a church more like the New Testament model.
b. Pilgrims at Plymouth	_____ (2) Established the first Baptist church on English soil.
c. John Smyth	_____ (3) Author of <i>Pilgrim’s Progress</i>

Column One (People)	Column Two (Activities)
d. John Leland	_____ (4) Came to the New World for religious freedom, but only for themselves.
e. Thomas Helwys	_____ (5) Helped establish the Massachusetts Bay Colony and referred to it as “a city on the hill.”
f. Isaac Backus	_____ (6) Established the first Baptist church in America.
g. John Bunyan	_____ (7) Helped establish a Baptist church at Newport and “brought the first legal sanction to religious liberty in America.”
h. Patrick Henry	_____ (8) Served as pastor of a Baptist church in Massachusetts and wrote about and lobbied for religious freedom.
i. Governor Winthrop	_____ (9) Influenced James Madison to support First Amendment, guaranteeing religious freedom.
j. Dr. John Clarke	_____ (10) Defended a Baptist preacher for the sake of religious freedom.

Following are the correct answers to this quiz: (1) c; (2) e; (3) g; (4) b; (5) i; (6) a; (7) j; (8) f; (9) d; (10) h. This exercise can be used as a pretest before the lecture presentation or as a posttest at the end of the session.

SESSION *Four*

Chapter Four, Religious Freedom and Church-State Separation

Introduce the Study

1. If you are using the road map display (session one, step 2), write the title of this chapter on the next road sign and attach it to your road map. If you placed the final destination sign on your map at the beginning of session three, add the addendum sign as suggested by the third paragraph of chapter three (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, pp. 61–62), “Positive relationship with God and an authentic Christian witness and ministry.” Point out that this, of course, would be our ultimate destination for the journey toward religious freedom.
2. As a time of review and preview, lead members to help you write down some of the main reasons religious freedom is so important to Baptists and some of the reasons so many wanted to limit or deny this concept. Record their responses and your suggestions on a markerboard divided into two columns. Label column one “Reasons for Religious Freedom” and column two, “Concerns About Religious Freedom.” (See *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, pp. 76–78, for assistance with ideas.) This activity is intended to help your group better understand the views on

both sides of this issue. The completed chart might resemble the following:

The Struggle for Religious Freedom	
Reasons for Religious Freedom	Concerns About Religious Freedom
1. God created us with religious freedom	1. Afraid of the demise of religion
2. Jesus reinforced this concept	2. Immorality and government instability
3. Fear of persecution	3. Would lead to religious anarchy
4. Long history of the failure of state religions	4. Government completely devoid of religion

Share with members that in this study we will be reminded of the natural progression of these two philosophies into a battle over the issue of the separation of church and state. Point out that those who fought for religious freedom also, naturally, fought for the separation of church and state and that those who believed so strongly in the union of church and state were willing to fight for this issue even though it would result in a denial of religious freedom for some people (those who were in disagreement with the designated state religion).

Guide the Study

- To help members gain a better understanding of the issues involved with separation of church and state, write the definitions of “state” and “church” on a markerboard. (Use the definitions found in *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, chapter four, pp. 62–63.) Also share the Scripture references related to each term. Include the following thoughts from page 63 under the appropriate term: *The church follows a voluntary pattern; the state uses coercion for legitimate ends. The church is not to seek the power or*

the financial support of the state for spiritual ends. The state is not to dictate doctrine, worship style, organization, membership, or leadership to the church. Emphasize that church and state “operate in separate realms with different methods” (Baptists and Religious Liberty, p. 63).

As you share additional information from chapter four, be certain to help participants understand the basic issues involved in the church-state relations struggle. Point out that many of the people involved in this struggle may have been in at least partial agreement about the importance of religious freedom, but they did not agree about how far it should go or about the nature of church-state relations. Ask members to discuss why they think this was so. Refer to the “Reasons” and “Concerns” information in step 2. Point out that chapter four focuses on how the *freedom* side of the issue came to gain support and momentum.

4. Consider using the following study questions to guide the study. You might ask participants to search through chapter four for answers. (A copy of these questions is available in “Teaching Resource Items” on the PowerPoint® CD if you wish to use them as handouts.)
 - a. What type of government is supported by Baptist beliefs about the Bible? (democracy; *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 64)
 - b. True or false? To this point in our study religious freedom has been rare and persecution has been common. (True; *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 64)
 - c. What governmental act brought an end to most of the harsh persecution in England in 1689? (The Act of Toleration; *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 65)
 - d. Rather than toleration, what was it that Baptists demanded? (Religious liberty; *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 65, including the quote from Truett)
 - e. In which American colony was the first experiment in religious freedom most successful? (Rhode Island; *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 66)

- f. In what two important historical documents of the United States was the idea of religious freedom not included? (The Articles of Confederation and the Constitution; *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, pp. 66–67)
 - g. Why were Baptists originally opposed to the ratification of the Constitution? (They demanded the inclusion of an amendment for religious freedom; *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 67)
 - h. What was the basis for Baptist belief regarding religious freedom and separation of church and state? (Basic biblical beliefs; *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 68)
 - i. What was the basis for the views of popular political leaders such as Thomas Jefferson regarding religious freedom? (Historical developments such as the Enlightenment; *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 68)
 - j. Which early leader of the United States used the phrase “wall of separation between Church & State” in a letter to the Danbury Baptist Association of Connecticut and praised Baptists for their support of church-state separation? (Thomas Jefferson; *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 70)
 - k. What early Baptist leader had a great influence on James Madison to write the First Amendment? (John Leland; *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 71)
 - l. Which state was influenced greatly by Isaac Backus to join in the ratification of the Constitution? (Massachusetts; *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, pp. 72–74)
 - m. Why did the First Amendment not eliminate all government-established churches in the United States? (Because each state had to agree to abide by that amendment; *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 75)
5. Remind members of the previous discussion (see step 2) regarding the basic reasons for a lack of total agreement regarding the true meaning of separation of church and state in the early days of our country and today. Add additional reasons as found in the section of chapter four titled “The Meaning of Separation of

Church and State” (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, pp. 75–76). Lead members to discuss the benefits and consequences of church-state separation as evidenced throughout history, including present-day events (see *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 79).

Prepare for the Next Study

6. Challenge members to continue reflecting on religious liberty and church-state separation. Point out that today some people lean more toward the “religious” side and others more toward the “liberty” side. Ask them to pray about how God would want them to respond to others who seem to be enjoying the benefits of religious freedom for themselves but with little or no regard for Baptist beliefs or concerns about religious freedom for everyone.
7. Encourage members to discover some examples from their local newspaper this next week that demonstrate the benefits of living in a country that has committed itself to the continuing experiment of religious liberty. Encourage them to bring these to the next session.

Additional Ideas

Questions

1. What are some examples of the continuing struggles in church-state relations in our day?
2. Can you think of religious leaders who seem to lean more toward the “religious” side and others toward the “freedom” side of the issue?
3. How would you answer this question, *What is more important to you, the truth, or the freedom to discover the truth?*

Scripture Activity

Prepare slips of paper containing the Scripture verses related to *state* and *church* in chapter four (select from Scriptures referred to on pp. 62–64 in *Baptists and Religious Liberty*). As you write each term on the markerboard, ask each person to determine which word their Scripture is best related to after reading the verse.

SESSION *Five*

Chapter Five, Church-State Separation: A Continuing Challenge

Introduce the Study

1. Add the next road sign to your *Freedom Road* map if you are using this visual (see session one, step 2). Enlist someone to read Galatians 5:13 as you place this sign on the road map. If anyone brought news articles related to the benefits of living in a country with religious liberty, ask that these be shared with the group at this point (see session four, step 7).
2. Distribute copies of the study sheets (see step 4) and pencils for participants who need them. This will give members an opportunity to record information and responses related to this study.
3. Enlist someone to read the opening quotation from E.Y. Mullins (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 80). Invite someone else to lead in prayer for a time of wisdom and guidance as we examine the difficulties of trying to be consistent in the administration of church-state separation.

Guide the Study

4. Prepare study sheets for members to use during this session. A copy of the study sheet (without the information in parentheses) is available in “Teaching Resource Items” on the PowerPoint® CD. Follow the headings in *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, chapter four, sharing information under each heading and adding information as indicated and as seems helpful. As the lecture is presented, ask members to write appropriate information on their study sheet. If time allows, encourage some to discuss their responses with the group.

Study Sheet

Church-State Separation: A Continuing Challenge

- I. Changes that Challenge Separation
 - A. The Relative Newness of Church-State Separation
 - (Decisions defining church-state relations were often controversial.)
 - (They still are.)
 - B. Increase in Size and Complexity of Both Government and Institutional Religion
 1. Government involvement in education (see also *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 85)
 - (Government aid for religious schools)
 - (Religious practices in public schools)
 - (Content of curriculum in public schools)
 2. Government involvement in health care (see also *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 85)
 - (Denominational health care institutions)
 - (Entanglement of church and state)
 - (Certain medical procedures)

3. Benevolence and human welfare (see also *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 86)
 - (Charitable care of people)
 - (Benevolence activities and ministries)
 4. Patriotism and national defense (see also *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 87)
 - (Pledge of Allegiance)
 - (Conscientious objectors for religious reasons)
 5. Government property and religious symbols and practices (see also *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 87)
 - (Manger scenes and the Ten Commandments)
 - (Religious symbols in military cemeteries)
 - (Religious symbols in government buildings)
- C. Rapidly Expanding Diversity of the Population
- (No longer only Christian religion in America)
 - (Difficulty in defining “what is religion”)
- D. Real or Perceived Threats to the Nation and Way of Life
- (Government responses to world threats)
 - (Inner struggles such as the Civil War)
 - (Shift in moral values and practices)
- E. Moral Issues Involving Government Legislation or Court Decisions
- (Abortion, capital punishment, the nature of marriage, homosexuality, medical research)
 - (The response to court decisions)
 - (Related issue: Do you support the right of people to express their views in these areas?)
- II. The Ongoing Role of the Courts
- A. The Supreme Court and Separation of Church and State
1. The Constitution the supreme legal authority
 2. The first provision of the First Amendment (The establishment clause)
 3. The second provision (The free exercise clause)

4. Full implementation of the First Amendment
 - (The Fourteenth Amendment in 1868)
 - (Supreme Court decision in 1940)
5. Two basic interpretations
 - (Strict separationist approach)
 - (Nonpreferentialist view)
- B. The Establishment Clause
 - (Various interpretations and tests)
 - (No national church)
 - (No direct payment to churches for religious activities)
- C. The Free Exercise Clause
 - (Freedom of groups and individuals to carry out religious activities)
 - (But not free to create public disturbance or nuisance, endanger well-being of themselves or others, or threaten public policy)
 - (Statement by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor)
 - (Statement by Justice Robert Jackson)
 - (Statement by James Madison)
- III. Conclusion
 - (Statement by E. Y. Mullins)
 - (Statement by Justice Sandra Day O'Connor)
5. If time allows, discuss more thoroughly those issues that may be more relevant for your group members. Some of your members may have been personally involved with one or more of these struggles in your community. Try to make application of the principles of decision-making used by the court system during this time of discussion.

Prepare for the Next Study

6. Share with members that specific Baptist contributions to the ongoing struggles in church-state relations were not dealt with

in this study but that this will become more of the focus for our next study. Invite members to try to recall any examples of controversy within our Baptist family that have stemmed from the difficulties of dealing with specific issues in the continuing struggles in church-state relations. State that we will try to keep these in proper perspective as we will be reminded of “The Baptist Devotion to Religious Freedom” in chapter 5.

Additional Ideas

Research Project

See whether any of the participants would like to research and report on some of the areas of controversy that have affected your community in the area of church-state relations. When the report is given, lead the group to try to apply the decision-making principles used by the judicial branch of our government to specific examples as they are being discussed. This activity might enable your members to become better prepared to become involved in one or more of these areas of controversy as opportunities occur.

Questions for Discussion

- (1) Why are many decisions regarding church-state relations so controversial?
- (2) What are some of the reasons for the growing number of points of controversy between church and state?
- (3) What area of our government is responsible for settling church-state issues?
- (4) To which of the controversies do some in the church welcome government involvement?

Agree-Disagree Activity

Write these five responses on a markerboard or poster: “Strongly Agree,” “Agree,” “Not Sure,” “Disagree,” “Strongly Disagree.” As each of the following statements is read, ask participants to indicate by a show of hands their response to each statement. Count the responses, and place a mark by each statement and tally the results to see how the class as a whole feels about each statement. (A copy of this exercise is available in “Teaching Resource Items” on the PowerPoint® CD.)

- (1) With a diverse population, both in religious beliefs and political theory, decisions defining church-state relations are often controversial.
- (2) Many of the areas of controversy would be lessened if there was a better distinction between church and government response to the various needs of our society.
- (3) Religions that do not practice religious freedom should not be allowed to exist in a nation that guarantees religious freedom.
- (4) The government should become more involved in correcting the various moral values and practices that are undermining our society.
- (5) The government should provide financial assistance to parents who pay school taxes but place their children in private schools.
- (6) Public schools should be allowed to include in their curriculum religious teachings that are relevant to the subject being studied.
- (7) No one should be allowed for religious reasons to be exempt from military service or from paying taxes.
- (8) As with all other liberties, freedom of religion is not without limits.

SESSION *Six*

Chapter Six, The Baptist Devotion to Religious Freedom

Introduce the Study

1. Add the next sign to your road map display (see session one, step 2) if you are using this visual. Read the opening quotation by William R. Estep at the beginning of chapter six (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 97). This quotation will remind members that we are getting closer to our final destination of complete religious freedom.
2. Share with members that in this session and the next we will be focusing on the reasons religious freedom is at the heart of all that Baptists believe and do as a church. Challenge members to consider these two sessions to be of such importance that they will want to memorize key elements in each study. Distribute memory cards (described in step 4) to each member at this time. Encourage members to schedule a few minutes each day for the next two weeks to commit this information to memory. A time of sharing with other members will be included in the final session.

Guide the Study

3. Write the following summary statements on the markerboard as you begin this study:
 - a. Religious freedom is a part of every core Baptist doctrine, polity, and practice.
 - b. Baptists stake their devotion to religious freedom on the word of God, the Bible.
 - c. The term “denomination” refers to a group that holds certain distinguishing beliefs.
 - d. Interpretations of beliefs may vary, but all Baptists have a unifying commitment to religious freedom.

Point out that these statements will serve as reference points throughout this study to remind participants that religious freedom is essential to everything Baptists do and believe.

4. Prepare six memory cards for each participant. The memory cards will contain the six Bible-based doctrines of Baptists on one side and a related freedom statement on the other side. These cards can be printed on index cards or other especially prepared cards. (A copy of the information is available in “Teaching Resource Items” on the PowerPoint® CD.) The information to be included on each memory card is as follows:
 - a. *Side one:* The Lordship of Jesus Christ—“Jesus deserves total allegiance, loving service, and absolute obedience.” *Side two:* Jesus did not delegate his authority to any earthly entity or office.
 - b. *Side one:* The Authority of the Bible—“The Bible is the sole written authority for Christian faith and practice.” *Side two:* “People ought to be free to read the Bible, interpret the Bible, and follow the teachings of the Bible as they understand them.”
 - c. *Side one:* Salvation by Grace through Faith Alone—Salvation is solely by grace and faith, not by works or any human effort. *Side two:* People should never be coerced into professing faith in Jesus.

- d. *Side one:* Soul Competency—People have the God-given competence to make choices in regard to God’s will. *Side two:* No one should be forced to affirm certain doctrines or to worship in particular ways.
- e. *Side one:* The Priesthood of All Believers—All believers in Christ are priests. *Side two:* Believer priests should be free from government or church interference to share and minister in Jesus’ name.
- f. *Side one:* Believer’s Baptism by Immersion—Baptism is by immersion. It follows conversion and never precedes it, and it is not necessary for salvation. *Side two:* “Baptists have never condoned baptisms forced on people by the power of governments and have refused to baptize infants.”

As you share information about each of these doctrines using the information in *Baptists and Religious Liberty* (pp. 99–109), encourage members to refer to their memory cards and add additional notes related to each statement.

- 5. As each doctrine is being studied, lead members to recall some of the examples of persecution mentioned in previous sessions, particularly those that relate to one or more of the doctrines. Allow a time of discussion related to the probable reasons for each persecution mentioned. Examples include the following (see *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, pp. 99–109):
 - a. *The Lordship of Christ.* Because Baptists would not acknowledge the authority of governments in matters of faith, they were condemned as traitors, anarchists, and seditionists. Because Baptists would not bow to the decrees of powerful church groups, they were condemned as heretics.
 - b. *The Authority of the Bible.* Baptists were condemned by the Roman Catholic Church because they worked to make the Bible accessible to all people and they challenged the role of the priesthood of the approved state religion.
 - c. *Salvation by Grace through Faith Alone.* Baptists have insisted on a person’s freedom to respond and the freedom from coercion to respond.

- d. *Soul Competency*. State religions always demanded that people practice their religion in specific ways. Baptists have refused to force anyone to worship or participate in any religious practice that violated the person's conscience.
- e. *The Priesthood of All Believers*. Baptists consider every believer to be a believer priest. As such, each believer has direct access to God rather than being forced to adhere to the priestly functions of the state church.
- f. *Believer's Baptism by Immersion*. Baptists actually violated the laws of the state when they refused to acknowledge infant baptism and practiced baptism of adults.

Prepare for the Next Study

- 6. Introduce the next study by sharing with members that religious freedom also was the foundation for Baptist polity and practices and that this will be the focus of our next session. Challenge members to memorize as many of their cards from today's study as possible since nine additional memory cards will be distributed at the next session.

Additional Idea

Questions for Discussion

- (1) On what document do Baptists base their strong belief in religious freedom? (The Bible)
- (2) Why did the Baptists' commitment to biblical doctrines result in such harsh persecution? (Because all of these beliefs ran contrary to the accepted state religion)
- (3) Which doctrine is the bedrock of all other doctrines for Baptists? (The Lordship of Christ)

- (4) Why was it so important to Baptists for every person to have access to a Bible? (Because having a Bible allowed the person to read and interpret it for himself or herself)
- (5) In what way did the Baptist doctrine of salvation run contrary to the accepted state religion? (The state religion taught that salvation must be forced on everyone and in accord with its view of salvation.)
- (6) Why does the belief in soul competency require an atmosphere of religious freedom? (Because liberty of conscience means no individual or group should attempt to force a person to believe or worship in ways that violate his or her conscience)
- (7) In what setting does the priesthood of the believer best function? (In a fellowship with other believer priests)
- (8) Why do Baptists oppose the concept of infant baptism? (Because baptism is for those who have put their faith in Christ as Savior and Lord, and babies are incapable of such faith)

SESSION *Seven*

Chapter Seven, Religious Freedom and Baptist Polity and Practices

Introduce the Study

1. Add the next sign to the *Freedom Road* display (see session one, step 2), and write the definition of *polity* on the markerboard: “Polity describes the organization, function, and governance of religious groups, including Baptists” (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 110). Share with members that we will see, once again, that such issues as polity and practices of Baptist churches are very much dependent on Baptists’ view of religious freedom.
2. Conduct a brief review of the doctrines from the previous study (see session six), and encourage those who have committed these doctrines to memory to help with this review. An alternate idea would be to have the members share their memory work in small groups.
3. Distribute the nine memory cards for this study as described in step 4. These can be used also by members to take notes during the lecture presentation of the material in this chapter. Encourage members to add these cards to their memorization schedule for this next week.

Guide the Study

4. Prepare nine memory cards that contain the polity and practices statements from this chapter on one side and the related freedom statements on the other side. Once again, you may use regular index cards or special cardstock. Following is the information to be written on each card (a copy of the information is available in “Teaching Resource Items” on the PowerPoint® CD):
 - a. *Side one:* Born-Again Church Membership—“A church is a fellowship of people who have followed Jesus as Lord voluntarily, experienced believer’s baptism voluntarily, and associated with one another voluntarily under Jesus’ lordship and the guidance of the Holy Spirit for worship, Christian nurture, and ministry.” *Side two:* People must be free to choose whatever fellowship of Christians the Holy Spirit leads them to be part of and to worship according to their conscience.
 - b. *Side one:* Congregational Church Governance—“Each member of the body of Christ ought to have an opportunity and responsibility to exercise his or her competency as a believer priest to find the will of Christ as decisions are made for the church.” *Side two:* The Bible is the guide for the two ordinances of a Baptist church, and people should be free to follow the Bible’s teachings about them.
 - c. *Side one:* Church Independence—“A Baptist church is to govern itself without any outside human direction or control.” *Side two:* “Church independence functions best where there is religious freedom, where no ecclesiastical or government authorities attempt to dictate to a church.”
 - d. *Side one:* Voluntary Cooperation—It is impossible for any one church to fulfill the total mandate of the Great Commission unless it voluntarily joins with other Baptist churches to accomplish worldwide endeavors. *Side two:* Freedom can be maintained if all entities involved understand and are committed to Bible-based polity.

- e. *Side one*: Evangelism—“Those who have found Christ as Lord have a responsibility to share the way to salvation with everyone everywhere in order that everyone might have opportunity to respond.” *Side two*: The freedom to share the gospel with anyone, anywhere, anytime, without fear of persecution, is included in the concept of religious liberty.
 - f. *Side one*: Missions—“The emphasis in missions is on being sent, or going, to a place or culture different from one’s home base.” *Side two*: “The development of religious liberty in our country provided opportunity for missionary endeavor, and a sense of responsibility by Baptists for missions enabled these endeavors to be carried out.”
 - g. *Side one*: Ministry to Total Human Need—“Ministry to meet total human need—physical, emotional, mental, social, as well as spiritual—is rooted in Baptist beliefs and polity based on the Bible.” *Side two*: “Individuals and churches should be free to choose which ministries to conduct apart from coercion by either government or religious authorities.”
 - h. *Side one*: Applying the Gospel to Problems in Society—“The application of the principles of Christianity calls for both ministry and social action.” *Side two*: Baptists believe that they, and all other people, ought to be free to express their convictions on social issues and to work to correct problems in society.”
 - i. *Side one*: Christ-centered Education—“The Baptist devotion to the authority of the Bible calls for people to be able to read and understand the Bible.” *Side two*: “Where religious freedom is lacking, people are denied access to all of the resources of such education.”
5. Either during or after the lecture presentation, involve participants in a time of discussion related to possible interpretations or applications of each statement of polity and practice. Do this by asking them to determine examples of controversial interpre-

tations or applications that some churches have given to each of these statements. (This discussion can, of course, be applied to their own church.) Here are some examples you may choose to use, according to the needs of your own teaching situation (the examples are related to the corresponding items in step 4):

- a. Some churches may require a series of special classes before church membership is granted to an individual or they may have different levels of church membership.
- b. Some churches may entrust the decision-making in their church to a smaller group of individuals such as trustees, elders, or church staff.
- c. Some churches may sign a document of agreement with a convention or association that was developed by that denominational group for purposes of including some and excluding others.
- d. Some churches may be large enough to decide not to partner with anyone except other churches who may be willing to pay them for the privilege.
- e. Some churches may be so uncommitted to evangelism that they engage in few or no evangelistic efforts.
- f. Some churches decide to use mission dollars for mission activities of their own choosing so as to involve only their own church rather than to engage in cooperative mission endeavors.
- g. Some churches choose to spend nearly all of their money on themselves and very little, if any, to help to meet the ministry needs of those in their community.
- h. Some churches choose not to become involved in any attempt to apply the gospel to the problems of our society.
- i. Some churches minimize the importance of education and in various ways emphasize indoctrination in their point of view.

Prepare for the Next Study

6. Encourage members to continue memorizing each of their cards. State that a time of sharing will be included in the next session.
7. Read the statement by Herschel Hobbs found at the beginning of our next chapter, which says, “If eternal vigilance is the price of freedom, it is especially true of religious liberty.” Share with members that each of us will be reminded in the next session of our responsibility to continue the fight for religious freedom. Remind the group that we must never forget the sacrifices of so many, including our Savior, to make such a precious gift available for each of us to enjoy today.

Additional Ideas

Evaluation Questions

Lead participants to develop a list of questions that can be used to evaluate their own church’s commitment to each of the polities and practices in this chapter. Consider these possibilities:

- (1) What are our church’s requirements for church membership?
- (2) How are decisions made in our church?
- (3) In what ways does our church celebrate our independence but also demonstrate cooperation?
- (4) What is our church’s evangelistic strategy?
- (5) How much does our church give to the cooperative program and other mission causes?
- (6) What community ministries does our church support and provide?

- (7) Has our church been involved in any efforts to correct social problems or express concerns regarding social issues?
- (8) What educational opportunities does our church provide to help members understand our doctrines, politics, and practices?

SESSION

Eight

Chapter Eight,

Religious Freedom: A Serious Responsibility

Introduce the Study

1. Add the final road sign to the *Freedom Road* map (see session one, step 2), and refer once again to the final sign of our ultimate destination which is “Religious Liberty” with the addendum, “Positive relationship with God and an authentic Christian witness and ministry.” Share with members that chapters six and seven reminded us of the inseparable connection between these two destinations. At this time, lead members to share with another person the results of their memory work to this point. (You may wish to divide into groups of two for this activity.) Challenge members to keep the memory cards available for review in the days ahead to encourage a continuing focus on religious liberty in their church and in their lives.
2. Write the following statements on the markerboard as you begin the study of this final chapter in our book:
 - Religious freedom is not free.
 - Religious freedom is fragile.

Ask members to recall a few of the examples studied in previous chapters that reveal the terrible price paid by many for

religious freedom. (You may want to use the dramatic readings idea described in the “Additional Ideas” section of session one.) To introduce this study, read the following: “Being fragile, freedom requires vigilant protection and appropriate use” (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 127). State that this thought will become the focus of our study for this session.

Guide the Study

3. Share with members that while outside forces certainly can threaten the continued existence of religious freedom and separation of church and state, the greatest threats will continue to be those from within our country and even from the religious community itself. Such threats may be the result of an uninformed religious community or of misunderstandings regarding the eventual outcome of certain beliefs if allowed to have an impact on religious freedom.
4. Distribute the “Threats Worksheet” at this time. (A copy is available in “Teaching Resource Items” on the PowerPoint® CD.) Lead participants to preview the statements on the worksheet before you continue the lecture. Ask each participant to place a check by any of the statements he or she may find acceptable, at least in part or in spirit. Then ask participants to listen for information during this presentation that will help them make a final decision about these statements with respect to maintaining the integrity of the separation of church and state. The worksheet is as follows:

Threats Worksheet

- (1) The claim is made that separation of church and state has caused secular humanism to become the “established” religion of the nation.

- (2) Reconstructionism advocates a society in which the Bible in general and the law of the Old Testament in particular would be the law of the land.
 - (3) We should base state and national legislation on Christian beliefs and practices; have Christian beliefs and practices taught in the public schools, including devotional Bible reading, prayer, and worship times; and encourage government leaders to acclaim publicly the United States as a Christian nation.
 - (4) It would be acceptable to have certain forms of vouchers for private schools, non-sectarian prayer in public schools and government events, tax funds for church-sponsored charitable efforts, and the display of religious symbols on government property.
5. Use the outline in chapter eight in *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, including the subheadings, to review the ideas in this chapter. Focus especially on the ideas under these headings, including the quotes from each section.
- a. Opposition to Church and State
 - “. . . The Christian religion is not, and never has been, the official religion of the nation.” (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 131)
 - “. . . The Declaration of Independence, as inspiring and significant as it is, is theistic and not distinctively Christian.” (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 132)
 - “The Constitution is the official judicial authority for the nation, and it has never been amended to reflect the ‘Christian nation’ approach.” (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 132)
 - “A nation is not Christian. People are.” (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 133)
 - ““The weight of history and the plain meaning in the language adopted argue persuasively that the founders rejected any kind of watered-down ‘non-preferentialism’ and certainly did not intend to establish a Christian theocracy.”” (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 135)

- b. Support of Church-State Separation
- “. . . Most historians agree that the founders intended to establish a nation that was not hostile to religion but neutral.” (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 136)
 - “Baptist strict church-state separationists indicate that schools ‘should accommodate the rights of students to practice their religion in ways that do not disrupt the education process or interfere with the rights of other students not to participate.’” (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 137)
 - “The argument that separation of church and state in the United States is hostile to religion is not accurate.” (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 137)
 - “Baptist separationists indicate that religion sometimes deserves and receives some special treatment in order to lift various government-imposed burdens.” (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 137)
 - “The nonpreferentialist support of religion, such as providing vouchers for religious schools, can cause numerous problems.” (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 138)
 - “For a church to engage in partisan political activity, such as endorsing candidates, carries many risks. . . .” (*Baptists and Religious Liberty*, p. 140)

Conclude the Study

6. Read the final two paragraphs from the “And Finally” section of *Baptists and Religious Liberty* (p. 144), including the words from “My Country, ’Tis of Thee.” Challenge members to determine specific actions they will take to promote the concepts of religious freedom and separation of church and state in their church and community. Share a few examples such as the fol-

lowing to stimulate their thinking (see also *Baptists and Religious Liberty*, pp. 140–142):

- a. Remain sensitive to Baptist voices speaking out on issues that might be detrimental to religious liberty and separation of church and state, and determine acceptable ways to voice responses that champion religious freedom.
- b. Participate in the distribution of materials dealing with separation of church and state and religious freedom.
- c. Generously support with prayer, time, and finances those organizations devoted to preserving religious freedom and separation of church and state.
- d. Actively support the various freedoms made available for us by embracing Baptist doctrines, polity, and practices.
- e. Encourage and support Baptists in other nations as they strive for freedom. Urge our government to affirm religious freedom throughout the world.
- f. Continue to review your memory cards of Baptist doctrines, polity, and practices.

Additional Ideas

Dramatic Presentation

If you used the dramatic readings idea from the “Additional Ideas” section of session one in this *Teaching Guide*, ask these three people to be prepared to share these readings again in this final study. If not used, consider enlisting the three readers for this study. Ask them to read these at step 2 in “Introduce the Study.”

Debate the Issues

If your class is small enough you may want to consider dividing into two groups. Give group one the four statements from the “Threats Worksheet” and ask them to be prepared to defend each of these statements. Ask the second group to take the statements from the lecture

outline in step 5 and prepare to discuss how each of the four statements given to group one can be a threat to separation of church and state and, thus, to religious freedom. (A copy of the lecture outline is available in “Teaching Resource Items” on the PowerPoint® CD.)

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