

We Organized A “Special Committee” With Baby Baptizers And Called It...



Pastor Bob Kirkland

Fundamentalism



On October 7, 1955, I received Jesus Christ as my personal Saviour. I began my Christian walk involved in what we call *evangelicalism*; however, due to the erosion of Bible doctrine and Bible principles in the *evangelical movement* I moved my support to the *fundamental independent Baptist movement* in the 1960s.

In the past four decades, there have been many changes in our “Fundamental Independent Baptist Movement.” As a result of those changes, a church member at FHBC recently asked me to define a “*fundamentalist*.” I preached a series of messages on the subject and will share some of those thoughts in this article.

I want to strongly express the fact that this article is not meant to be an attack by an enemy. I have constantly used the word “**we**” in this article. I do not write as one who is standing outside of our group slinging mud, or as one who is suggesting we dump fundamentalism for an easier lifestyle.

A FAULTY FOUNDATION

“If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?”

(Psalm 11:3)

I am very strongly saying **we** need to realize that **we** are in trouble. Our “*fundamental movement*” was founded on the faulty foundation of human reasoning from day one.

Reasoning Is The Power of The Mind To Think, Understand, And Make Judgments By The Process of Logic.

On several occasions in the Scriptures, we find the disciples “*reasoning among themselves*.” They were trying to understand and make judgments by the process of logic, and their reasoning was always faulty. The only safe way to reason about anything is to follow the example of Paul who “*reasoned*” with his listeners, “*out of the Scriptures*.” (Act 17:2)

In the early 1900s, liberalism and modernism were coming in like a flood. Concerned Christian leaders *reasoned together* concerning how to combat the problem. The outcome of their *reasoning* was a series of articles known as *The Fundamentals*.



The preface to *The Fundamentals*, written by R.A. Torrey reads, “*The oversight of the selection of articles to be included in The Fundamentals was given to a special committee of men who were known to be sound in the faith*” (Emphasis mine)

Our “*special committee*,” armed with the *logical humanistic reasoning* that “*big is better*” decided to bypass God’s plan for local churches and formed a “*committee*.” of Anglicans, Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists, Baptists and other denominations. Some sprinkled babies and called it baptism, some did not.

Our “*special committee*” included C. I. Scofield, who was divorced in 1883, remarried three months later, and was ordained as pastor in a Congregational church the same year. Our “*special committee*” who according to R.A. Torrey were all “*known to be sound in the faith*,” obviously did not consider the Scriptures commanding a pastor be “*the husband of one wife*” or baptism as being “*fundamental*.”



The Niagara Bible Conference, held annually from 1876 to 1897 contributed to the rise and spread of other large Bible conferences. Speakers began promoting Bible Schools and other para-church ministries. The Niagara meetings inspired scores of Christian businessmen to become generous donors to *Bible colleges, publications* and other ministries outside of the authority of God’s local church. The Conference also resulted in a fourteen point creed otherwise known as the “*Niagara Creed*.”

No Reference To The Local Church

Nothing is mentioned in their creed about the *local church* or *baptism* as these two Bible doctrines could not be a part of their new para-church movement.

For the first time in two thousand years, God’s pastors and God’s local churches were pushed aside and our new *movement* became the spearhead of *fundamentalism*.

Point Number Ten In Our New Creed Promotes The Universal Church And Interdenominational Unity

Point #10 reads, “*We believe that the Church is composed of all who are united by the Holy Spirit to the risen and ascended Son of God, that by the same Spirit we are all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, and thus being members one of another, we are responsible to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, rising above all sectarian prejudices and denominational bigotry, and loving one another with a pure heart fervently.*” (Emphasis mine)

Prejudices And Bigotry?

Was it for the sake of denominational unity that *R.A. Torrey, A.C. Dixon, W. B. Riley, Lewis Sperry Shafer, C.I. Scofield* and others agreed to a creed that reduced Bible doctrine to a prejudice? (“*An opinion, not based on reason.*”) Was it for the sake of denominational unity that they approved a creed that says those who were true to the doctrine of *baptism by immersion* and *the local church* were promoting “*bigotry*?” (“*Intolerant toward those who hold different opinions.*”) **We sacrificed doctrine for the sake of unity and called it “fundamentalism.”**

Our *special committee* sent what they considered to be “*the fundamentals*” of the Word of God to about 300,000 ministers, missionaries and other workers in different parts of the world.

Motives And Methods

We should be very careful about judging the *motives* of anyone; however, we are clearly commanded in the Word of God to judge *methods*. Jesus said we are to “...*judge righteous judgment.*” (John 7:24) The only safe way to “*judge righteous judgment*” is to judge according to the sure foundation of Scripture.

The fact that the committee was put together with a group of leaders with many different doctrinal beliefs, indicates the reasoning was humanistic rather than Scriptural. Had they *reasoned together* using the Word of God as their foundation, they never would have formed such a group of men with many different opinions concerning Bible doctrine.

The fact is, if they had checked the Scriptures they never would have bypassed God’s pastors and God’s local church in forming a “*special committee*” in the first place. Nowhere will anyone find a Scripture that would indicate that God wants a “*committee*” to do His work. First Timothy 3:15 plainly says “...*the pillar and ground of the truth*” is “...*the house of God, which is the church of the living God.*” Their faulty *reasoning* originated in their thinking that *big is better*. They thought they needed a *big organization* with some *big named people* and they set aside Bible truth to accomplish our goal. We determined our doctrinal differences are “...*preconceived opinions not based on reason*” and agreed that “*we are responsible to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace, rising above all sectarian prejudices and denominational bigotry.*” We had the gall to call it fundamentalism.



J.C. Ryle

The Committee And The “True Church” Virus

One of the contributors on our special committee was Anglican Bishop John Charles Ryle. He wrote an article in *The Fundamentals* on what he called the “True Church.” **He supported his position with absolutely no Scripture.** What else could he do? No Scripture can be found to support his position.

He began his discussion with the question “*Do you belong to the one true Church?*” All sincere Christians who are members of a Bible believing church should have a serious problem with that question. First, because there is no scriptural basis for asking that question. There is a scriptural basis for asking a question such as, “...*are you a true Christian?*” or “...*are you a loyal Christian?*” However, there are no Scriptures we can go to in regards to a question about “...*one true church.*”

Second, the question plainly suggests that your local church, no matter what it believes, is not a “...*true church.*” The dictionary meaning of the word true is to be “...*in accordance with fact or reality, genuine, accurately conforming to a standard or expectation.*” The dictionary meaning of untrue is to be “...*not in accordance with fact or reality; false or incorrect, not faithful.*”

Ryle said, “*The one true Church is composed of all believers in the Lord Jesus. Its members are entirely agreed on all the weightier matters of religion, for they are all taught by one Spirit.*” (Emphasis mine)

The Weightier Matters?

Were the Anglicans and the Presbyterians and the Baptists "...of one mind" concerning baptism? **Obviously not!** Keeping the unity of the group was apparently more important than the Bible doctrine of baptism. In spite of the fact that baptism is one-third of the command of Christ in Matthew 28:19, where Christ commanded us to "*Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.*"



Immersion Is Not A Mode of Baptism - Immersion is Baptism!

In spite of the fact that immersion is not a mode of baptism, immersion *is* baptism, our new "*special committee*" did not consider it one of the "*weightier matters.*" Ryle went so far as to say we are all taught this wicked compromise of the Scriptures by the "*Spirit.*" Why didn't *Torrey, Dixon, Riley, Shafer, Scofield* or any other of our "*giants of the faith*" protest? Apparently *unity* in the movement was more important than Bible doctrine. Of the sixty-four subjects dealt with in *The Fundamentals*, baptism is not one of them.

"The Doctrines That Must Be Emphasized"

Leander Whitcomb Munhal, a Methodist evangelist wrote in *The Fundamentals* about, "*The Doctrines That Must Be Emphasized.*" He did not mention baptism.

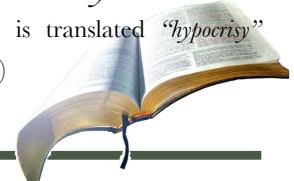
AGREE TO DISAGREE ON BIBLE DOCTRINE?

Where do we find a chapter and verse for that nonsense? Our committee should never have "*...agreed to disagree*" on Bible doctrines. Our God-given mandate is to "*Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.*" (Second Timothy 4:2)

The word "*preach*" in this text means to "*herald.*" A herald would come into town saying, "*Hear Ye! Hear Ye! Thus saith the King.*" If the herald left part of the message out because he thought it might cause disunity, he would have been disloyal to his king. When our founders of fundamentalism left part of the message out, they were compromisers and they were disloyal to the King of kings. The men who compromised concerning any Bible doctrine should have been treated as Peter was when Paul "*...withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.*" (Galatians 2:11)

When Peter's Actions Did Not Agree With The Truth of The Word of God, Paul Did What The Holy Spirit Directed Him To Do.

Paul did not look the other way to save their unity. Truth demands that even "*pillars*" like Peter (Galatians 2:9) need to be confronted when they promote false doctrine. We read in verse thirteen, Peter's actions caused others to "*...dissembled (act hypocritically) likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.*" (Dissimulation is translated "*hypocrisy*" five times in our King James Bible)



**Paul Did Not Cause Disunity.
Peter Had Already Done That.**

In verse fourteen, Paul rebuked Peter “...before them all,” and in so doing Paul did not cause disunity.

Our fundamental movement began with a compromising committee of interdenominational leaders who determined what was a fundamental doctrine and what was not. (Something they had no scriptural right to do) The compromise that is prevalent in our *movement* began over a 100 years ago on day one of our movement.

God-given Authority

Authority is “*the power or right to give orders, make decisions, and enforce obedience.*” Christ has the authority to do all of those things.

In Matthew 28:18 He said, “*All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.*”



In the next verse we read Christ gave **pastors** the authority to be the leaders in God’s local churches. We know the setting here was the local church because the authority included the

right to baptize. (No para-church leader has dared to baptize anyone in their college or newspaper office. Not yet anyway!)

Christ also gave **pastors** the authority to teach. Once the pastor has baptized them, he is given the authority to teach them “*...to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you.*”

Para-church movements have made God’s local churches less impressive or valuable than *colleges, newspapers, magazines,* and our *movement.* The God-given position of the *pastor* has also been pushed to a roll of less importance with our humanistic titles of

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presidents, professors, administrators, directors, editors and such like, that lead in our big para-church movements.

Pastors are commanded to teach God’s people “*...all things.*” **Pastors** are commanded to teach “*...faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.*” (Second Timothy 2:2) This responsibility was not given to *editors* or *college professors* it was given to **pastors.** A *college, mission board, newspaper, seminar* or any other ministry **that is organized outside of the local church is not part of a church, it is part of a movement.** (Any and all ministries must be under the authority of the local church if it is going to be in line with the Word of God.)

A Malignant Doctrine

The foundation for all of our para-church organizations is found in Bishop John Charles Ryle’s position concerning his so-called “*one true church,*” (sometimes referred to as a “universal church”). This malignant doctrine has been the main catalyst for all programs operating outside of the local church.

In our fundamental movement *anyone, anywhere,* is now free to start *any ministry* he wants. We are free to *do that which is right in our own eyes,* because we have no local church authority to watch over our new *movements* and no Scripture to dictate the structure of our para-church ministries. Organizations can be built on the false foundation of the so-called *universal church* and methods can be founded on whatever our favourite fundamentalist teaches.

Fundamentalism Is Man-Centered

Our new movement started as a man-centered organization. Like Israel of old, who rejected the simple life of Tribes and Judges, crying rather for a king and a kingdom, our founders of fundamentalism rejected God's simple local church plan and God's pastors, and focused on our new kings and our new kingdom.

Here is an example of our man-centered mentality. Recently, a concerned parent asked me for some guidelines for her children who were on facebook. I researched the site for three days. I made a survey of only fifteen young people **from Independent Baptist churches in our area** who were on facebook. (There are at least three times that many fundamental Independent Baptist young people and their fundamental pastors in Ontario, on this social networking site.)

I found each of these young people from our fundamental Baptist churches had an average of 120 "friends" they communicated with. I found the "friends" of these young people had "friends" promoting the occult, very vulgar sexual comments, and one had an actual close-up photograph of a man's privates. I found on their sites a "Sex Button" that says, "Browse profiles of hot looking people and Have Sex! with them in different positions and places! Put a "Have Sex!" button on your profile so your friends can Have Sex! with you." Their friends also had other material and photos to immoral to report in this article. It took me another three days to get the trash out of my mind after being on the sites of fundamental independent Baptist young people. I published several articles

warning pastors of the dangers of this site. (Article available on our website at www.fairhavensbaptist.net.)

THE DIFFERENT RESPONSES



A pastor of a small church in Alberta wrote, "Thank you for this excellent warning, Brother Kirkland, At one time, I had profiles on three different social networking sites (Hi5, Bebo, and Facebook), and everything you said is very true. Even if someones' motives for being part of one of these sites is pure, they cannot help but be bombarded with immorality, pornographic or near pornographic pictures. Also, most of these sites have very sensual advertisements (including swimsuit calendars, pornographic screen-savers, and dating sites) that will pop up from time to time and are **IMPOSSIBLE** not to see."



Another Well Known "Fundamental" Pastor Wrote Saying He Saw No Problem With Facebook.

How did he come to that conclusion? He said, "I just preached at Crown College two weeks ago and heard Dr. Sexton encourage his grads to stay in touch with him through Facebook." He continued, "Dr. Chappell and I talked about this when he was here last month. He "Tweeters" and has people that stay up with him daily." The conclusion of the pastor who wrote me was, "I don't know that Facebook is sinful."

He came to his conclusion because of what other well known *fundamental* leaders with *large* ministries believed. He ignored the *facts* in the article and he ignored the testimony of the pastor of a *small* church who confirmed my finding about the trash-filled site. He started his letter to me

with the phrase “*I think.*” He told me what other well known *fundamentalists think* and offered absolutely no Scripture to support his conclusion.

Should we not prove what is “*Acceptable unto the Lord*” (Ephesians 5:10) by checking with the Word of God rather than our favourite successful looking fundamentalists? Fundamentalism started out as a man-centered movement and remains a man-centered movement today.

In Conclusion

I want to strongly express again, that this article is not meant to be an attack by an enemy. I am not attempting to stir up contention. Proverbs 13:10 says, “Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.”

Peter’s Response Would Determine If There Was To Be Contention Between Peter And Paul

When Paul, under the direction of the Holy Spirit exposed Peter for his error, Paul did not cause contention. Peter’s response would determine if there was to be any contention. **Peter’s Response Was One of Humility.** At the council at Jerusalem recorded in Acts chapter fifteen Peter defended Paul in their discussion concerning the very thing Paul had publicly confronted him about.

In Peter’s final recorded words he referred to Paul as “...our beloved brother Paul” and he made reference to “...the wisdom given unto him.” (Second Peter 3:15)

Again, “*Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom.*” (Proverbs 13:10)

Our movement is plagued with compromise and has been since day one. We need to get back to **God’s Word** and **God’s way.** “*For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God...*” (First Peter 4:17)

Your thoughts concerning this important issue are welcome. I will respond to all who support their comments with Scripture. “*If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil.*” (John 18:23)

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(Acts 17:11)