

Why Most Fundamental Baptist Churches Will Be Emerging Within Two Decades

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(First published December 15, 2011 by David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service,
P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org.

“A prudent man foreseeth 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.

‘...this rejection of “separatism” is sweeping through fundamental Baptist churches.’

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:

1. 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.

2. 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 (to see the report in its entirety go to <http://www.wayoflife.org>)--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?

3. 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 reprove 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 Independent Fundamental Baptists 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. 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 discipled. Young people aren't being seriously discipled. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

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 then 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! Yes, 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).

POSTSCRIPT BY DR. LEWIS R. WOODARD:

I do not believe it will take many Fundamental Baptist Churches two decades to emerge into what I call "*apostasy*". To me the term "*emerging church*" is a much too kind reference to the ungodliness that is now prevalent in what used to be "*Bible believing*" local churches . One day, Pastors will give an account to the Almighty Lord at the Judgment Seat Of Christ. I would remind Pastors that it is not the Lord's work that will be brought into judgment, but it will be **THEIR WORKS**.

The Bible says:

2 Timothy 3:13 But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived.

2 Corinthians 6:17 Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you. (See also Isaiah 52:11; Rev. 18:4)

Thank God for those Godly Pastors who have come out from among them, the world, and are staying away from the ungodly filthiness of the world's teaching that you need to "*fit in*" in order to be recognized as a pastor who loves people. The Pastor who loves people is that Pastor who stands up for the Christ who saves. The Christ who saves would never "*rock out*" to the ungodly music of the "*emerging, apostate, church*". The Pastor who loves people will warn his congregation of the dangers of the world's philosophy of joining hands with the "*emerging church*". By the way, the emerging church movement is not something new, only the name has been changed. The name used to be called the "*ecumenical movement*", the "*One World Church*".

The person who is the pastor of an emerging church is a pastor who advocates that it is alright to adopt the actions of the world (the unsaved) , so people will enjoy, and be entertained, because we live in a new day and time. The pastor of the emerging church believes we need to cater to the worldly desires of the unsaved to get them into church. I call the church that these pastors "*pastor*": "*The First Church Of The Unconcerned*". Actually, Christ's Church is made up of saved people not the unsaved. There is nothing wrong with inviting the unsaved to visit your local church. Prayerfully the unsaved person will receive the Lord as Savior when visiting a Bible believing, Bible preaching, standing on the Word of God local church.

Acts 2:47 Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.

Please note that ***the Lord*** added to the church in the Book of Acts. All the Disciples did was to preach the Word. It is ***the Lord Who adds*** to today's church just as He did in the Book of Acts. I know all the hype that says "*we need to attract people by offering them entertainment and programs to get them into church*". It is by the presentation of the Gospel (1 Corinthians 1:18, 21) whereby people are invited to accept God's invitation to receive eternal life. We cannot expect people to respond to the Lord's Message of salvation when we water it down with "fun and games"! Folks, eternity in Hell means FOREVER! There will be no fun and games in Hell.

Although many local churches will give into the temptation of straying into apostasy over the next several years, I still believe the Bible. Christ said:

Matthew 16:18 And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock ***I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.***

Until Christ returns for us at the Rapture there will be Fundamental Independent Baptist Churches standing, and not compromising, because ***the gates of Hell will not prevail!***

QUIT PLAYING GAMES AND GET BUSY FOR THE LORD!

Lewis R. Woodard

Once again, I am not the author of the article:

***"Why Most Fundamental Baptist Churches
Will Be Emerging Within Two Decades"***

To see the article in its entirety go to <http://www.wayoflife.org>

MAKE SURE OF HEAVEN

Question: Who is a sinner? **Answer:** ALL

Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"

Question: Why are people sinners? **Answer:** BECAUSE OF ONE MAN: ADAM

Romans 5:12 "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:"

Question: What happens because of sin? **Answer:** DEATH

Romans 6:23a "For the wages of sin is death;...."

Question: If all people are sinners, and the wage (payoff) for sin is death (both physical and spiritual), does that mean no one will go to Heaven? **Answer:** NO, CHRIST PAID FOR OUR SIN

Romans 5:8 "But God Commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Question: What is eternal life? **Answer:** A GIFT

Romans 6:23b "...but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

Question: So, what does all this mean? **Answer:** It means that all people in this world are sinners. No one can go to Heaven on their own because everyone is a sinner. No one is good enough (without Christ) to go to Heaven. Because no one is good enough to go to Heaven, (everyone is a sinner), God sent His Son, Jesus, who died so that we could have eternal life. Christ not only died, He rose from the grave, alive!

Question: Exactly what would you have to do in order to make sure of Heaven?

Answer: CALL: PRAY, ASK JESUS TO SAVE YOU:

Romans 10:13 "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Accept the fact that you are a sinner. Accept the fact that you cannot save yourself. Accept the fact that Jesus died and rose from the dead (He's alive) for you.

PRAY: "Lord, I know I'm a sinner. I know I wouldn't go to Heaven if I died right now. Please forgive me of my sins, and come into my heart. I am praying this prayer, believing in my heart, taking You at Your Word (the Bible) that by asking You to come into my heart, I am now ready for Heaven. Thank You, Lord, for saving me!"

REMEMBER: Romans 10:13 "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord, shall be saved."

If you have decided to ask Jesus into your heart or if you have not decided at this time, please allow me to send you more information about going to Heaven.. Write to me at the address below or go to our website: WWW.LRWM.ORG.

*Because of Christ,
Dr. Lewis R. Woodard*

497 Judith Avenue
Fruitland Park, Florida 34731

WWW.LRWM.ORG
WWW.ItsAGoodLifeRadio.com
E-mail: LRWM@LRWM.ORG