

Why the Bridge Network of Churches (Formerly the Norfolk Baptist Association) needs to address “The Circle Maker” Heresy being taught at South Norfolk Baptist Church
–Rev. Joseph Hughes

Many years ago, my father took a stand against the “Unity School of Christianity” philosophical heresy that was starting to take root in First Baptist Church, Norfolk, because of a naïve pastor (this was before they moved to their Newtown Road location). As Moderator, my father and the other minister members of the Norfolk Baptist Association, along with the Association Director, stood up to the pastor of First Baptist, who was trying to bring the Unity School heresy, including “Unity School” doctrinal cult Sunday School literature, into First Baptist. The First Baptist pastor had gone to a "church growth" seminar hosted by Unity School at Lees Summit, Mo.; then came back to Norfolk, and tried to employ the heresy he had been taught there. My father and the other ministers of the Norfolk Baptist Association were successful in saving that church for the Lord’s Work, and that heretical pastor left.

Here is a short history of the Unity School of Christianity cult, and what they believe:

Unity School of Christianity

Unity is a Gnostic cult like Christian Science, except Christian Science denies the literal existence of matter, while Unity acknowledges that God can express Himself in matter and in mind. Founded by Charles and Myrtle Fillmore in 1889, Unity is just another bad apple from the corrupt tree planted by Phineas P. Quimby, whose theories about mental healing also inspired Mary Baker Eddy (founder of the cult, Christian Science). They began a publication titled *Modern Thought* in 1889 and then changed it to *Christian Science Thought* a year later. Mary Baker Eddy, who founded the Christian Science cult, objected to the Fillmores using her group's name, so they changed it to *Thought*. In the 1890's, the Fillmores became very interested in Hinduism and Yogaism, which brought about their beliefs in reincarnation and vegetarianism.

This cult school is still operated by the Fillmore family. Unity Village, the cult's headquarters, is located in Lees Summit, Missouri. They have a huge printing operation, which produce such publications as *Wee Wisdom* for

children (a Sunday school quarterly), *Good Business* for working men, and a weekly devotional titled *Weekly Unity*. Dr. Walter Martin (who wrote a very definitive book on the cults titled, "Kingdom of the Cults") says that Unity is "probably the most inoffensive of all the cults." Unity followers are allowed to remain in the churches of their choice while subscribing to the Unity publications.

Like Christian Science, the heresies of Unity are numerous. Some are listed below:

1. Deity of Man
2. Denial of Blood Atonement
3. Denial of Deity of Christ
4. Denial of Deity of Holy Ghost
5. Denial of Eternal Security
6. Denial of Literal Burning Hell
7. Denial of the Physical Resurrection of Christ
8. Denial of Literal Second Coming of Christ
9. Denial of Sin Nature from Birth
10. Denial of the Trinity
11. Denial of the Virgin Birth
12. Multiple Authorities
13. Reincarnation
14. Salvation through Works

[Here is a copy of the letter Dad sent to the pastors of the Association, which summed up what had happened at First Baptist Church, Norfolk:](#)

SOUTH NORFOLK BAPTIST CHURCH

FRANK HUGHES, JR.
PASTOR

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Dear Brother,

On October 28, 1966, I promised to communicate with you concerning our mutual interest in reference to First Baptist Church of Norfolk.

Several of our churches, and all of our pastors have been deeply anxious in regard to the "Unity" movement in Norfolk. We have sought to share with all the pastors the correctional measures taken by the Association.

Your Moderator is aware of the dangers of "Unity" and is not in favor of compromise or toleration of such heresy within the Norfolk Baptist Association.

Therefore, I have given hours of valuable time to conferences, telephone conversations, letter writing, etc., all in the direction of getting at the root of the problem. We have been at work on this situation and have through the Lord's guidance been able to perfect some worthwhile results.

Now, as I stated on Friday, October 28, I am sending you the recorded account of our stewardship in this regard.

1. Norfolk Baptist Association Denounced "Unity".

(Resolution from First Colonial requested The Association to make a declaration of its position.)

March 22, 1966 - The Executive Committee of Norfolk Baptist Association passed the following proposal. The Minutes read:

"The Vice-Moderator, Mr. Mike Mason, recognized Rev. Frank Hughes Jr., for a proposal with reference to the resolution made at the semi-annual meeting, which proposal was as follows:

"I move that the Executive Committee of the Norfolk Baptist Association make a declaration of our agreement with the generally accepted articles of faith of Baptists (including the statement of "The Baptist Faith and Message" adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention in 1925, and as revised in 1963) (Southern Baptist Convention 1963 Annual Page 269);

"That we express our concern over and disapprobation of any movements (such as the Unity School of Christianity, New Thought, Christian Science, and similar cults) which are contrary to these declarations of faith concerning the Nature and Person of Christ and the related basic doctrine of Salvation." The motion carried.

"It was moved that this action be sent to the Church Clerks in the Association and that it be shared with the congregations at their next business meeting. The motion carried."

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(A COPY OF THESE MINUTES ALSO ARE MAILED EACH MONTH TO THE PASTORS OF OUR CHURCHES AND TO EACH LAY MEMBER ON THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE).

2. Statements By Officers Of The Association.

(Resolution from First Colonial requested a hearing before the Executive Committee for Dr. John Brown, Mr. E. G. Ayers, and Mrs. Idella Treakle.)

September 6, 1966 - The Executive Committee Minutes contains the following record of their statements.

Dr. Brown:

"As there is apparently some concern about the faith, doctrine and church relationship of the Executive Secretary of the Norfolk Baptist Association, I am happy to make the following statement:

"I believe in God the Father, Creator and Sustainer of the universe, who is the only living and true God. I believe in Jesus Christ, His Son and my Saviour and Lord, who through my acceptance of Him and His atoning death on my behalf, takes away the guilt of my sin and makes possible my fellowship with God. I believe in the Holy Spirit, who indwells the Christian, admonishing, instructing and leading. I am a Christian by choice. I am a Baptist by choice. I am a Southern Baptist by choice. It is my intention to remain a Southern Baptist, by God's grace doing my best to bear my witness of Him and what He has done for me."

On October 28 at the Special Conference Dr. Brown said in the presence of us all, "I do not believe in Unity."

Mrs. Idella Treakle:

"Mrs. Treakle said that she knew she was a Christian and considered herself a Baptist, and with Dr. Brown's permission, she would repeat the statement he had just made."

On October 28 at the Special Conference, Mrs. Treakle said in the presence of us all "I do not intend to embrace "Unity" and I am not a follower of "Unity".

Mr. E. G. Ayers:

"At this point Mr. Ayers said that he was not a part of Unity and that his interest was in the Baptist work, and he planned to continue in the Baptist faith and practice."

Also, at the October 28th Conference, Mr. Ayers stood and gave his testimony of loyalty to our Baptist work and his denial of any connection with Unity. He also said he never attended any of the classes taught in "Unity". He further stated that the First Church of Norfolk was seeking a Southern Baptist Pastor.

3. Statement From The First Church Of Norfolk.

September 6, 1966 - Minutes of the Executive Committee contain this statement:

"Mr. R. L. Burchett, chairman of Deacons of First Baptist Church, substituting in the pastor's place, renounced Unity and stated that the church anticipates calling a Southern Baptist Pastor."

During the October 28th Special Conference, Mr. E. G. Ayers said that a woman "Teacher of Unity" had approached the church recently about using a class room at First Baptist of Norfolk for the purpose of teaching Unity. This request was emphatically denied.

4. Resolutions Of First Colonial Church.

- (1) The June 1966 Resolution called for efforts to restore First Church to Baptist practices.

Tabled - After much discussion June 28, 1966 at the Executive Committee Meeting.

At the Special Conference on October 28th, Dr. Ernest Honts, Pastor, Talbot Park Baptist Church, explained that efforts were being made to guide First Church of Norfolk and that ground work was being done in the interest of saving the church from "Unity". Since that was the case, the feeling prevailed that the resolution should be tabled. It was in no way a rebuff to First Colonial Church. But simply that something was being done and that patience should prevail.

Removed from the Table - September 6, 1966.

"Mr. Richard Moore, Pastor, Centerville Baptist Church, moved that the resolution which was placed on the table in June be removed from the table." Carried.

Action by the Association as recorded in September 6, 1966 Minutes:

"Rev. T. L. Alexander, Pastor, Central Baptist Church, moved that we accept the statements made by Mr. Burchett, Mr. Ayers, and Mrs. Treacle, concerning First Baptist Church, as satisfactory to this body." Carried.

- (2) The July 27, 1966 Resolution called for a hearing of the officers. (Statements by the officers were made and recorded in September 6, 1966 Minutes. They are given in Section 2 of this letter.)

Action by the Association is recorded as follows:

"Mr. Waters moved that the statements be acceptable to this body as made."

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Substitute Motion - "Mr. DeFoe moved that the Executive Committee accept the statements as being satisfactory to the committee and that this record be sent to First Colonial Church." The motion carried.

(3) The July 27, 1966, Resolution contained two elements:

First, it charged the Association with tolerating Unity, and treating First Colonial Church and her pastor with contempt and disdain.

Second, it stated the intentions of First Colonial in future relationship with Norfolk Association.

Action by the Association as recorded in September 6, 1966 Minutes.

"The Committee felt that they had no control over the intentions expressed in the resolution, and Dr. W. L. Lumpkin, Pastor, Freemason Street Baptist Church, moved that the testimony of the three members of First Church be accepted as satisfactory evidence of the orthodox position and co-operative intention of First Baptist Church." Carried.

* * * * *

This is the record of action taken on the Resolutions offered by First Colonial Church.

They were prayerfully dealt with as we treasure the fellowship of First Colonial, and we desire the membership be informed of the actions by the Norfolk Association.

Finally, it is impossible for me to convey to you in this letter all of the detailed efforts undertaken by your Association in seeking to exterminate "Unity". I, as your Moderator, had private conferences with Rev. E. I. Moshier, Pastor of First Church, and also some of the deacons of the church. I discussed with him our position and even the sensitive subject of his resignation as pastor for correctional purposes. Rev. Moshier has resigned and has moved from the city, therefore, the teacher of Unity is no longer in our midst. The First Church is seeking a Southern Baptist Pastor. And it appears that our prayers have been answered, and the church has been saved for our Baptist people.

I trust these facts have given you a clearer understanding of the problem, and that First Colonial will continue in a harmonious fellowship with the Norfolk Baptist Association. We need each other in this day of crises in our world. I feel this is a great time of Christian opportunity. I assure you that I will work with First Colonial Church in maintaining our Baptist practices and doctrine according to the New Testament, and I will prayerfully deal fearlessly with any heresy which may arise.

Sincerely,

(Signature omitted for security reasons)

Frank Hughes, Jr.
Moderator-Norfolk Bpt. Assoc.

You will notice that the church was disciplined, until it admitted its error, made a statement of commitment to Baptist doctrine, and was readmitted. That pastor of First Baptist was asked to resign, which he did.

So my question is: Why is the current Norfolk Baptist Association, aka, Bridge Network of Churches, silent concerning the blatant heresy of “The Circle Maker” now being endorsed at South Norfolk Baptist Church by Pastor Slayton? Is it because it is being sanctioned by someone in authority at the Association? And is it being endorsed for use in other Baptist churches in the Association? Deacons, why are you not standing up for what is right? It’s time for the Bridge Network Association to take a stand, and stop endorsing, even silently, this heresy.

A further question is in order: Why did the Bridge Network hire David Slayton as a “Consultant” for the Association, knowing he was teaching this Heresy?

I will not remain quiet, when I see new types of heresy taking root in the church that I grew up in, where I became a Christian, where I was Baptized, and loved; where I learned to study the Bible, memorize scripture, witness to the lost.

If you’re wondering if the word “heresy” is too strong, consider the Merriam-Webster Dictionary definition:

- “1. A belief or opinion that does not agree with the official belief or opinion of a particular religion.
2. An opinion or doctrine contrary to church dogma.
3. Dissent or deviation from a dominant theory, opinion, or practice.
4. An opinion, doctrine, or practice contrary to the truth or to generally accepted beliefs or standards.”

Dr. Charles Stanley gave these definitions in his sermon, “False Doctrine”:

Doctrine: A body of teaching used as a standard of Orthodoxy.

False Doctrine: A belief that doesn’t match the Word of God.

Heresy: A deliberate denial of revealed truth, together with the acceptance of error and a self-willed opinion in opposition to Biblical truth.

Under that rubric, the word “heresy” is appropriate.