



THE SINNER'S PRAYER: GOSPEL OF CHRIST OR ANOTHER GOSPEL?

By Brett Hickey

A prominent young Baptist minister sent shockwaves through the evangelical world on March 1, 2013 when he derided the "Sinner's Prayer," a long-cherished Southern Baptist evangelistic tool.

David Pratt, a Southern Baptist, was labeled as "the youngest megachurch leader in America" by the New York Times when he took the reins of The Church at Brook Hills in Birmingham, AL, at age 26. Pratt gained further notoriety for his 2010 bestseller, *Radical: Taking Back Your Faith from the American Dream*.

Billy Graham's version of the "Sinner's Prayer" reads, "Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe You died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow You as my Lord and Savior. In Your Name. Amen."

Ted Olson, editor of Christianity Today, labeled the Prayer as "a hallmark of evangelical conversionism." Not all religionists agree with this assessment. In fact, conservative Christians have long denounced the "Sinner's Prayer" as a modern human substitute for the divinely ordained plan of salvation taught by the apostles. What alarmed Southern Baptists was that one so prominent within their group would object.

Olson quotes the portion of Pratt's message that ignited the firestorm in a June 20, 2012, article in Christianity Today titled, "Southern Baptists Debate the Sinner's Prayer": "I'm convinced that many people in our churches are simply missing the life of Christ, and a lot of it has to do with what we've sold them as the gospel, i.e. pray this prayer, accept

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Jesus into your heart, invite Christ into your life," Platt said. "Should it not concern us that there is no such superstitious prayer in the New Testament? Should it not concern us that the Bible NEVER uses the phrase, 'accept Jesus into your heart' or 'invite Christ into your life'? It's NOT the gospel we see being preached, it's modern evangelism built on sinking sand. And it runs the risk of disillusioning MILLIONS of souls" (emphasis BH).

While Platt's initial Luther-like boldness was admirable, he later buckled under the pressure brought to bear for his Bible-backed bravado. In a June 2013 article on ChristianityToday.com, Platt said he voted in favor of the Southern Baptist resolution "defend(ing) the use of a 'sinner's prayer' in evangelism." He added later, "Do I believe it is 'wrong' ... to pray a 'prayer of salvation'? Certainly not...."

Platt got it right the first time: the "Sinner's Prayer" was not part of the "gospel of Christ" taught in the first century but

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November TV Broadcast Schedule

11/6

Sermon #1068

"Is it a Small Thing to You?"

11/13

Sermon #1069

Lost and Found

11/20

Sermon #1070

Danger in Delay

11/27

Sermon #1071

The Compassion of the Christ

part of another gospel developed by Dwight L. Moody in the late 1800's and popularized in the 1950s by Billy Graham and Bill Bright. Paul issues a serious warning against developing gospels other than that preached in the first century (Galatians 1:6-9).

The real, soul-searching question is this: Why abandon the original gospel preached by the apostles?

Consider the plainness of Peter's response to the crowd crying out for an answer to their sin problem. These convicted Jews clearly believed Jesus Christ was the Son of God. Yet Peter, in answer to their pleading question "What shall we do?" did not congratulate them on being saved already by expressing their faith. Neither did he say, "Repent, accept Jesus as your personal Savior and pray the Sinner's prayer."

Instead, Peter said by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit." The faithful will not be ashamed of the gospel of Christ; they will reject all substitutes and demonstrate genuine faith by obeying the gospel revealed in the New Testament (Romans 10:16; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9).



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Upcoming Gospel Meetings

November 2-6

CHURCH OF CHRIST on Green Oaks

4601 S.W. Green Oaks Blvd.

Arlington, TX

Speaker: Ronny Wade

7:30 pm (2nd - 4th)

6:00 pm (5th)

10:00 am & 2:30 PM (6th)

November 9-13

CHURCH OF CHRIST in Grapevine

713 North Lucas Drive

Grapevine, TX

Speaker: Ron Courter

7:30 pm (9th - 11th)

6:00 pm (12th)

10:00 am & 2:00 pm (13th)

November 11-13

East Allen CHURCH OF CHRIST

1008 E. Exchange Parkway

Allen, TX

Speaker: Austin McConnell

7:30 pm (11th)

6:00 pm (12th)

10:30 am & 2:00 pm (13th)

We support Brett Hickey's message, and the truths taught in the Bible for all mankind. We assist bringing this TV program to the north Texas area, and are glad you have watched the program! We would like you to visit any of our worship services!

Allen

East Allen CHURCH OF CHRIST

1008 E. Exchange Parkway
Allen, TX

Arlington

CHURCH OF CHRIST on Green Oaks

4601 S. W. Green Oaks Blvd.
Arlington, TX

Bridgeport

East Mound CHURCH OF CHRIST

Highway 2123, 1.5 miles south of town
Bridgeport, TX

Canton

Phalba CHURCH OF CHRIST

Hwy 198 between Maybank & Canton
at Hwy 316 intersection
Phalba, TX

Cleburne

South Walnut CHURCH OF CHRIST

306 South Walnut Street
Cleburne, TX

Dallas

Dallas CHURCH OF CHRIST

122 Carol Lane
Red Oak, TX

Dallas (Spanish speaking services)

Dallas CHURCH OF CHRIST

2802 Walton Walker Boulevard
Dallas, TX

Duncanville

Duncanville CHURCH OF CHRIST

1615 Stratford Lane
Duncanville, TX

Fort Worth

Fossil Creek CHURCH OF CHRIST

3517 North Beach Street
Fort Worth, TX

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CHURCH OF CHRIST in Frisco

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Frisco, TX

Grapevine

CHURCH OF CHRIST in Grapevine

713 North Lucas Drive
Grapevine, TX

Lewisville

Denton county CHURCH OF CHRIST

1305 S. Business State Highway 121,
Suite 105
Lewisville, TX

Mineral Wells

Mineral Wells CHURCH OF CHRIST

300 Southeast 15th Street
Mineral Wells, TX

Paris

Paris CHURCH OF CHRIST

35 13th Street S.E.
Paris, TX

Rockwall

Northview CHURCH OF CHRIST

NE corner of I-30 Frontage & Industrial
Blvd
Rockwall, TX

Weatherford

Bankhead Drive CHURCH OF CHRIST

2610 East Bankhead Drive
Weatherford, TX