

A composite image showing a church service. In the foreground, a band of six people (three women and three men) are performing on a stage decorated with flowers. They are wearing formal attire. In the background, a white church with a tall steeple is visible. A pastor in a suit is seen speaking into a microphone on the right side of the church. The sky is dark and cloudy.

Why Most Independent
Baptist Churches
Will be **EMERGING**
within 20
Years

eBook Series:
Issues Facing the Churches

David Cloud

*Why Most Independent Baptists Will Be Emerging
Within 20 Years*

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Dakota wrote: “If I were going to the mission field and could carry only three books, they would be the Strong’s concordance, a hymnal, and the *Way of Life Bible Encyclopedia*.” Missionary author Jack Moorman says: “The encyclopedia is excellent. The entries show a ‘distilled spirituality.’” A computer edition of the Encyclopedia is available as a standalone eBook for PDF, Kindle, and PUB. It is also available as a module for *Swordseacher*.

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The Collapse of Separatism

“A prudent man foreseeeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished” (Proverbs 22:3).

We are witnessing a widespread collapse of separatism. Over the past 50 years, fundamental Baptists have composed the largest part of the separatist movement, but fundamental Baptist churches today, in general, are radically different in character from what they were when I was saved in 1973.

What is happening now among fundamental Baptist churches is exactly what happened within evangelicalism in the 1950s. It is the rejection of “separatism.” When I was saved nearly 40 years ago, the major thing that distinguished fundamental Baptists from Southern Baptists was biblical separation, but that distinction is disappearing and there is a merging of philosophy.

From its inception, the hallmark of New Evangelicalism was the rejection of separation. Harold Ockenga, who claimed to have coined the term “neo-evangelicalism” in 1948, defined it as “A REJECTION OF SEPARATISM” (foreword to Harold Lindsell’s *The Battle for the Bible*).

The New Evangelicalism aimed at a more positive and pragmatic philosophy as opposed to the “negativism and isolation” of fundamentalism.

In a speech he gave in 1947 at the founding of Fuller Theological Seminary, Ockenga said:

“We repudiate the ‘Come-outist’ movement which brands all denominations as apostate. We expect to be positive in our emphasis, except where error so exists that it is necessary for us to point it out in order to declare the truth” (Garth Rosell, *The Surprising Work of God: Harold John Ockenga, Billy Graham, and the Rebirth of Evangelicalism*, 2008, p. 176).

Ockenga represented the changing mood of the sons of the old fundamentalists. They were tired of exposing error and separating from compromised denominations and churches. They were tired of fighting. That new generation of evangelicals determined to abandon a militant Bible stance. They wanted a more positive face on their Christianity.

New Evangelical philosophy has swept the globe. Today it is no exaggeration to say that those who call themselves evangelicals are New Evangelicals; the terms have become synonymous. Old-line evangelicals, with rare exceptions, either have aligned with out-and-out fundamentalist separatists or have adopted New Evangelicalism.

Ernest Pickering observed: “Part of the current confusion regarding New Evangelicalism stems from the fact that there is now little difference between evangelicalism and New Evangelicalism. The principles of the original New Evangelicalism have become so universally accepted by those who refer to themselves as evangelicals that any

distinctions which might have been made years ago are all but lost. It is no doubt true to state that ‘Ockenga’s designation of the new movement as *New or Neo-Evangelical* was abbreviated to *Evangelical*. ... Thus today we speak of this branch of conservative Christianity simply as the Evangelical movement” (*The Tragedy of Compromise*, p. 96).

What happened to evangelical churches in the 1950s is happening to fundamental Baptist churches today.

The doctrine of biblical separatism is being rejected at breathtaking speed and the bridges that are subsequently built to the “broader church” are resulting in spiritual corruption.

General Association of Regular Baptists (GARBC)

The General Association of Regular Baptists (GARBC) were staunchly separatist when I was saved in 1973. The first church I joined was pastored by the dean of one of their colleges. They were very conservative and separatistic. They had high standards of separation from the world with a biblical emphasis on genuine holiness and following biblical principles rather than mere external conformity. They were dead set against New Evangelicalism. Some of the GARBC writings on separation, such as “A Limited Fellowship or a Limited Message” by David Nettleton, helped me greatly as a young Christian.

By the 1990s, though, the GARBC was well down the path of New Evangelicalism. Many GARBC preachers, such as Bill Rudd and Eric Strattan of Calvary Baptist Church, Muskegon, Michigan, participated enthusiastically in the radically ecumenical Promise Keepers, which yoked together with Roman Catholic priests. Rudd was chairman of the GARBC's Council of Eighteen leadership committee.

The GARBC-approved Cornerstone College was partnering with New Evangelical and charismatic organizations in the 1990s through its Mission Network News. These organizations included Baptist World Alliance, Pat Robertson's Christian Broadcasting Network, Evangelism Explosion, the Jesus Film Project, Luis Palau Evangelistic Association, Lutheran Bible Translators, and Youth for Christ International, which had long worked with Roman Catholics.

Richard Christen, who was elected speaker of the GARBC in 1996, said that "instead of a wall around the GARBC, let's build a picket fence."

The gaps within that picket fence-approach to separatism have grown ever wider.

Association of Baptists for World Evangelism (ABWE)

The Association of Baptists for World Evangelism (ABWE) moved in the New Evangelical direction in the 1980s. Dr. Ralph Colas and Dr. Ernest Pickering resigned

from the board of ABWE in the late 1980s because of its compromise.

ABWE's well-known work in Bangladesh, led by the medical doctor Viggo Olson, traded separatism for pragmatism and compromised a fundamentalist position by yoking together with organizations such as Wheaton College and the apostate United Bible Societies.

In the 1990s Charles Ware, prominent ABWE board member, spoke at an ecumenical conference in Indianapolis with men representing Promise Keepers and Campus Crusade.

William Commons, ABWE Director of Enlistment, praised *Choices for Tomorrow's Mission* by David Hesselgrave of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. This book endorses Billy Graham-style ecumenical evangelism.

Baptist Bible Fellowship International (BBFI)

The Baptist Bible Fellowship International (BBFI) capitulated to the New Evangelical philosophy in the 1990s and the men with separatist convictions left the fellowship.

I first became aware of the rejection of separatism on the part of BBFI men when I wrote reports warning about PK's ecumenism and I received scathing rebukes from some BBFI preachers.

The writing was on the wall by the time the 2002 BBFI annual conference was held at Bethlehem Baptist Church in Fairfax, Virginia. The music was led by a contemporary “worship team” composed of four women. Around that time Bethlehem Baptist dropped the “King James Only” clause from the by-laws and the New Living Translation and other corrupt versions are now used from the pulpit. The pastor sent out a letter to members saying, “With regard to dress and modesty issues, we enforce NO RULE on our folks. ... apparel issues are really of no concern to us.” The church’s Skate Night, which was sponsored by secular skateboarding companies, featured “throbbing Christian rock.” The church’s youth pastor in 2002 had an earring and promoted the rock band P.O.D.

In 2003, the BBFI in the Philippines invited the country’s Roman Catholic president to speak at an evangelism conference. This is the new non-separatist BBFI.

Highland Park Baptist Church and Tennessee Temple

Highland Park Baptist Church, home of Tennessee Temple University, came out of the Southern Baptist Convention in the 1940s and was a prominent fundamental Baptist institution for half a century, was rocking out by the mid-2000s. In April of 2005 the church and school hosted a Christian rock concert featuring Bebo Norman, Fernando Ortega, and Sara Groves. It was held in Highland Park’s main auditorium. All three of these mainstream CCM musicians are

enemies of biblical separatism. Ortega, for example, is an Episcopalian who has appeared at Billy Graham Crusades and Promise Keepers conferences. Bebo Norman has toured with Amy Grant.

The October 29, 2005, issue of the *Chattanooga Times Free Press* featured a picture of Tennessee Temple University students “worshipping” to contemporary rock music during a Wednesday evening service. TTU president Danny Lovett said, “Each generation has different styles of music, and what churches have to realize is that we’ve got to meet those younger generations’ needs.”

In April 2006, the school’s College Days, when prospective students visit the campus, featured two Christian rockers, Toddiefunk and the Electric Church and Warren Barfield. Toddiefunk is the bass player for Toby Mac, formerly with DC Talk. Electric Church’s album *Ready or Not* featured “Holy Ghost Thang,” “Dance Floor,” “Naked,” and “Crazy.”

Tennessee Temple was one of the sponsors of the “Winter Jam Tour 2007,” which featured Christian rockers such as Jeremy Camp, Steven Curtis Chapman, Sanctus Real, and Hawk Nelson. Sanctus Real lead guitarist Chris Rohman says: “On the tours we’ve been lucky to be part of, the kids are really into the rockin’ songs ... every night on that tour kids were just screaming along to every word of every song.” Can you imagine the apostle Paul promoting this type of worldly thing?

Matt Hammitt of Sanctus Real participated in the 2003 tour of the *!Hero* rock opera, which depicts Jesus as a cool black man. In *!Hero*, the Last Supper is a barbecue party and ‘Jesus’ is crucified on a city street sign. Sanctus Real and Steven Curtis Chapman played a concert in 2003 at St. Mary Seminary sponsored by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Cleveland, Ohio. Retired Catholic bishop Anthony Pilla celebrated mass at the event. Chapman told the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* that it’s “a good thing” that “the Catholic Church is showing a greater openness to contemporary Christian music” (*Plain Dealer*, Aug. 7, 2006).

By 2008, Highland Park Baptist Church had gone back into the Southern Baptist Convention.

A couple of years earlier Tennessee Temple had emerging church leader Dallas Willard for the Spring Lecture Series. Willard believes that “it is possible for someone who does not know Jesus to be saved” (“Apologetics in Action,” *Cutting Edge* magazine, Winter 2001). He rejects the infallible inspiration of Scripture, saying, “Jesus and his words have never belonged to the categories of dogma or law, and to read them as if they did is simply to miss the point” (*The Divine Conspiracy*, p. xiii). Willard is confused about salvation. He says, “Why is it that we look upon salvation as a moment that began our religious life instead of the daily life we receive from God” (*The Spirit of the Disciplines*). He rejects the traditional gospel of Christ’s blood atonement (*The Divine Conspiracy*, pp. 44, 49). In his book *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, which promotes Roman

Catholic-style contemplative mysticism, Willard includes the endorsement of Sue Monk Kidd, a New Age “goddess.” (See “From Southern Baptist to Goddess Worship” at the Way of Life web site.) Willard promotes the Catholic-Buddhist Thomas Merton and an assortment of heresy-laden mystic “saints.” Willard claims that God is not concerned about doctrinal purity. In fact, he says that God loves theologians of all types.

This is the new emerging edition of Highland Park Baptist Church and Tennessee Temple University.

Southwide Baptist Fellowship

Southwide Baptist Fellowship, founded by Lee Roberson of Highland Park Baptist Church and formerly one of the largest independent Baptist networks, was rocking out by the mid-2000s and had begun to capitulate to the New Evangelical philosophy.

Many of the speakers who preached at Southwide in October 2003 were from churches with contemporary rock worship services. Bo Moore, the moderator of Southwide that year, is the pastor of Heritage Baptist Church of Kentwood, Michigan, which advertised itself at that time as “a progressive independent Baptist church” with a “High Impact” Sunday evening service consisting of “praise and worship choruses led by our worship leader, praise team and band.” Another Southwide speaker that year, Johnny Hunt, is pastor of First Baptist Church, Woodstock, Georgia, a rocking Southern Baptist congregation that decidedly rejects

“separatism.” A man wrote to me in 2003 and testified, “I visited there [Hunt’s church] and got up and left because of the wild, party-like atmosphere in their ‘worship’ service.”

Jerry Falwell was slated to speak at the 51st Southwide Baptist Fellowship, October 22-25, 2006, at Trinity Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Florida. This is further evidence of Southwide’s deeply compromised direction and the fact that it has left its original moorings. The music at the 2006 Fellowship was led by Mike Speck. His choral book “Everlasting Praise” features many songs that are on the CCLI list of top 25 contemporary “praise and worship” songs in America, including “Shout to the Lord” by the radical ecumenist and charismatic Christian rocker Darlene Zschech. Jerry Falwell well represents Southwide’s new direction and philosophy. In the late 1970s he formed the Moral Majority, and by February 1986 he told *Christianity Today* that Catholics made up the largest constituency (30%). In his autobiography *Strength for the Journey*, Falwell referred to the “Catholic brothers and sisters in the Moral Majority” (p. 371). Falwell endorsed Chuck Colson’s 1992 book, *The Body*, which urges evangelicals to join forces with Catholics and Charismatics. Colson said, “... the body of Christ, in all its diversity, is created with Baptist feet, charismatic hands, and Catholic ears--all with their eyes on Jesus” (*World*, Nov. 14, 1992).

By 2007, the number of Southern Baptist speakers at Southwide equaled the number of Independent Baptists, and two contemporary musicians provided music,

including one who had appeared on the Crystal Cathedral television program with Robert Schuller (Don Boys, “Rise and Fall of Southwide,” CSTNews.com, May 16, 2007).

In 2009, Southern Baptist Ed Stetzer was invited to speak at the Southwide Baptist Fellowship meeting. They even sent a plane to fly him from Nevada, but because of severe weather he was forced to land in Albuquerque and missed the meeting (Stetzer, “Wednesday: Southwide Baptist Fellowship and Independent Fundamental Baptists,” 2009, www.edstetzer.com).

Stetzer, head of the SBC LifeWay research department, holds to the “in non-essentials liberty” philosophy, despises separatism, and associates with pretty much anybody and everybody. He is a bridge to the “broader church” that is filled to the brim today with ancient and end-times heresies (such as baptismal regeneration, popery, Mariolatry, sacramentalism, anti-Trinitarianism, universalism, Catholic mysticism, kingdom now reconstructionism, Charismaticism, theistic evolution, fallible inspiration of Scripture, pantheism, the non-judgmental “Shack” god, and Christian homosexuality). As far as I know, Stetzer, as a “conservative evangelical,” doesn’t hold to these heresies, but he is a bridge to the broader “evangelical church” where an individual can easily be influenced by any and all of these. (Most of these things are represented in any LifeWay Bookstore.) Consider some of Stetzer’s direct associations. He is closely affiliated with Mark Driscoll, who is “culturally liberal” (e.g., ushering in the New Year

through champaign dance parties), hates the doctrine of the pre-tribulational Rapture, and promotes Catholic contemplative mysticism, among other things. Stetzer is affiliated with fellow Southern Baptist Rick Warren, who in turn is closely affiliated with many New Agers and universalists (e.g., Tony Blair, Mehmet Oz, Daniel Amen, Mark Hyman, and Leonard Sweet) and promotes Catholic contemplative mysticism. Stetzer is non-critically affiliated with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, who in turn is affiliated with the papacy, praises the pope, and has turned thousands of “converts” over to the Catholic Church. Stetzer is also affiliated with the most liberal of emergents, who deny the infallible inspiration of Scripture, the substitutionary atonement, a literal Hell, and many other fundamentals of the faith. Though Stetzer criticizes their heresies, he does so in gentle terms and refuses to disassociate from them. For example, Stetzer participates in Shapevine, an emerging church blog that features liberal emergents such as Brian McLaren, Tony Jones, Sally Morgenthaler, Alan Hirsch, and Leonard Sweet. Shapevine is called “a global community of collaborators”; and “conservative Southern Baptists” like Stetzer are right in the middle of this unscriptural collaboration (Romans 16:17; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 2 Timothy 3:5).

Cedarville University

Cedarville University (which was Cedarville Baptist College prior to 2002) capitulated to the New Evangelical philosophy in the 1990s. In January 2001 the ecumenical charismatic Jim Cymbala of the Brooklyn

Tabernacle was a featured speaker. When I warned about this in *O Timothy* magazine, I received a deluge of angry, mocking correspondence from Cedarville students. Many espoused the ecumenical doctrine. Consider a couple of examples. One student said, “I agree that the charismatic movement is wrong in some large doctrinal issues, but we are still responsible to be unified in the Body of Christ.” Another said, “What all Christianity lacks today is UNITY. ... I believe that if people want to believe or not believe something that is their judgment. ... [signed] Proud to be a Cedarville student.”

Many Cedarville students reproved me for speaking against Christian rock. For example, one student wrote,

“The fact that the choir at his church sings what you would call ‘contemporary and jazzy’ music proves my theory that you must be a narrow-minded, brain-washed backwoods Baptist. It ----- [here he used a profanity] me off whenever anybody condemns a style of music simply because it is anything other than 18th century hymns or classical. There is no such thing as bad ‘music.’”

Another wrote,

“You can spend your whole life debating over issues as such, but until you receive the gift of genuine love in your heart, you’ll never understand or gain anything.”

(The communications I received in 2011 from students at West Coast Baptist College in response to my warnings about that school’s adaptation of CCM reminded me of

those I had received a decade earlier from Cedarville students.)

In 2002 Cedarville was approved for Southern Baptists. The Baptist Press (Jan. 3, 2002) said that “Cedarville is one of the top feeder schools for Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.” Cedarville President Paul Dixon “voiced excitement” for a “growing a relationship with Southern Baptists.” Jack Kwok, executive director of the Baptist Convention of Ohio praised Cedarville and recommended the school to “all Southern Baptists,” observing that they “embrace our theology, our polity and our missiology.”

In October 2002, CCM musician Michael Card performed at Cedarville. Card has produced an album jointly with Roman Catholic John Michael Talbot, who prays to Mary and practices yoga. Card and Talbot perform ecumenical concerts together at Catholic and Protestant churches. Card led the “worship” for “an Evening of Friendship” with Mormons in Salt Lake City in March 2011. On that occasion he said that he “doesn’t see Mormonism and evangelical Christianity as opposed to each other; they are more like the two ends of a long thread -- part of the same thing” (*Deseret Morning News*, Nov. 16, 2004). Card also said, “The older I get, I guess the more I want to integrate everything. I think it’s more important to be faithful than right.” Michael Card represents the new non-separatist Cedarville.

Joyful Woman

Joyful Woman, a magazine for women published by the daughters of the late fundamentalist evangelist John R. Rice, adopted the New Evangelical philosophy in the 1990s. The editor is Joy Rice Martin; two other Rice daughters, Jessie Sandberg and Joanna Rice, are contributing editors; and Elizabeth Rice Handford is the editorial consultant.

The July-August 1991 issue contained a full-page ad for Campus Crusade's Here's Life Publishers, including the offer of a book entitled *Freeing Your Mind from Memories That Bind*. Campus Crusade has been radically ecumenical since its inception and has had Roman Catholic staff members.

The Jan.-Feb. 1992 issue of *Joyful Woman* contained a full page ad for the radically ecumenical World Vision, as well as an advertisement for the New International Version. World Vision works closely with the Roman Catholic Church in many parts of the world and the leader signed the Evangelicals and Catholics Together statement.

The May-June 1994 issue of *Joyful Woman* featured James Dobson and his wife, Shirley, on the front cover. Fifteen years earlier, Focus on the Family's vice president Rolf Zettersten said he and co-workers "cast their theological distinctives aside in order to achieve a common objective--to help families" (*Focus on the Family*, December 1989). Dobson has had a close and

uncritical relationship with Roman Catholicism. The November 1989 issue of Focus on the Family's *Clubhouse* magazine featured Mother Teresa and there was not a word of warning about her false gospel and universalism. In November 2000, Dobson participated in a conference in Rome hosted by the pope's Pontifical Council for the Family and by the Acton Institute, a Roman Catholic organization. Dobson met with Pope John Paul II. The September 1990 issue of *New Covenant*, a Catholic charismatic magazine, praised Focus on the Family and featured a smiling Dobson on the cover, while another of the articles promoted prayers to Mary.

The Joyful Woman Jubilee in October 1994 featured the radically ecumenical Elisabeth Elliot as a speaker. In July 1989, Elliot spoke at the Roman Catholic Franciscan University in Steubenville, Ohio, a hotbed of Roman Catholic-Charismatic confusion. Franciscan University holds an annual conference to exalt the blasphemous Catholic dogmas that Mary is the immaculately conceived Queen of Heaven and advocate of God's people. In 1998, Elliot spoke at Notre Dame (Our Mother) University. When her brother converted to the Roman Catholic Church, Elliot said it is acceptable to be a Catholic and to celebrate the Catholic mass. She said this during a question-answer session at a gathering at the Wisconsin Expo Center on September 6, 1997, sponsored by WVCY radio in Milwaukee.

Other Examples

NORTHLAND BAPTIST BIBLE COLLEGE, CENTRAL BAPTIST SEMINARY OF MINNESOTA, AND CALVARY BAPTIST SEMINARY OF PENNSYLVANIA, are quickly moving away from a separatist position into the evangelical orb. They have bought into the New Evangelical “in essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty” philosophy. Southern Baptist professor Bruce Ware was invited to teach courses at Northland. Calvary Baptist Seminary invited Southern Baptist leader Mark Dever as a speaker at their National Leadership Conference. Kevin Bauder of Central Baptist uses his blog to praise “conservative evangelicals” such as Southern Baptist Seminary head Al Mohler, John Piper, D.A. Carson, and R. C. Sproul.

The Reasons Why

Other examples could be given of the rapid collapse of separatism among fundamental Baptists, and I am convinced that unless there is a dramatic change most fundamental Baptist churches will be well down the New Evangelical-emerging path within 10-20 years.

Following are some of the reasons for this:

The Maligning of Warning and Reproof

The prevailing attitude toward warning and reproof was exemplified by Pastor R.B. Ouellette's recent blog "Chasing Buzzard." Though he began by saying that it is important to chase off the buzzards of compromise and error, he spent the largest percentage of the blog characterizing a "warning ministry" as wrong-headed, dangerous, and "secondary."

It is typical among fundamental Baptist churches today for godly reproof to be treated as cheap gossip, as "throwing stones," as "hit pieces," as "shooting the wounded," as "touching the Lord's anointed," and other such things.

According to the prevailing attitude it is OK to give private warnings, but it is wrong to "attack" a "man of God" publicly. This is a neat trick that makes it impossible to effectively correct public error. If a preacher has a wide influence beyond the "walls" of his own church through his writings, conferences, college,

music, etc., the only way to help those who are being influenced negatively is to deal with error and compromise *in the public arena*. This type of thing is not a Matthew 18 matter; it is a 2 Timothy 4:2; Titus 2:15; 1 Peter 4:11; and Jude 3 matter. When we are commanded to reprove error and to earnestly contend for the faith, we are nowhere told that we can do this only in private.

Churches that treat spiritual warnings as dangerous cannot deal effectively with the leaven of error and will therefore eventually be corrupted. This is a law.

“Your glorying is not good. Know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump?” (1 Corinthians 5:6).

Independent Baptist churches are encountering the hurricane force winds of apostasy in the form of the emerging church and all of its elements, such as the contemporary rock & roll philosophy (“cultural liberalism”) that mocks strict holy standards of Christian living as legalism, modern textual criticism, Purpose Drivenism, self-esteemism, kingdom now replacement theology, Third Wave charismaticism, reconstructionism, ecumenical evangelism, C.S. Lewisism, Christian counseling psychobabble, Neo-orthodoxy, contemplative mysticism, John Piper’s Christian hedonism, organic churchism, to name a few.

When warnings are given about something like the downgrade of music standards in certain influential churches and schools and how dangerous that is, or the error of building an Independent Baptist “friendship

unity” on the basis of treating certain biblical issues as “non-essentials,” those warnings are despised and the reprover is maligned with a vengeance.

That is a recipe for spiritual destruction. When Israel demanded that the prophets preach only smooth things, her downfall was already sealed.

Unquestioning Loyalty to Man

Another reason why I am convinced that most fundamental Baptist churches will be well down the emerging path within 20 years is the unscriptural exaltation of and loyalty to men.

In light of what has happened over the past 20 years which I have documented at the beginning of this report--the collapse of so many formerly fundamentalist churches--you would think that a tremendous amount of heart searching and biblical examination would be going on to see what went wrong.

You would think that the old leaders such as Lee Roberson and John R. Rice and Jack Hyles and Curtis Hutson and the leaders in the GARBC and the BBFI, etc.--men who had great influence and whose influence should have stemmed the tide but obviously didn't--would be under the microscope of biblical Berean discernment (Acts 17:11) to see if we could learn what they might have done that was wrong so we can avoid it.

But this is most definitely *not* what is happening, typically. In fact, in my experience the average fundamental Baptist preacher doesn't want to hear anything "critical" or "negative" about such men. Let's build monuments to their memory but let's don't "judge them" and "throw rocks at them."

This is not only unscriptural; it is foolish. It has been said that if we don't learn from the past, we are doomed to repeat it.

We are commanded by God to "prove ALL things" (1 Thes. 5:21). None of our former or present leaders are exempt from examination. Isn't the Bible supposed to be the Baptist's SOLE authority for faith and practice?

Following the Crowd

It is human nature to follow the crowd. We do this as children. We do it as teens. We do it as adults. We even do it as preachers. A major motive in this phenomenon is the fear of man, which is so often and staunchly condemned in Scripture.

"The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe" (Proverbs 29:25).

"And after this Joseph of Arimathaea, being a disciple of Jesus, BUT SECRETLY FOR FEAR OF THE JEWS..." (John 19:38).

"For before that certain came from James, he [Peter] did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, FEARING

THEM WHICH WERE OF THE
CIRCUMCISION" (Galatians 2:12).

If Joseph or Armathaea and Peter were susceptible to the fear of man and were inclined to be crowd followers, it is obvious that there is no preacher who cannot be tempted with this sin.

And it is a sin, because the believer is not supposed to follow a crowd. He is supposed to follow Christ as defined in the Holy Scripture, the sole authority for faith and practice. It is idolatrous to fear man more than God, and we are warned to keep ourselves from idols (1 John 5:21).

To a man, fundamental Baptist preachers *claim* to follow Christ and His Word alone, but after 39 years of experience in these circles I am convinced that most follow a crowd instead (e.g., one's associates in some fellowship or mission or other organization, one's fellow graduates of a certain school, some "good old boy's network" of Bible conference speakers, one's fellow admirers of some influential pastor).

When this is the case, the crowd determines the preacher's position on "non-essential" doctrines and practices (falsely so called).

This explains the reason behind so much inconsistency and so much change. The "convictions" are only as deep as the crowd allows. The crowd followers can stand only as firm as the brethren allow.

If the crowd still says it believes in “dress standards,” but in reality it no longer cares much about the matter, then that will be the crowd follower’s position. He might still preach about “modesty,” but he won’t *define* modesty and draw the same clear lines he once drew, because that is no longer acceptable to his crowd.

In that context, though the man says he “believes in dress standards,” he will not promote a good book on the subject. In fact, it is more likely that he will mark such a book as “legalistic,” even though the book is only teaching what his own crowd taught not that long ago.

If the crowd is truly opposed to CCM, then the crowd follower can be opposed to CCM in a real, practical, consistent way, if he so chooses.

But when the mood changes and the crowd only *SAYS* it is “opposed to CCM,” but *REALLY ISN’T* opposed to it any longer and instead is more zealous to justify the “adaptation” of CCM than to identify CCM and separate from it, the crowd follower can no longer be consistent in his stand (assuming he ever had one). He, too, must be “opposed to CCM” only as window dressing while in practice he has to justify its use. And he will be irritated with men who try to oppose CCM consistently and point out his inconsistencies.

In this context, the crowd follower won’t educate his people properly on an issue even though he professes to believe in and care about it. He might preach and write against something like contemporary music, but it will be

more in generalities and will not get so specific as to improve the type of thing that his crowd is doing.

Regardless of his personal convictions, the crowd follower cannot take any sort of stand that would be unpopular to his associates.

When one's stand is determined by one's associations, the stand changes as the mood within the association changes.

Fifteen years ago the vast majority of IFBaptists condemned CCM in no uncertain terms. Back then the BJU and Lancaster and Pensacola crowds weren't borrowing heavily from CCM, so there was no problem in speaking out boldly against CCM within those circles and letting the "chips fall where they may."

Now that the climate has changed and it is popular to "adapt" CCM for use in the churches, the crowd followers are having to back peddle and soft peddle and just plain ignore some things they preached and wrote a decade ago.

To continue to preach and write what they did in the past, when the climate was different, the crowd follower would either have to move away from the crowd of his own free will or he would continue to speak out and they would move away from him. Either alternative is just too frightful for the crowd follower to bear.

The fact that so many fundamental Baptist preachers are crowd followers is yet another reason why most independent Baptist churches will be emerging within 10-20 years.

Ignorance about Important Issues

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge” (Hosea 4:6).

Another reason why a large percentage of fundamental Baptist churches will be well down the emerging path in 20 years is that there is widespread ignorance about important issues such as contemporary music, New Evangelicalism, the Southern Baptist Convention, Reformed theology, reconstructionism, charismaticism, Neo-orthodoxy, Darwinian and theistic evolution, contemplative mysticism, and the emerging church.

I recall a veteran Independent Baptist missionary who once looked around for a few minutes in my 6,000-volume library. He had no questions and showed zero interest and the only comment he made was negative, because he looked upon serious research as more of a hindrance and a sidetrack than a blessing.

That is the mindset that has already destroyed a great many IBaptist churches both here and around the world and it is going to destroy a great many more in coming years. And this is a missionary who has started churches and raised a godly family, but even godly people can be destroyed for lack of knowledge when they are guided

more by human tradition than the Bible and when they are more man followers than Christ followers.

Thousands of churches have been established around the world by fundamental Baptist missionaries, but what is their character? How solid is their spiritual foundation? Are they well-grounded, properly-taught congregations or are they shallow and largely ignorant?

With the aforementioned mindset, the preacher doesn't carefully ground his people in such a way that they can deal effectively and intelligently with the issues of the day. He teaches them how to be faithful church members and to do one-two-three Romans Road evangelism and hopefully encourages them to love their wives and discipline their kids, and these are all good things; but this isn't enough to protect the churches from the onslaught of end-time apostasy and the subtle compromise of the hour. Most Southwide Baptist Fellowship and BBFI churches taught these things, but they are falling like dominoes to New Evangelicalism and the contemporary philosophy.

A decade or so ago my pastor rented a table at the Southwide Baptist Fellowship for two or three years running. He offered solid Bible study books such as the *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible & Christianity* and *Things Hard to Be Understood* and seriously-researched books on issues such as music and New Evangelicalism. Though the books were deeply discounted, there was almost no interest by the hundreds of preachers in attendance. I see a direct connection between this and the

spiritual downfall of and collapse of separatism in a great many of those same churches, including the host church, Highland Park Baptist Church, which is a rock & roll Southern Baptist congregation today.

A couple of decades ago, those same churches renounced New Evangelicalism, but even the pastors had only a vague idea of New Evangelicalism's history and principles and were uneducated about contemporary music, etc., *and weren't interested in studying such issues*. And their people were more ignorant by far than the preachers.

In light of the fact that every Independent Baptist church is inundated with New Evangelical philosophy from every direction (Christian bookstores, Christian radio, Internet, friends, neighbors, relatives), it is no surprise that churches that were not properly educated and spiritually fortified against error are either in the New Evangelical camp today or are heading in that direction.

There are exceptions, praise the Lord, but the fundamental Baptist congregation that has an interest in anything more substantive than a little pamphlet is the exception and not the rule, and most of the church members don't even take the time to read pamphlets.

The people aren't encouraged to read substantive magazines such as *O Timothy* and *The Fundamentalist Digest* that would enable them to keep abreast of the apostasy.

The members of soft separatist churches walk into a typical Christian bookstore and are unequipped to distinguish between sound and unsound authors, and are thus in great danger of being influenced in a wrong direction. They are unequipped to discern the compromise represented by the nationally-syndicated personalities on Christian radio. They are unequipped to deal effectively with the error that permeates the Internet. They are unequipped to confront the error of contemporary Christian music and to deal with the contemporary worship phenomenon. They don't know Darlene Zschech from Annie Oakley.

“My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge...” (Hosea 4:6).

I thank the Lord for the fundamental Baptist churches that are engaged in training their people properly and educating them in the issues they must face. Consider four examples among many I could give:

Cozaddale Baptist Temple, Goshen, Ohio, where Travis Burke is Pastor and Rick Sallee is Associate Pastor, has regular one-week training programs during which they bring in a knowledgeable speaker and focus on a Bible doctrine or issue. I spoke at one of these in 2011 on the theme of the dangers of contemporary Christianity. I preached for four days on the topics of the Bible's Proof, the Emerging Church, Contemporary Christian Music, and Bible Prophecy. The response was enthusiastic and encouraging, but this is only because the pastor has made the effort to hold the standard of biblical separation high

and to educate the people so that they are not offended at the truth.

Grace Baptist Church, Oxford, Pennsylvania, is pastored by Steve Rogers. In 2011, I preached there for five days on the theme of compromise and biblical separation. I preached on Contemporary Christian Music, Bible Prophecy, the Emerging Church, the Charismatic Movement, and New Evangelicalism. Again, the response was enthusiastic and encouraging. Most of the members were there for every service, which is always a sign of a spiritually healthy church. The book table, which was packed with titles providing the education that church members need today, was well used.

Hope Baptist Church, North Little Rock, Arkansas, is a new work pastored by Terry Coomer. I appreciate Pastor Coomer's humble but unbending stand for the truth in this wicked day. He is busy not only in soul winning (they have knocked on 23,000 doors in one and a half years) but also in serious Bible training and discipleship. He spends much time personally discipling the flock and has started a one-night Bible Institute. The church, though young, already operates a book store ministry to provide educational materials (including Way of Life books) to the people

Lighthouse Baptist Church, Rolesville, North Carolina, is a five-year-old church pastored by Bryan Greene. He has a Bible Institute to disciple his people and to train Christian workers, and he regularly has visiting preachers in for five days of intensive focus on a doctrine or theme.

In 2011, I taught a series of messages on “Why We Hold to the King James Bible.” Brother Greene is a humble man of God who is upholding biblical standards of holy living and is striving to provide serious Bible education for the people. The congregation has already sent out missionary families to plant churches in other parts of America and beyond.

I could describe many other churches like this, and I thank the Lord that such churches exist. They are laying a proper biblical and spiritual foundation against the onslaught of end-time apostasy.

The church being the pillar and ground of the truth (1 Timothy 3:15), it is essential for the cause of truth that we establish Christ’s exalting, biblically-sound, spiritually-healthy, properly-disciplined, discipline-practicing, well-educated churches for the glory of Christ and the blessing of the people.

The home and church are two different divinely-ordained institutions and each has its own ministry and responsibility and influence. We need godly families, but godly families should be the pillars of effective churches and the churches should build godly families.

In this day of “soft fundamentalism” it is refreshing to be associated with men who are willing to fly the flag of godly biblical separation high, men who don’t buy into the New Evangelical “in essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty” heresy, and who do not hesitate to

educate their people properly in the face of growing compromise and apostasy.

Soft Separatism

Another reason why I am convinced that the average fundamental Baptist church will be well down the emerging path within 20 years is the prevalence of “soft separatism.”

Soft separatism is a separatism that is ineffective to protect the people from spiritual dangers. It is characterized by professing to believe in separation, but actually doing many things that make the separation ineffective, such as focusing on positive truth and avoiding “negativism and criticism”; avoiding dealing with “personalities”; refusing to distance oneself properly from those who are headed in a wrong direction in order to cut off the leaven of compromise from my personal life and family and from my church. Soft separatists are more concerned about the danger of “fragmentation” and more desirous of “unity” and getting along with the brethren than about standing for the truth if such a stand proves to be divisive.

“Soft separatist” Independent Baptist preachers such as the extremely influential Lee Roberson, of recent memory, pastor of Highland Park Baptist Church of Chattanooga, Tennessee, and those today who are leading large segments of the IBaptist movement in the same soft direction, allow bridges to be built between IBaptists and the evangelical/Southern Baptist/contemporary Christian

music world. This is because they have a “keep it positive” philosophy whereby they don’t typically reprove error plainly or name the names of compromisers. They might name the name of a Billy Graham or a Robert Schuller or even a Rick Warren, but not that of a compromising fundamental Baptist leader. They don’t effectively expose the conservative evangelical bridge builders such as Ed Stetzer and John Piper, and they don’t reprove and disassociate from IBaptist preachers who are affiliating with the Southern Baptist Convention and evangelicalism at large.

And even when they do disassociate to some extent, they do it “quietly” and no one knows what is happening and the leaven of compromise is not therefore stopped.

Lee Roberson, pastor of Highland Park Baptist Church for 40 years and founder of Tennessee Temple University, was the king of “soft separatism” in the fundamental Baptist movement. Everything was kept on a positive, upbeat note. Dr. Roberson’s official biographer observes:

"Roberson developed a focus that controlled his ministry. 'I kept my mind and ministry settled -- winning people to Christ, getting people to grow in grace,' he said. 'Stay out of controversy in the pulpit--stay out of it and stay on the main line. I think that helped me a lot. I tried to avoid personalities and stay on the main line: preaching the gospel, emphasis on winning people to Christ, emphasis on developing the spiritual life, dying to self, the fullness of the Spirit, the second coming--kept on the positive side, kept negatives away from the people.' ... Negativism and criticism simply were not a part of

Lee Roberson's life" (James Wigton, *Lee Roberson-- Always about His Father's Business*, pp. 78, 243).

As a 1970s graduate of Tennessee Temple, I can testify that this is an accurate description of Dr. Roberson's ministry.

Typically, warnings were given only in generalities. Leading compromisers such as Jerry Falwell or James Dobson or Bill Bright or Charles Swindoll were not identified by name from the pulpit and their error was not detailed and highlighted so that the people could get a proper grasp of the danger they represented and where their compromise would lead.

"Later when Billy Graham's ecumenical cooperation became a controversial issue among fundamentalists, Lee Roberson quietly backed out of such cooperation. 'Dr. Roberson NEVER SAID A CRITICAL WORD ABOUT IT,' said Faulkner. ' If he had anything to say, it was always positive. That was his position on all issues. He just never had a critical word about anything. ... He won't talk about the brethren. You never heard him in the pulpit here call anyone names.' ... Ed Johnson, always loyal to Dr. Roberson said, 'He avoided controversy. We were not exposed to the rise of the neo-evangelicalism in my days at Temple. Doc stayed away from that controversy.' ...

"When it became common for some independent Baptists to criticize independent Baptist leaders such as Jerry Falwell or evangelist Tim Lee for preaching for Southern Baptists or other non-independent Baptist ministries, Roberson never wavered in his support of such men. He felt that men like Falwell and Lee had a heart for the Lord and for souls, and that was all that mattered to him" (Wigton, *Lee Roberson*, pp. 240, 241).

IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT NO POSITION CAN BE MAINTAINED WITHOUT A CAMPAIGN, AND I AM CONVINCED THAT LACK OF CAMPAIGNING IS ONE OF THE CHIEF REASONS WHY HIGHLAND PARK IS A NEW EVANGELICAL SOUTHERN BAPTIST ROCK & ROLL INSTITUTION TODAY.

And lack of campaigning for separation is a chief reason why most Independent Baptists will be New Evangelical rock & rollers within 20 years.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the church claimed to be fundamentalist and professed *not* to be New Evangelical, but there was no real campaigning *for* separatism and *against* New Evangelicalism.

They were Independent Baptist and *not* Southern Baptist, but there was no real campaigning *against* the Southern Baptist Convention and little or no clear exposure of the compromise there, and the bridges to the Convention were not properly broken down.

As a student at Temple in the 1970s, I learned many good things and I thank the Lord for it. What I learned and experienced there was a tremendous help in my Christian life and ministry, but the problem resided more in what I *didn't* learn. This is the heart of New Evangelical error. It is not the heresy that is taught that is the problem; it is the truth that is neglected. It is not a complete lack of Biblical stance; it is the softness of that stance.

It was not uncommon for pot shots to be taken against real separatists and those men who did issue plain warnings.

Positivism is death in the pot of any church or school that wants to maintain a biblical position, because the Bible is most assuredly filled up with a lot of very “negative” stuff, and the plainest warning against sin, error, and compromise is a major characteristic of New Testament writings.

Paul often named names, and he said, “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample” (Philippians 3:17). In the Pastoral Epistles he named the names of false teachers and compromisers many times -- Hymenaeus and Alexander, Phygellus and Hermogenes, Hymenaeus and Philetus, Alexander the Coppersmith, Demas. These epistles were used among the churches to train preachers in that day. Paul’s “criticism” of these men was a matter of public record, which is how it must be.

How can it be reasonable to allow compromisers to influence people without PUBLICLY reproofing them? Private reproof doesn’t help those being influenced by them.

Because of Dr. Roberson’s soft separation, bridges were maintained with the Southern Baptist Convention and the broader evangelical world.

“Roberson never fought against Southern Baptists, nor did he openly criticize them” (Wigton, *Lee Roberson*, pp. 227, 228, 232, 242).

The soft stance on separatism and the wrong associations and lack of clear teaching and warning about error were the reason why the church’s deacons were not prepared to choose a pastor to replace Dr. Roberson. They were not properly educated about New Evangelicalism and many other important issues pertaining to the isms and schisms of our day, and the association with New Evangelicals and Southern Baptists was already established. So it is no surprise that the deacons chose an even softer fundamentalist followed by an out-and-out New Evangelical to replace Dr. Roberson.

The fruit of soft separation is now evident for all to see.

The fact that the church Dr. Roberson pastored for 40 years is Southern Baptist today and the fact that his funeral was preached by a man who led his college into the Southern Baptist Convention (Paul Dixon, president of Cedarville University) and the fact that Roberson’s authorized biography was written by a Southern Baptist pastor is the fruit of soft separatism and the weak stance toward the great spiritual/doctrinal/moral compromise within evangelicalism today.

Highland Park Baptist Church and Tennessee Temple University are in treacherous spiritual waters, and one of the reasons is that the separation that was practiced by the former leader was too soft.

Dr. Roberson has had a massive influence in the Independent Baptist movement and many preachers are following in his footsteps and committed to his principles. They are more concerned about avoiding “fragmentation” and building unity and “friendship” among IBaptists than standing against error. They aren’t careful enough about their associations. They say they are opposed to the Southern Baptist Convention, but they make no serious effort to expose the Convention’s errors and they do not effectively reprove and disassociate from preacher friends who are building unwise bridges to the Convention. They speak highly of men like Lee Roberson and Jerry Falwell who built bridges to the Convention and beyond that many have traveled; they mention such men in their lists of past heroes and build monuments to them, and *any* criticism of such men is extremely low-key and vague. More often the criticism is non-existent *and not even allowed*, and those who issue such “criticism” are considered enemies of the truth and fair game for cheap mockery.

Lack of Serious Discipleship

Another reason why I am convinced that the average fundamental Baptist church will be well down the emerging path within 20 years is the lack of serious discipleship.

Typically, new converts aren’t being seriously disciplined. Young people aren’t being seriously disciplined. We have dealt with this extensively in the book *Keeping the Kids*.

More time and effort is devoted to sports and entertainment than to serious biblical discipleship. The demand to give up all for Christ either isn't being given or it is being blunted in its force by the church's lifestyle and habits.

As a result, the churches typically aren't producing disciples. They are producing soft Christians who love a Christianized version of the world. A one-week "missions trip," which could more properly be called a tourism lark, is about as much real discipleship as these Christians can take.

The average fundamental Baptist church is not producing real church planters and missionaries who put the plow to the ground and don't look back and don't quit.

Such weak churches are prime candidates for a collapse of whatever separatist stance that remains, if not under the present pastor then under the next.

Carelessness about Music

The attitude in regard to music that is proliferating among fundamental Baptists is that it is a personal, local church matter rather than a biblical matter. This attitude was expressed to me recently by a pastor who said that "as far as music is concerned, I see it as a local church issue, not a 'way of life' issue." He was saying that he doesn't accept my warnings about the danger of contemporary Christian music, that each pastor is at liberty to decide what type of music to use, that it is

really none of my business and I should not publish articles about via Way of Life Literature.

It is ever more common among fundamental Baptist churches to malign those preachers who are still warning about the dangers of CCM and who are trying to help the churches draw godly lines between sacred and contemporary music. Each time I have warned about the drift toward CCM in a fundamental Baptist college I have been deluged with angry communications from students and graduates who defend the compromise.

This careless attitude was not widespread until recently. Not that long ago, CCM was almost universally condemned among fundamental Baptists. That is no longer the case. Even many of those who still profess to be opposed to “Christian rock” hold an inconsistent, hypocritical position in that they do not make an issue of “soft rock” and the adaptation of and toning down of Contemporary Christian Worship music (CCW) and contemporary Southern Gospel.

This carelessness about music is unscriptural and extremely dangerous. Few forces in church and society today are more powerful than music. Preachers who are taking the position that music is not a major issue and that it is largely a matter of personal taste are playing with fire, and not only will they and their own families be burned, but also their church members.

AND THIS WILL BE EVEN MORE EVIDENT IN THE UPCOMING GENERATION.

Contemporary worship music is sensual, addictive, and feeds the flesh; and it is a powerful bridge both to secular rock as well as the “broader church” with all of its heresies and compromises. We have documented this extensively in many reports such as “Musical Associations and CCM Adaptation” and “The Transformational Power of Contemporary Christian Music,” which are available at the Way of Life web site, and in the video series “Music for Good or Evil.”

Many Independent Baptist churches are “adapting” contemporary worship music by toning down the rhythm (trying to take the rock out of Christian rock), but this is very dangerous. Typically, what they end up with is soft rock ballads which has the same sensual, addictive nature as harder rock.

The CCM movers and shakers know that their music is transformative. In an interview with *Christianity Today*, Don Moen of Integrity Music said:

“I’ve discovered that worship [music] is transdenominational, transcultural. IT BRIDGES ANY DENOMINATION. Twenty years ago there were many huge divisions between denominations. Today I think the walls are coming down. In any concert that I do, I will have 30-50 different churches represented.”

In fact, they are actively targeting “old-fashioned” churches to move them into the “broader church.”

There are TRANSITION SONGS and BRIDGE SONGS designed to move traditional churches along the

contemporary path toward Christian rock. From the perspective of the CCM artists involved in this, they aren't doing anything sinister. They are simply trying to "feed" the "broader church." But from a fundamentalist Bible-believing position, the effect is to draw "old-fashioned" Bible churches into the contemporary orb, and that is most sinister.

Bridge songs include "How Deep the Father's Love for Us" by Stuart Townend and "In Christ Alone" by Townend and Keith Getty.

These songs are doctrinally sound and hymn-like (soft rock ballad style as opposed to out-and-out rock & roll), so they are considered "safe" by traditional churches.

But by using this music a church is brought into association with the contemporary world that Townend represents and that has the potential to bring Independent Baptist church members into treacherous waters.

(See "Analyzing 'Adapted' CCM Songs" for video clips of how one Independent Baptist church is pursuing this technique -- <http://www.wayoflife.org/adaptingccm/index.html>)

Townend is an out-and-out Christian rocker. He is charismatic in theology and radically ecumenical in philosophy, supporting the Alpha program which bridges charismatic, Protestant, and Roman Catholic churches. He is a member of the Church of Christ the King in Brighton, U.K. and supports the "extraordinary

manifestations of the Spirit,” which refers to the demonic/fleshly charismatic mysticism such as nonsensical ecstatic tongues, spirit slaying, holy laughter, and shaking.

Townend is holding hands with the “broader church” in all of its facets and heresies and end-time apostasies, and Townend’s objective in writing “hymn-like” contemporary songs is ecumenism. He is doubtless sincere in this, but he is sincerely and decidedly and dangerously *wrong*. Townend is a rock & roller, pure and simple. In his blog he said that he doesn’t go home and put on a hymns album, because this is not “where I’m at musically at all.” He simply wants to use the soft CCM to bring together the “broader church.”

When “traditional” churches borrow Townend’s “soft” CCM “hymns,” the contemporary churches are in no danger of being “traditionalized,” but the traditional churches are most definitely in danger of being contemporarized and led into the treacherous waters of modern evangelicalism.

Contemporary Southern Gospel is probably as dangerous as Contemporary Worship Music, and its popularity is growing by leaps and bounds among fundamental Baptists. My warnings about Bill Gaither and his crowd have, for the most part, either fallen on deaf ears or stirred up anger and bitter rejection of my ministry.

(See “Bill Gaither’s Disobedience” and “Southern Gospel Music” at the Way of Life web site. There is also

a segment on Southern Gospel in the video series “Music for Good or Evil,” which is available on DVD or eVideo downloads from the Way of Life web site -- www.wayoflife.org.)

Contemporary Southern Gospel tends to bring the same type of broadminded tolerance and ecumenical thinking and rejection of “strict separatism” as Contemporary Worship Music brings to a church.

A church will not long maintain a biblical separatist stance if it embraces either contemporary Southern Gospel or Contemporary Worship Music.

Within a decade or so such churches will be have adopted a different stance, a New Evangelical-emerging one.

Quick Prayerism

The widespread practice of Quick Prayerism is another thing that will destroy the spiritual, separatist stance of fundamental Baptist churches.

It is an evangelistic methodology that is quick to get people to pray a sinner’s prayer after a very shallow gospel presentation and usually without any hint of the necessity of repentance. It is quick to pronounce people saved and to give them “assurance” and to try to baptize them even if they barely show any interest in the presentation and even if they give no evidence whatsoever of having been born again. Frequently, Quick

Prayerism incorporates psychological salesmanship manipulation. In Quick Prayerism, an empty “sinner’s prayer” has too often replaced Holy Spirit conviction and miraculous regeneration. Quick Prayerism is characterized by soul winning reports that are grossly exaggerated, since the number of real conversions are minute compared to the overall statistics.

I call it “prayerism” because it focuses on a prayer. I call it “quick prayerism” because it specializes in quick presentations and quick decisions and an overall lack of spiritual and biblical depth.

An example of this was communicated to me some time back by a friend who had the following experience at a prominent independent Baptist church which operates a large Bible college. The soul winner in question is a veteran Independent Baptist missionary to Japan, a man with significant influence in the Independent Baptist movement.

“We went out with their staff on Saturday morning for soul winning. We were immediately partnered up with some of the veterans. The first door we went to, we spoke to a friendly Catholic guy and to my surprise, the guy got ‘saved’ before my very eyes as ----- took him from a few scripture passages to the sinner’s prayer so smoothly that I was caught off guard. I caught myself and while ----- was recording this man’s contact details and writing it down, I asked the man whether (1) he believed that he was a good person and (2) that it is possible to go to Heaven by being a good person. This man who had just got ‘saved’ told me ‘YES.’ I looked around and the other two men beside me said nothing and did nothing. We went to a few more

places and eventually reached a home with a Roman Catholic young lady who came to the door. She said she was a professing Christian. Even though she said that all churches were the same ----- gave her assurance of salvation by quoting 1 John 5:13.”

This is Quick Prayerism, and this is a church and school that claims to believe in repentance and to be serious about proper soul winning!

Quick Prayerism destroys the spiritual character and biblical stance of a church for many reasons.

For one, it tends to produce a mixed multitude because many of the members have prayed a prayer but haven't been supernaturally converted. They have been gotten down the aisle and baptized but their Christianity is an external conformity rather than an internal reality.

Children who grow up in a Quick Prayerism environment typically “pray the prayer” at a young age, receive assurance and even in many cases a “spiritual birth certificate,” and their salvation is not questioned thereafter even if they live like the devil and show no real interest in the things of Christ beyond conforming externally to the church's minimum requirements.

With each generation the church becomes spiritually weaker because it is a mixed multitude and the percentage of nominal Christians increases until it outnumbers that of true ones. The church can't practice discipline because too many of its members would need to be disciplined! It can't effectively disciple the people

because so many are unregenerate and thus unresponsive. The spiritual program has to be kept on a very low level.

Unsaved people don't have spiritual discernment and don't love the truth and therefore can't be expected to support biblical separatism.

The redefinition of repentance by Hyles/Hutson and the corruption of biblical evangelism that is so widespread among independent Baptists is a *fundamental* issue that lies at the very heart of salvation and church life and missionary work. A building established on such a corrupt foundation is destined to collapse, even if a lot of other things are right.

Conclusion

In light of what we have witnessed in a mere two decades, we fundamental Baptist preachers need to ask ourselves some questions. What is to keep our churches from going the same direction as GARBC, BBFI, Southwide, Highland Park? What are we doing that these churches did not do? What are we *not* doing that these churches did do? If ever there was a time to learn from recent history and to batten down the hatches, it is now.

Pastor, is your church doing everything that is necessary to hold the line against the onslaught of end-time apostasy?

I, for one, believe in separation. I am convinced that the “renunciation of separatism” is the renunciation of biblical Christianity. Separation is Biblical. It is even an “essential” and a “fundamental” doctrine. Separation is not the gospel, but it is a divinely-ordained wall of spiritual protection against apostasy and the world. To reject “separatism” is to tear down this important wall so that God’s people are no longer kept from the “good words and fair speeches” whereby heretics deceive the hearts of the simple (Romans 16:17-18) and no longer protected from the siren call of the world.

I was not raised a separatist. I don’t hold to separation as some form of tradition from my fathers. I was raised Southern Baptist and learned absolutely nothing about separation then. I became a separatist by conviction after

I was born again as a young man and began studying the Bible for myself.

As a new Christian I wasn't attracted to separatism because of my background or personal inclination. I am a converted hippy. After I was discharged from the Army as a Vietnam vet, I grew my hair long, sold drugs, hitch hiked across America twice, went to jail, and otherwise lived the rock & roll lifestyle to the hilt. Any natural inclination I had as a new Christian was to *keep* my long hair and rock music and to remain friends with the Pentecostal movement. God's Word didn't allow that, and it was learning to separate from the world and from false teaching that kept me on the right track in the Lord's will. Separation is necessary for true discipleship.

Knowing the importance of separation, I am deeply concerned about the next generation, if Jesus "tarries." I am concerned about my kids and grandkids and not yet born great grandkids. There are fewer and fewer churches that give more than lip service to separation. Will such churches still exist in 20-30-40 years so that God's people can find the spiritual protection they will need even more urgently than we do now?

By God's grace, there will be such churches if I have anything to do with it, and I pray that many preachers will join me in that determination.

When I find a preacher who is playing games about Biblical separation and who is showing signs of rejecting it, I refuse to have anything to do with him as far as

ministry goes. I am not going to join his church. I'm not going to preach in his church. I am not going to preach with him on the same platform in meetings. And I am not going to preach in churches that would have him!

Yea, that is narrow and strict, but I believe it is necessary to cut off the effect of compromise. Compromise is a communicable disease!

The old backslidden prophet in 1 Kings 13 taught the young prophet to disobey God by taking His commandments lightly. God told the young prophet to preach against the idolatrous altar at Bethel and then to leave and not even to eat there. The prophet obeyed for awhile. He ran a good race for a distance. He proclaimed God's message against the altar boldly, refusing the king's offer of a reward, and headed away from Bethel. But instead of continuing to get away from there as fast as his donkey could carry him, he decided to take a rest under an oak tree. There an old compromised prophet, who had become comfortable in Bethel, met him and encouraged him that he didn't need to take God's commandments so strictly, that he could go to his house and enjoy a meal before leaving the idolatrous city. That sounded reasonable, didn't it? Surely God would understand. The "little bit" of compromise didn't work out for him, though. As a result of his association with an old backslidden prophet, the foolish young prophet was killed. By the way, we see in this account that backslidden preachers lie!

There are a lot of compromised preachers in Independent Baptist churches who are saying it is OK to lighten up on separation. They say that music is more an issue of taste, that teaching the biblical principles of modest dress is legalism, that it is fine to take the youth group to Dollywood and initiate them into Hollywood. Their theme song is “lighten up, don’t be so strict, so narrow. Let’s be separatists but let’s not go overboard with it. Let’s not be fanatics. Surely, it can’t hurt to read the ‘conservative’ evangelicals and use their materials and follow their blogs. If we don’t lighten up, we’ll lose the kids.”

I don’t want anything to do with that crowd! I believe that if you “lighten up” on biblical separation you will definitely lose the kids. You will lose them to the world and to the contemporary emerging philosophy. I am convinced this thinking is wrong, that it is compromise, and I don’t want to be affected by it.

Even if I could associate with such men without being personally affected, which is probably not possible, what about those who are observing my example? I don’t want to risk having our church members influenced by association with compromising preachers and churches.

Biblical separation cannot be maintained without a real campaign. A separatist stance will only be maintained on purpose and at a cost, but it is worth it.

Separation is not the gospel and it is not the work of the ministry, but it is a divinely-ordained wall of spiritual

protection against apostasy and the world. To reject “separatism” is to tear down this wall so that God’s people are no longer kept from the “good words and fair speeches” whereby heretics deceive the hearts of the simple (Romans 16:17-18) and no longer distanced from the siren call of the world (2 Timothy 2:22).

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*Why Most Independent Baptists Will Be
Emerging Within 20 Years*
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