



**How Decisionism Is
Destroying Our Churches**

Today's Apostasy

**R. L. HYMERS, JR.
CHRISTOPHER CAGAN**

TODAY'S APOSTASY

How "Decisionism" is Destroying Our Churches

by

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Many have noticed that the spiritual condition of this generation is comparable to the days of Noah, but few have understood how such apostasy came about. How did so many denominations become apostate in the last hundred years? Why do 74% of our people claim to be saved without this having a more positive effect on our crumbling society? Why do so many preachers commit immorality? Why do our churches seem unable to hold on to most of their young people? Why no major revival for over ninety years? This book gives an answer to those questions.

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DISCLAIMER

The people or sources mentioned in this book do not necessarily carry the endorsement of Dr. Hymers, Dr. Cagan, or the Baptist Tabernacle of Los Angeles.

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DR. CAGAN

Christopher Cagan is a graduate in mathematics from the University of California at Los Angeles (B.A., M.A., Ph.D.). He was a teaching assistant in mathematics at UCLA for several years prior to his conversion. He is also a graduate of Talbot Theological Seminary (M.Div.) and the Claremont Graduate University (M.A., Ph.D.). His second Ph.D. dissertation was written on the subject of apologetics. He is a published expert in the field of stock market analysis, and is currently employed as a statistical analyst. Dr. Cagan's wife, Judith, is a medical doctor. They are the parents of two boys, John Samuel and David. Dr. Cagan is the director of education at the Baptist Tabernacle. He has been Dr. Hymers' associate for more than twenty-nine years.

This book is dedicated to the memory of

Dr. Hymers' mother

CECELIA

(May 20, 1913 - December 18, 1997)

She sat beside him and encouraged him as he worked on the final copy of this book. Her own conversion at the age of eighty was instrumental in motivating us to write it.

and to

DR. HENRY M. McGOWAN

He and his late wife, Joyce, took Dr. Hymers to a Baptist church when he was thirteen years old.

Without their encouragement
he would not be a pastor today.

Quotations in this book, from sources other than the Bible, do not imply our full endorsement of everything the person we have quoted has written or said, even in the same book we have cited. We have quoted men favorably who hold various views. We ourselves are independent fundamental Baptists. We hold the historic Baptist position on all essential points. We strongly believe in baptizing the saved, and baptizing them only by immersion. We hold to the autonomy and absolute authority of the local church. We quote only from the KJV, though we reserve the right to refer to the Masoretic Text Hebrew and the Textus Receptus Greek, from which the King James Bible was translated, as did our Baptist forefathers.

This book gives names of those who are in error, as the Bible does. Matthew names Judas and names his sin (Matthew 26:14-16, 47-49); Genesis names Adam and names his sin (Genesis 3:6-19); the Bible gives David's name and his sins (II Samuel 11:1-12:18); the Bible names Ananias and Sapphira (Acts 5:1-11), Herod (Acts 12:1), Demetrius the silversmith (Acts 19:24-28), Alexander the coppersmith (II Timothy 4:10), Cain, Balaam, Korah (Jude 11) and many others, in nearly every book of both the Old and New Testaments. We follow the example of God's Word and give the names of those who are in error.

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"Remember the days of old,
consider the years of many
generations" (Deuteronomy 32:7).

"Ask for the old paths, where is the
good way, and walk therein, and
ye shall find rest for your souls"
(Jeremiah 6:16).

FOREWORD

by

Dr. John S. Waldrip
Calvary Road Baptist Church
Monrovia, California

Dr. Hymers and Dr. Cagan have rediscovered some of the old paths of evangelistic preaching and personal counselling, paths all but given up in many of our churches.

My own involvement in this type of ministry started with a conversation. I introduced myself to Dr. Hymers at a preachers' get together we both attended. As preachers do, we began to discuss things Biblical and theological. At some point he asked me, "You counsel all your church members yourself, don't you?" I assured him that I did. He then said in his soft voice, "But you let someone else deal with them about their salvation, don't you?" That struck a chord in my heart. Nothing is more important than getting saved. It started me thinking.

Our nation is dying. Our way of life has almost disappeared from the scene. Our culture has been wrenched from our grasp and replaced by a cruel and hateful paganism. This has happened because Christianity in America has become impotent. The problem began when preachers stopped listening to the sinners who responded to their Gospel sermons after they stepped down from their pulpits. As a result of not listening to sinners who responded to the call of the Gospel, preachers gradually lost touch with those to whom they were preaching.

When people said they wanted to get saved, I discovered that I didn't know what they meant, or what they really believed, because I never asked them. Saved from what? I never knew. Saved by whom? I had not a clue concerning who they meant when they said "Jesus," because there are so many false concepts of Christ today.

R. L. Hymers has a vigorous church in the civic center of Los Angeles because he has resorted to an old fashioned practice employed by nearly every Gospel-preaching, Christ-exalting pastor in the English speaking world before Charles G. Finney changed evangelism in the last century. Instead of shaking everyone's hand after church, Hymers actually listens to sinners. He stays

behind in his office for an hour or so after every service to do this with a few trained counsellors. That's something every preacher used to do, but few do it today. Dr. Hymers listens to sinners.

The goal of this book is to get preachers and counsellors to listen. Why? Dr. Hymers and Dr. Cagan show the horrible results of not doing so. Not listening has produced hundreds of thousands of lost church members, including lost preachers. It is not at all uncommon these days to hear of pastor after pastor falling into adultery, and then resuming his pastorate at another church, too often with another wife! And it's really no different with church members. How many medium to small sized churches have a group of qualified deacons anymore? Many of our churches are dying because pastors are not taking time to listen and make sure the people are in Christ.

I watched Dr. Hymers doing personal work after he preached a few times. After he concluded, I questioned him. At times I challenged him. And I examined the results. For three years now I have been listening to sinners who respond to my Gospel sermons. This is spiritual obstetrics, bringing sinners into the new birth. This is wrestling for anxious souls. This is spiritual warfare. Oh, how I love this work. I never knew what being an under-shepherd was before I began it. I knew what preaching was. I knew what counselling was. But being a shepherd?

Sheep have a very high mortality rate when lambing time comes on a sheep ranch, if the shepherd isn't right there to "pull" those lambs. It seems that God created sheep in such a way that they need shepherds to help the birthing process. Men of God, back in the days when life was more rural and agricultural, knew this and did this. Now I do this. When it's lambing time at my church, when I've concluded my message, I am right there "pulling" those lambs. I'm sitting with them, one by one, listening to sinners and pointing them to the Savior. I have found that it's worthwhile knowing what those sinners think about subjects which determine whether they spend eternity in Heaven or Hell.

Read this book. It could be the most important thing you read this year, because it will make you think about effective evangelism.

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"The dark days that preceded the Great Awakening will come again unless somebody stands firmly and clearly and decidedly by the doctrine of a converted church-membership."

- Rev. F. L. Chapell,

"The Great Awakening of 1740" (written in 1903).

"How did the scourge of modernism ever succeed in wiping out the true Gospel from so many Western Protestant denominations over the last hundred years? And what caused countless evangelical churches to capsize before the tide of 'worldly' Christianity which arose only three decades ago?"

- Dr. Peter Masters,

Pastor of Spurgeon's Tabernacle (written in 1976).

"Many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many"
(Matthew 24:11).

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith"
(II Corinthians 13:5).

"Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again"
(John 3:7).