

Max Lucado

We have often been asked about Max Lucado. Brother Lucado is our erring brother in Christ, and is presently the pulpit minister of the Oak Hills Church in San Antonio, Texas. Many months ago, the church decided to remove "of Christ" from their former name, "Oak Hills Church of Christ." Denominationalists are now asking us for distinction in where the church of Christ stands. We may be asked if we are of the "old group," or more likely, "Do you endorse Max Lucado?" In other words, "Do you still preach the old 'church of Christ' (Bible) doctrines?" is what they really want as an identifier. Lifted directly from the Baptist Press News, so you can answer sensibly, here is where brother Lucado stands.

1.) Baptist Press—Lucado's church is Church of Christ but not a typical Church of Christ. For starters, musical instruments are used (although there is still one a capella service). Also, the church has a baptistic view of baptism, that is, that baptism isn't required for salvation. Recently, his church, which has some 5,000 members, even changed its name from "Oak Hills Church of Christ" to simply "Oak Hills Church."

2.) Lucado: "I was really struck that many people would not visit our church because of the name. They had a bad experience somewhere with the Church of Christ. I've never had an allegiance to the name. Oak Hills has never fit into that mold of a Church of Christ.. There are people in the Church of Christ who believe that they're the only ones going to heaven. We never believed that. I never believed that. We were never exclusively a capella in our music, but a lot of Churches of Christ are. We always had instrumentation."

3.) Lucado: "We never taught—the buzz phrase is baptismal regeneration, where you go into the baptistery lost and come out saved. We never taught that. Now, I'm not saying there were not people in our church who believed that.. I think our church just felt like we needed to have a clearer stand. There are those who have taught that baptism is necessary for salvation, as if baptism adds to the finished work of Christ. We have felt that baptism is necessary for obedience, but that baptism doesn't add to what Christ does for us in the cross, and doesn't add to what a person receives by faith."

4.) Lucado: "I've always had plenty of ministry opportunities, but I have suspected a

disconnect when people say, 'I don't understand your understanding of grace when you come out of a Church of Christ background.' I've tried to help them see, first of all, that not all Churches of Christ are alike just like not all Baptists or Methodists or Lutheran churches are alike and then also, that there is a great movement of grace, discovery going on among Churches of Christ right now. And it's exciting to watch. I believe that if a person is genuinely saved they're eternally saved, and that the work of the Holy Spirit-Ephesians 1:13, 'When you believed you were sealed with the Spirit' that sealing is effective and eternal. If a person is genuinely saved, then nobody can snatch them out of the Father's hands. That's a discovery that I have made in the last decade or so that I don't think I embraced early on. But when you discover that salvation belongs to the Lord and doesn't belong to you, that is good news."

Added to the Baptist Press coverage, we learn from bro. Max himself that a Pentecostal taught him about prayer, a Baptist taught him about grace, and a Catholic taught him about the tenderness of Jesus. Most of us learned all that from God's Word.

In a radio program as far back as 1996, he denied the necessity of baptism by appealing to sinners to accept the invitation, saying all they needed to do was to pray and ask God to accept them. He then compounded the error by saying: "I want to encourage you to find a church. I want to encourage you to be baptized. I want to encourage you to read your Bible. But I don't want you to do any of that so you will be saved. I want you to do all of that because you are saved..."

Probably the most definitive, the most accurate thing that brother Lucado and the Oak Hills Church has done in the last few years was to remove Christ from their name. Although digressive

from the start, with the gross sectarian doctrines they now embrace.. .salvation by faith only, baptism is not essential to salvation, a Christian cannot fall from grace-with these added to their charge, they had long since surrendered any semblance to the church of the New Testament that Jesus built, —jj