

**A History of Separation in Twentieth-Century
American Fundamentalism**

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Introduction

Fundamentalism, as a movement within Christianity, is unique in that its very survival depends upon a proper interpretation and application of Biblical Separation. Without this doctrine, Fundamentalism loses its vitality and credibility and degenerates into just another "plain vanilla" Christian movement. With separation in its proper niche, Fundamentalism becomes the most powerful force within Christianity. The current emphasis and practice of ecclesiastical and personal separation among Fundamentalists of the latter part of the twentieth century is the product of a century of evolution and adjustment.

This observation must be tested by church history. Upon examination of the history of the Fundamentalist movement, we can see its rise and fall as being directly related to how separation was treated and understood.

When this doctrine was held in high esteem, Fundamentalism moved forward, making dynamic inroads into the very fabric of the Church and society. When the doctrine is neglected, then Fundamentalism wallows and flounders. These observations may be verified by a consideration of the place separation enjoyed during these periods.

As would be expected, Fundamentalism in the twentieth century has had its periods of revival and retreat. These cycles can be directly traced to Fundamentalist attitudes and understandings toward separation. The history of Fundamentalism is anything but even and homogeneous. The doctrine of separation among Fundamentalists suffers from this same inconsistency. Fundamentalist views of separation have varied from decade to decade. Varying definitions and philosophies of separation have also affected Fundamentalism. How has Fundamentalism's concept of separation affected the health and vitality of the movement? We may examine this question by investigating the various periods of the history of Fundamentalism since 1900 and compare its vitality to its attitude toward separation.

The doctrine of separation has evolved over a short span of church history. It was hardly emphasized before the twentieth century. When the doctrine was recognized, it was first limited to the practice of personal separation. As problems with modernism and liberalism increased, recognition of ecclesiastical separation resulted. After years of struggle attempting to stay true to separation ideals, battle fatigue and a desire for worldly acceptance began to erode at the foundations of separation. Strange new definitions of separation were developed and separation was also categorized into degrees. After years of decline, compromise, and apostasy within Fundamentalism, a remnant demanded a return to Biblical separation and all of its aspects at whatever cost to preserve Biblical Fundamentalism. Such is where we find ourselves today as we stand at the door of the twenty-first century and, hopefully, the Lord's return.

This book was written in 1994 as a master's thesis submitted to Foundations Theological Seminary in Dunn, North Carolina. I am editing this version of it in 2018. After 24 years, many of the names and faces have changed within Fundamentalism and Fundamentalism itself has changed. I believe Historic, Biblical Fundamentalism died a public death in the late 1990s. The modern expressions of Fundamentalism fall into two categories.

First is the remains of the old movement but it is weak and moderate on most issues. It is populated by younger men who have an unhealthy attraction to New

Evangelicals like John MacArthur and John Piper. They also have a tendency to have no loyalty to the Authorized Version of the Bible, mainly gearing their ministries toward corrupt, modern versions like the English Standard Version. Their roots still go back to the old Fundamental Baptist Fellowship, Bob Jones University, Detroit Baptist Theological Seminary and Maranatha Baptist Bible College, but they have not maintained the separatist legacies of those institutions.

The second group is a neo-Fundamentalism espoused by John R. Rice, Jack Hyles and the Sword of the Lord. This wing of the movement was birthed in the 1950s and 1960s, as many refugees came out of the rapidly failing Baptist Bible Fellowship. Their main burden is not the "Pursuit of Purity" (which is the very good title of David Beale's history of Fundamentalism, which we will refer to often) but rather with their definitions of evangelism, church growth and "red hot preaching". Separation is a secondary issue, as long as it does not interfere with the above.

Why Study the History of Separation

Separation as a whole has not had an adequate treatment as to its history. Several works exist on the doctrine and practice of separation, but none as to the development of the doctrine during the twentieth century. George Dollar noted in his work, *The Fight for Fundamentalism*, that "an exact history of the doctrine of separation in historic Fundamentalism has yet to be written. Gathering all that has been written and spoken in this important matter would be a significant contribution."¹ We agree but also realize the tremendous scope of such a task. The history of Fundamentalism is broad, and the terrain can be rocky. While this work may not have the scope Dollar envisioned, it can be considered an introduction to the history of this doctrine. The need is indeed great for such a historical survey so Fundamentalists can better understand the modern-day applications by studying the past applications made by their spiritual fathers.

What is Fundamentalism?

Before any survey of separation in Fundamentalism during this century can be undertaken, terms must be defined and historical periods for our consideration must be established. Our first task is to define "Fundamentalism." The term was coined in 1920 to describe a group of concerned Baptists who met at the Delaware Avenue Baptist Church in Buffalo, New York, to address the problem of modernism within the Northern Baptist Convention.²

¹ George Dollar, *The Fight for Fundamentalism*, page 128. Dollar does mention a work by Billy Vick Bartlett entitled, *History of Baptist Separation* in his book, *A History of Fundamentalism in America*, on page 133. Dollar gives the impression that Bartlett's book is more useful as a history of the Baptist Bible Fellowship than as a history of separation.

² David Beale, *SBC: House on the Sand?* page 195.

We must be careful not to restrict any definition to Baptists only. The Baptists may have been the first to be tagged "Fundamentalists," but Fundamentalism as an attitude and spirit was around before 1920 and was not confined to Baptists. This is a

critical error George Dollar makes in his otherwise useful work, *A History of Fundamentalism in America*.³ Fundamentalism is trans-denominational in its scope and appeal, although the Baptists have dominated it in recent years. Talmadge Spence breaks down the denominationalism of 218 early Fundamentalist leaders at the turn of the 20th century as including 91 Baptists, 59 Presbyterians, 20 Nondenominational, 15 Methodists, 11 Congregationalists, 7 Brethren, 6 Anglicans, 4 Lutherans, 3 of the Salvation Army, and a pair from the Christian and Missionary Alliance.⁴

Rather than thinking of Fundamentalism in a denominational frame, it should be considered as an independent interdenominational movement. Fundamentalism may be considered as a resurgence and continuation of ancient apostolic practices and beliefs which date from the period of the Book of Acts 2. The modern expression of Fundamentalism may be traced back to the various Bible and Prophetic Conferences of the mid-to-late 19th century which were interdenominational in nature. No single denomination may take credit for founding the movement as men from all flavors of Christianity desired purity in doctrine and practice. Fundamentalism may be considered a "holiness" movement as it seeks to practice what it understands as true, apostolic Christianity.

David Beale is one of the few Church historians to recognize this in titling his history of Fundamentalism as *In Pursuit of Purity*. In this valuable work, Beale corrects a serious flaw in the understanding of the true nature and purpose of Fundamentalism:

Most histories of Fundamentalism have portrayed the movement as essentially a response to liberalism. In the more extreme cases, the movement comes across as a knee-jerk reaction caused by an anti-intellectual mind-set. To the contrary ... the roots and origin of the movement lie in the 19th century revivals in America and Ireland.⁵

The pursuit of this desire for purity among Fundamentalism involves the doctrine and the practice of separation. Any attempt to define Fundamentalism apart from separation results in only a partial and hence incorrect and incomplete definition. Earlier definitions of Fundamentalism may not have included the adherence to separation, but it is a vital element of the movement.

It is enlightening to notice how some modern-day Fundamentalist writers overlook the importance of separation in their definitions. Dollar, in his *A History of Fundamentalism in America*, defines Fundamentalism as "The literal exposition of all the affirmations and attitudes of the Bible and the militant exposure of all non-Biblical

3 For example, he considered the Presbyterian Fundamentalists as mere "Orthodox Allies" to the Baptists and not as true, independent Fundamentalists in their own right. See George Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America*, pages 173-183.

4 Talmadge Spence, "Scriptural Separation: The Endangered Species," *Straightway*. May, 1992, page 1.

5 David Beale, *In Pursuit of Purity: American Fundamentalism Since 1850*, page 399.

affirmations and attitudes."⁶ This definition is acceptable as far as it goes, but there is no mention concerning separation.⁷ The definition reached at the World Congress of Fundamentalists in 1976 is better as it does make mention of separation by defining

what a Fundamentalist is as "One who exposes and separates from all ecclesiastical denial of the faith, compromise with error and apostasy from the truth."⁸ John Ashbrook gives a more complete definition of Fundamentalism by suggesting it to be "the militant belief and proclamation of the basic doctrines of Christianity leading to a Scriptural separation from those who reject them ... A man cannot be rightly called a Fundamentalist unless he practices separation."⁹

By combining the various aspects of these definitions, we may settle upon the following definition of Fundamentalism: Fundamentalism is the literal affirmation of Biblical truth and the militant defense of the same, with the goal of purity of doctrine and life as well as in practice through the exercise of separation.

Defining Separation

A proper definition of separation is vital if it is to be rightly understood and practiced. The basic definition of separation is obvious; the disunion of one group from another. This definition must be developed more fully. It is a withdrawal of fellowship from any man, church, or organization that is disobedient to the Scriptures in either doctrine or practice.

The basis for separation may vary, but it is based upon obedience to the teachings of Scripture regarding personal conduct and an unconditional acceptance of Bible doctrine. If one group is not conducting itself along Biblical guidelines, separation must be the result. If doctrinal error is present within a group and that group refuses to correct their position, then separation must be the result. The motive of separation is not due to a superior or "holier-than-thou" attitude on the part of the separating party, but rather a desire to obey the Lord in the separation from error lest it contaminate them as well. David Beale links it to God's holiness but still does not give a concrete definition.¹⁰ Ernest Pickering offers a description as "a renunciation of fellowship with apostates."¹¹ O. Talmadge Spence emphasizes the necessity of glorifying the Lord Jesus Christ in the practice of separation.¹²

We must also define the various types of separation: personal and ecclesiastical. Allen Dickerson, who pastored Maranatha Baptist Church in Elkton, Maryland (who was also my pastor from 1985-1998) saw four categories of separation: institutional, ecclesiastical, personal, and participative. He defined institutional separation as separation of Church and State, which is not relevant to our discussion. Secondly is

6 Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America*, page 283.

7 Notice as well how Dollar makes no mention of the holiness aspect of Fundamentalism. Dollar's definition is all militancy but no heart. This is a similar problem with definitions of Fundamentalism among the followers of Jack Hyles and *The Sword of the Lord*.

8 Definition of a Fundamentalist reached at the World Congress of Fundamentalists, Edinburgh, Scotland, 1976.

9 John Ashbrook, *Axioms of Separation*, page 10.

10 Beale, *SBC: House on the Sand?* page 212.

11 Ernest Pickering, *Biblical Separation: The Struggle For A Pure Church*, page 11.

12 O. Talmadge Spence, *Pentecostalism: Purity or Peril?* page 105.

ecclesiastical separation, which is separation from apostate religious leaders and organizations that refuse to come under the absolute authority of the Word of God. Thirdly is personal separation, which involves separation from a world system under the

control of Satan and his demons. Lastly is participative separation, which is separation from a brother or a local church or Christian organization because of their involving themselves in cooperation or common cause or maintaining fellowship with others who are in doctrinal error or are in violation of Bible principles.¹³ All forms must be practiced if we deal with ecclesiastical, personal, and participative forms of separation.

Then there is the issue of so-called "first- and second-degree" separation. Although we will be dealing with these issues later in this paper, they should be defined now. Let us state that we do not accept this distinction of separation by degrees. All separation is "first degree." The exponents of such a philosophy maintain that first-degree separation is separation from liberals, heretics, and apostates, while second-degree separation involves separation from disobedient brethren. We disagree with this distinction and will deal more concerning it when we consider separation in the 1970s.

The Importance of Separation

There must also be a proper understanding of the doctrine of separation before it can be studied. As we have noted, this doctrine is at the heart of Biblical Fundamentalism. Remove separation and Fundamentalism loses its heart and dynamics. This quest for doctrinal and personal holiness in the practice of separation is the consuming drive behind Fundamentalism. Separation is the life-blood of the movement; remove it and Fundamentalism degenerates into an anemic form of evangelicalism.

Fundamentalist history is a clear demonstration of what happens to the movement when this doctrine is either improperly understood or improperly implemented. Funda-mentalism suffers when separation does not occupy the position of honor to which it is entitled. Strife, carnality, worldliness, and apostasy replace separation in these circumstances. The only time Fundamentalism has been an effective movement is when true Biblical separation is practiced, and when it is properly understood.

We now begin our consideration of a history of separation among the Fundamentalists of the twentieth century, and how the understanding and the practice of the doctrine have evolved from the very simple understanding at the turn of the century to the complex and controversial issue of later years. Our goal of the study is not only to undertake a historical survey of the development and practice of the doctrine, but also to enable us to come to a better and more Biblical understanding of separation. If we are going to please the Lord with our lives and our service in this day of increasing apostasy, carnality, and compromise, we need to come to a more comprehensive personal understanding of the doctrine. By a study of how our spiritual forefathers grappled with these issues, we may become better grounded in our own practice and understanding of this doctrine.

¹³ Allen Dickerson, *Bible Separation*, unpublished notes distributed at the Fundamental Baptist World Wide Mission Candidate School, held at the Maranatha Baptist Church in Elkton, Maryland, in July, 1992.

CHAPTER 1 Foundations Laid: Separation Up To 1900

The history of Fundamentalism can be studied by making divisions in its history. We can divide Fundamentalism into historical periods to survey both it as a movement and the role separation has played in it.

George Dollar offers a simple three-point outline in his division of Fundamentalist history:

- (1) Up to 1900;
- (2) 1900-1935; and (3) 1935-present.¹

David Beale divides the history of Fundamentalism into five sections. His divisions are:

1. 1857-1920, characterized by revivals, Interdenominational Bible and Prophetic Conferences, the organization of the World's Christian Fundamentals Association.

2. 1920-1930, characterized by the Fundamentalist-Modernist battles within denominations.

3. 1930-1950, characterized by separation from mainline denominations, the rise of Neo Orthodoxy, Nee-Liberalism and Nee-Evangelicalism.

4. 1950-1970, characterized by Fundamentalist separation from Neo-Evangelicalism.

5. 1970-present, characterized by the present Neo-Fundamentalist defection into broad Evangelicalism.²

O. Talmadge Spence gives an informative breakdown of the Fundamentalist era by suggesting the following format:

1. Puritan Period - 1900-1920
2. Pilgrim Period - 1920-1930
3. Neutral Period - 1930-1976
4. Compromise Period - 1976-1983
5. Pragmatic Period - 1983-present.³

After considering the above divisions, we will work with the following outline while keeping the above information in mind:

1. The period prior to 1900
2. 1900-1920
3. 1920-1930
4. 1930-1950
5. 1950-1970
6. 1970-1980
7. 1980-2000.

1 George Dollar, *The Fight For Fundamentalism*, pages 1-8.

2 David Beale, *In Pursuit of Purity*, pages 5,6.

3 O. Talmadge Spence, *Pentecostalism: Purity or Peril?* pages 131-137.

The Bible and Prophetic Conferences

The origins of the modern Fundamentalist movement have often been traced back to these conferences which were held in the last quarter of the 1800s. In these conferences, which could be considered as meetings of Fundamentalists on a regional if not national scale, the fundamentals of orthodox Christianity were expounded in a coherent and unified manner for the first time. Orthodox Christianity was putting up a unified front against growing apathy from within the churches and the threat of liberalism from without.

The first of these conference-meetings in 1876 at Swampscott, Massachusetts, did not deal with separation. The 1877 meeting in Watkins Glen, New York also did not deal with it. The 1878 Niagara Creed, a product of the 1878 Believer's Meeting held at Niagara Falls, New York, does not mention separation.⁴ The 1886 Bible and Prophetic Conference held in Chicago did begin to plow the new ground of separation by calling on Christians to be more separate from the world in order to better serve God.⁵ By modern standards, it was weak in not clearly defining the Christian's duty toward separation.

We certainly do not wish to take anything away from the accomplishments of these conferences. We do notice that almost nothing was preached regarding the important of separation in the life of the believer. Much of the preaching centered around prophetic themes as well as expositions of various doctrines, separation not being among them. The reason why issues regarding separation were not dealt with was current interest in orthodox Christianity was not centered on separation. Prophecy Bible teaching and calls to holy living were the emphasis of the day.

Spurgeon's Example

While the Americans were hesitant and unsure regarding separation, the British were more daring in the person of Charles Spurgeon, who pastored the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, England. His controversies with the Baptist Union of Great Britain and Ireland in the "Downgrade Controversy" were well publicized in the late nineteenth century. It was what we would call a "Liberal-Fundamentalist" controversy in that the Liberals were willing to admit any group that would subscribe to baptism by immersion. To allow such would open the door to any group into the Union, including Liberals. Spurgeon vocally opposed the Union and personally withdrew from it. He may have been following the example set by the Scottish preacher Horatius Bonar who separated from the Church of Scotland over doctrinal and practical questions in 1843 to join the Free Church of Scotland.⁶

Spurgeon's act of separation was the first of its kind in the era in which modern Fundamentalism was born. Many British pastors denounced Spurgeon for destroying the unity of the Union, but others began to notice a deeper principle at work and a

⁴ The Niagara Creed did see the upcoming apostasy that would over sweep the Church in Section 14 of the Creed but makes no suggestion as what to do about it.

⁵ Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America*, page 48.

⁶ William Ashbrook, *Evangelicalism: The New Neutralism*, page 44.

lesson to be learned. Spurgeon was teaching a lesson which took his American counterparts decades to learn:

It now becomes a serious question how far those who abide by the faith once delivered to the saints should fraternize with those who have turned aside to another Gospel. Christian love has its claims, and divisions are to be shunned as grievous ends; but how far are we justified in being in confederacy with those who are departing from this truth.⁷

Spurgeon realized that a true Christian cannot claim to be in fellowship with the Lord if he was also associated with apostates and compromisers. The only answer was separation.

American Attitudes

News of the Downgrade Controversy and the results spread to America where it was widely followed. Many saw and studied Spurgeon's demonstration of ecclesiastical separation, but few seemed ready to enact it or imitate it. Americans had little trouble acknowledging personal separation from sin but had not yet been exposed to the difficult choices ecclesiastical separation would later demand of them.

The reason for the lag in American understanding of separation came from the slowness of growth of the influence of modernism in America. Modernism hit Europe (especially Germany) first and then was brought to America. It took years for it to get a foothold, and it was not seen as much of a threat by Orthodox Christians until it had established a beachhead in the seminaries and in positions of denominational leadership in the early twentieth century. There was little emphasis on separation from apostasy, since there was little apostasy from which to separate at that time. There were cults, such as the Mormons or Christian Scientists, but there was no controversy over the need to separate from them as they were clearly cultic and did not pose to be orthodox. The problem would arise later when modernists would talk like Christians while denying the foundational truths of the faith Christians believed and held dear.

The confusion over the question of what to do with such men sets the stage for the denominational battles of the 1920s.

The Early Emphasis on Personal Separation

During the nineteenth century, the emphasis was on personal holiness rather than doctrinal purity. The Prophetic Conferences of these years had awakened the Christian as to the reality of the Second Coming. With the realization of the lateness of the hour, Christians began to reexamine their lives and ministries. They understood that they might be called to stand before the Lord at the bema judgment at nearly anytime. Such a realization produces a deeper desire for personal holiness and sanctification on the part of the true Christian.

⁷ Lewis Drummond, *Spurgeon: Prince of Preachers*, page 692.

The Christians of this period rightly understood that to be a Christian who honored the Lord, separation from all forms of sin and worldliness was necessary. There were few problems involved in practicing this form of separation since the objects

from which to separate were obvious: alcohol, tobacco, extra-marital sex. The continuing downhill trend in American morals (such as in "the Gay Nineties") gave these Christians the incentive they needed to separate from the sins of the day.

Pentecostal Separations

Ironically, personal separation did produce an ecclesiastical separation in the form of the Holiness movement which would later evolve into Pentecostalism. The stress in personal holiness and sanctification would naturally be resisted by the more traditional mainline denominations. Those who persisted in emphasizing it became increasingly unpopular in their churches. The reason should be obvious; the carnal, nominal church member gets under conviction with that kind of preaching and practice. Instead of conforming to the conviction of the Holy Spirit, these churches expelled those who were putting so much emphasis on personal separation.

One would need to understand the spiritual climate in America in the last half of the 1800s to understand the revival of personal separation and holiness. Moral decline and not apostasy was the enemy in these days. Jessyca Gaver, in her book, *Pentecostalism*, records the signs of those times:

“Churches were understaffed and church attendance was adversely affected. In the period from 1865 to 1900, a large percentage of congregations in all Protestant denominations were without pastors. By the end of the nineteenth century, some of the larger churches were alarmed at the situation...This period was characterized by moral corruption...(but)...the Civil War was not the only cause for this moral decay...Slums became breeding places for delinquency while the concentration of wealth became a lure for crime, especially theft...Prostitution operated openly in most cities. The liquor evil became a formidable problem...The champions of traditional conduct and morals were alarmed at the appearance of the 'concert-saloon' in the cities...political rottenness also affected state and federal governments...American religious life was particularly affected...This improved economy tended to make the existing churches more and more concerned with the middle and upper middle classes as their members rose into these (wealthy) groups...Religion became more and more exclusive, and the poor became more and more neglected until the mass of them was largely unchurched...Since no existing church communion declared itself as a body against the religious laxness ... the way was open for a new group to come forward as champions of traditional evangelical Protestantism. Under these circumstance, the Holiness movement came into existence.”⁸

8 Jessyca Russell Gaver, *Pentecostalism*, pages 71,72.

The Holiness groups did separate (or were thrown out, depending upon the circumstance) for a variety of reasons; among them, a desire for personal holiness and sanctification. But this was one of the major reasons.⁹ They perceived a lethargy in

many of the mainline churches as well as an increasing worldliness. Unable to effect change from within, they separated from these groups.

Thus, the first wide scale practice of ecclesiastical separation in modern times stemmed from personal separation from sin. The Holiness groups were not separating due to apostasy, although the denominations that expelled them did so often due to the teachings of the Holiness groups. Doctrine, while one of the reasons behind the separations, was not the major reason for the separation. Practice in respect to holy living was the most important initial reason. But even that practice resulted in ecclesiastical separation. Few realized the important precedent that had been set nor of the pattern that was struck. The separation of the Holiness groups would become a pattern for the Fundamentalists in the 1920s.

The lesson of these groups is clear. They could not change their denominations from within. The denominations themselves would not change to accommodate the new beliefs. Neither side would compromise. Therefore, someone had to leave, and it was the Holiness groups. Whether the Holiness groups were right or wrong is not the issue. That they did separate is. If two groups cannot work together, they ought to separate to maintain their own perceived doctrinal and practical purities.

After these groups separated from the mainline churches, they then began to separate from each other.¹⁰ As a movement, Pentecostalism is very individualistic. Since there was no historic creeds or doctrinal systems for them to use, they established their doctrines from scratch and developed it as the needs arose. This led to a wide variety of doctrinal positions among the Pentecostal groups. These groups tried to harmonize their doctrines with each other but were largely unsuccessful. The Pentecostals began to splinter from each other over doctrine and practice. They were not at all hesitant to separate from brethren they considered to be in error, unlike the mainstream Fundamentalists who showed more patience with Liberalism. Thus, the Pentecostal groups were not only trailblazing personal separations in their relations to the mainline churches, but also ecclesiastical separation in their relations with each other.

The question then arises as to whether these groups, which would later be known as Pentecostals, could be considered Fundamentalists. Did they understand and practice the keystone doctrine of separation? They certainly did separate and were separated from the mainline denominations for both practical and doctrinal reasons. Many thought their over-emphasis on sanctification to the point of sinless perfection to be too extreme, hence the casting out of the Holiness groups. Many of these early Holiness groups taught "entire sanctification" and that a "crisis experience" was necessary for conversion. Eradication, or the "second blessing" was at the center of these teachings.¹¹ Speaking in tongues as an initial evidence of the baptism in the Holy

9 C.E. Jones, "Holiness Movement," *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, page 406.

10 The Plymouth Brethren groups were also famous for their multiple internal separations, due mainly to doctrine, practice and personalities.

11 Gaver, page 68.

Spirit was also taught by some of these groups as early as 1854.¹² Faith healing was also promoted by these groups. These beliefs did not align themselves to mainline

doctrines. But O. Talmadge Spence, of Pentecostal background himself, clearly identifies these early groups as Fundamentalist in their attitudes.

“These persons, like the early Fundamentalists, took a stand against the dangers of liberalism. But whereas the Fundamentalist had a heavy burden for evangelism and for enunciating the basic teachings of the Word of God, the Pentecostalist, because of his links to Wesleyan theology, added to this fundamental orthodox doctrine a concern for experimental holiness and the distinctives of the Christian life.”¹³

While the doctrine and some of the practice may not line up with orthodox Fundamentalist positions, their desire for holiness and their stand against modernism would certainly qualify them as part of that first Fundamentalist generation. The Holiness groups separated from the mainline groups over personal separation. To this day, this breach has not been healed due to the fact that the bulk of the Holiness Movement has degenerated into the Charismatic Movement, which Fundamentalists condemn. Non-charismatic Pentecostals would be better candidates for a reunion into the orthodox Fundamentalist movement.

As for the Pentecostals themselves, they considered themselves to be “Fundamentalists with a difference.”¹⁴ They thought themselves to be Fundamentalists who went beyond other Fundamentalists in their belief of New Testament Christianity patterned after the Book of Acts. The mainline Fundamentalists rejected the new doctrines which promoted tongues, miracles, and healings and rejected the Holiness groups on these doctrinal grounds, citing the dispensational changes from the Book of Acts to the present day. The break was complete by 1928¹⁵ when the Holiness groups were officially rejected by the World Christian Fundamentals Association. From this point, the Pentecostals and Fundamentalists have blazed separate trails and had little fellowship with each other.

While these Pentecostals may have considered themselves Fundamentalists, few others did. The fundamentalists as a whole rejected the Holiness movement. R. A. Torrey evaluated the Holiness movement as “emphatically not of God, and founded by a Sodomite.” Harry Ironside wrote in his book, *Holiness, the True and the False*, dated 1912, that the Holiness movement was “disgusting” and was fraught with “delusions and insanities.” Arno Gabelein said, “I have borne for many years an unflinching testimony against all unscriptural and fanatical cults and teachings.” Among these, he lists “Pentecostalism” and “McPhersonism.” J. Frank Norris, William Bell Riley, and later, the

12 Ibid., page, 69.

13 Spence, *Pentecostalism: Purity or Peril?* page 31.

14 H.V. Synan, “Fundamentalism,” *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, pages 326, 327.

15 Vinson Synan, “Introduction: Frank Bartleman and Azusa Street,” *Azusa Street*, page xxi.

American Council of Christian Churches, would also reject the movement.¹⁶ It is little wonder that with these kinds of attitudes on the part of the early Fundamentalist leaders

that the Holiness movement was shunned and was never considered to be a part of mainstream Fundamentalism. While these same Fundamentalists may have struggled over what to do with the Northern Baptist Convention or Presbyterian apostasy, they were united on what to do with early Pentecostalism and Holiness groups.

Roman Catholic Separations

For the sake of completeness, we need to make several observations regarding the practice of separation within the Church of Rome. Fundamentalists may be hesitant to admit that Rome practiced a stronger form of separation (until the Vatican II council of 1962) than most Fundamentalists.

Romanism in the nineteenth century was dogmatic to the extreme in its condemnation of those who would not conform to its authority. Protestants and Baptists¹⁷ were not regarded by Rome as they are today, as "separated brethren," but rather as heretics and apostates who were worthy of death whom Rome would have killed if they could. No contact with Protestant or Baptist groups was tolerated. This was ecclesiastical separation carried to the extreme. All Roman Catholics were forbidden to read non-Roman literature (including Protestant translations of the Bible), attend and participate in non-Roman church services, and to marry non-Romanists. It was necessary to convert to Romanism to fellowship with a Roman Catholic.

In this is an interesting observation which we will notice appearing again and again in Fundamentalist dealings with Modernists and New Evangelicals. For two groups of dissimilar faith and practice to cooperate, one of them must compromise the offending doctrine. Church history clearly demonstrates that in such circumstances, it is always the Fundamentalist who lowered his colors, not the non-Fundamentalist. The New Evangelical and Modernist and Romanist all realize that if they simply wait long enough, the professing Fundamentalist who desires their cooperation and fellowship will come crawling to them and will accept any terms that are dictated to him. The ones who reject separation are usually the groups who practice it the most in their dealings with Fundamentalists. The Fundamentalist will be the first one to abandon the principles of separation in order to expand his circle of fellowship.

We see this in the ecumenical movement today, which Rome controls. Other groups who wish to participate must compromise their doctrines as Rome refuses to compromise hers. This dogmatism is seen in the attitudes Rome espoused in the 1800s. Rome was more Fundamentalist than the most militant Fundamentalist in this period.

16 Larry Pettegrew, *History of Fundamentalism II*, page 47, unpublished class notes. Talmadge Spence, in *Pentecostalism: Purity or Peril*, page 14, stressed that even after this break with mainline Fundamentalism, some early Pentecostal leaders kept up a correspondence with Fundamentalist leaders. These Pentecostals also valued Fundamentalist literature. This separation was then not universal, as there was cautious dialogue between some early Pentecostals and Fundamentalists.

17 I do not believe Baptists to be Protestant as they pre-date the Reformation.

CHAPTER 2 Years of Patience: Separation From 1900-1920

President John Kennedy once wrote a small book¹ entitled, *Why England Slept*. His theme was to examine how Nazi Germany could grow so powerful while the English were oblivious to the threat. *Why Fundamentalism Slept* has yet to be written which would describe the slumber of Fundamentalists at the turn of the century. This period would set the stage for the great separation battles to follow in both the Baptist and Presbyterian camps.

As Fundamentalists moved into the new century, a new crop of problems began to confront them. Liberalism had been confined mainly in the realm of philosophy and Unitarianism in times past but was now making assaults upon orthodoxy. The growth of such apostasy within the ranks of orthodox Christianity and the results would lay the foundations for the denominational struggles which would mark the 1920s. How could the Fundamentalists allow themselves to fall into such a peril? How was Liberalism able to make inroads into Orthodox denominations so easily? It was a lack of spiritual discernment on the part of the Fundamentalists who didn't see the danger until too late.

Separation may have been unable to do much to stem the rising tides of infidelity, even if it had been properly practiced. Separation won't keep the Liberals from trying to wreck a denomination, but it will make their job more difficult. Being identified as Orthodox and separatist only makes the Fundamentalist a juicier target for the Liberal. The Liberals found no such barrier to their plans as the Fundamentalist couldn't figure out what to do with separation or how to apply it.

The Increasing Power of Liberalism

Liberalism was a theological system which challenged nearly every Bible doctrine. It attacked the inspiration of the Scriptures, the virgin birth and resurrection of Christ, as well as His deity and Second Coming. It promoted the goodness of man and downplayed the severity of sin and judgment. J. Gresham Machen defined Liberalism as a "non-redemptive religion" which is so destructive since it makes use of Christian terminology.² George Dollar identifies it with the Social Gospel which emphasizes Christianity in the light of the needs of society rather than in the needs of the heart of men.³ George Marsden identifies evolutionary naturalism, higher criticism of the Bible, and idealistic philosophy and theology as the three major tenants of Liberalism.⁴ Liberalism also promoted freedom in theological thought. It demanded there be room within Christianity for those who challenged the traditional doctrines. Liberalism rejected any Biblical authority in theology. The goal of Liberalism was to allow every man to do and to think that which was right in their own eyes. They wanted to be heretical and yet be called Christians.

1 Or "ghost-wrote" it, as many believe.

2 J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, page 2.

3 Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America*, page 382.

4 George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, page 26.

The Illustration of the Cuckoo

A good illustration of the methods and philosophy employed by Liberalism is demonstrated by the cuckoo bird. Mother cuckoos do not build their own nest in which to lay their eggs. They rather deposit their eggs in an existing nest of another bird when that bird is away from its nest. The cuckoo mixes her eggs with the legitimate eggs of the other bird. The cuckoo eggs usually would hatch first and then engage to push the legitimate eggs out of the nest so it would have the nest (as well as the food and attention of the mother bird) to itself. The mother bird would be unaware of these events as they transpired under her nose.

The relation to Liberalism is clear. Liberalism never founded its own seminary (with the exception of the University of Chicago) or founded its own denomination, local church, or mission agency. Liberalism has stolen every church, denomination, agency, and school it has encountered, just as the cuckoo of our story. The Fundamentalist has been the builder in church history while the Liberal has been the thief. They let the Fundamentalist do all the work, spend all the money and make all the sacrifice. Once the organization is up and running, then the Liberal made his move.

Liberalism was a clever foe. It did not make an overt confrontation against Fundamentalism but rather adopted a New Evangelical approach in infiltrating and undermining Orthodoxy. It started slowly, feeling its way through Orthodox denominations, trying to go as far as it could and gain as much power as it could without revealing its true colors. Using this strategy, Fundamentalists did not realize the extent of the Liberal threat until it was far too late. When the Liberal threat was exposed, the Liberals were entrenched. The cuckoo egg had been laid in the denominations, and these groups had been tricked into raising the illegitimate egg.

The Futility of the Heresy Trials

The Fundamentalists did make an earnest attempt to dislodge the Liberals from their denominations but without success. The Presbyterians held numerous heresy trials in this period to defrock apostate preachers.⁵ When a Liberal professor or preacher was identified, he would be brought before his presbytery to answer the charges of heresy. These trials would then produce one of three results: the Liberal would be found guilty and expelled from the denomination; he would be found not guilty and would resume his ministry; or he would be found guilty and expelled but would then resign from the denomination and continue teaching his heresies. This third result was made possible by the employing body of the guilty Liberal refusing his resignation.

Regardless of the outcome of the trials, the Fundamentalists usually ended up as the villain. As a result of these trials (which were covered by the press), the Liberal was often presented as the poor, persecuted seeker for truth and theological and academic liberty who was being attacked by the narrow-minded Fundamentalist who was stuck in the Dark Ages. Americans have always pulled for the underdog and the oppressed, and the Liberals were only too glad to adopt that alias. They cried "Freedom of Conscience!" and "Soul Liberty!" as a basis for teaching error. When they suffered for their actions, it

⁵ The backgrounds of some of these trials are detailed in *Pursuit of Purity*, 144-149.

was presented as persecution on the basis of academic and theological freedom.

Fundamentalist Reactions Against Liberals

These resulting charges made against the Fundamentalists were naturally false. They had no desire to persecute anyone. They were interested in maintaining doctrinal purity in their churches, which was impossible as long as Liberalism was allowed to roam through the denominations and schools unchecked.

Matthew 18:15-17 was employed by the Fundamentalists. The Liberals were confronted with their sin, and the Fundamentalists offered to sit down and work out the problems with the offending member. The Liberals in these cases acted more like the Fundamentalist than the Fundamentalists themselves in refusing to compromise any of their false teachings. The Liberals vowed that if anyone was going to change their doctrine, it would be the Fundamentalist. Faced with such a wall of conviction, the Fundamentalists took the next step and tried to throw the Liberal out of the denomination or seminary. This was the proper Biblical procedure.

Such expulsions were sometimes successful but not always. Some Liberals managed to stay in their positions by manipulation of denominational by-laws and technical maneuvering. When the Liberal was expelled, he seldom went far from the position he lost. Many remained in the same schools from which they were supposedly barred from teaching. Others simply transferred to other schools that were more sympathetic to their views. Guilty pastors would simply transfer pulpits, often within the same city from which they had been expelled. From these outposts, they continued their activities.

A Baptist Example: The Northern Baptist Convention

A good case study of Liberal methods and infiltration is the Northern Baptist Convention. An examination of their capture methods of this Convention reveal the "standard operating procedure" of Liberalism when it sets its sites on an organization.

The Northern Baptist Convention has always had a tinge of Liberalism. At its birth in 1907, Liberals were already well represented, but they did not dominate. Fundamentalists held many important positions and posts. But Liberalism is the hungry enemy, not content with only a portion of the pie. Plans were laid early for the eventual Liberal capture of the entire denomination. If the Fundamentalists stood in the way, they would either be cajoled into submission by the threatening of their pensions or would be expelled at the loss of their salaries, churches, and pensions. It would be "play or pay" for the unfortunate Fundamentalist.

Liberalism first attacked the seminaries, since this was the training ground for the leadership. This is interesting. Since Liberalism is an intellectual movement, it finds its most favorable nesting ground in the seminary. The average church member would be ignored by the Liberal infiltrator, assuming they could capture the local church once the pastor was snared or recruited.

The University of Chicago was founded in 1892 and was for many years the premier Northern Baptist seminary. As Dollar and Beale point out, Chicago was not captured by the Liberals but rather was started by Liberals, and it stayed Liberal to the present day.⁶ True to its Liberal birth and mission, Chicago busied itself with pumping

out a continuous stream of Liberal preachers and Liberal teachings. Students were fed a steady diet of the social gospel,⁷ higher criticism, and evolution. Graduates of Chicago would then transfer to other Northern Baptist Convention seminaries and infect them with the Chicago Liberalism. The graduating pastors and missionaries would in turn be infected with the virus and Liberalism would thus be spread throughout the entire leadership and eventually to the people.

Few Fundamentalists lifted their voices in criticizing a Convention school in the name of "unity" and "loyalty" to the Convention. To criticize the "godly men" in the seminary would usually be met with charges of disloyalty to the convention, and the Fundamentalism would be blacklisted by the convention hierarchy. When attempts were made by the Fundamentalists to clean out the schools, the efforts were only done half-heartedly and were easily defeated by the Liberals who successfully used the convention by-laws to stay in power. Phase One was then complete: capture of the seminaries.

Liberals then aimed for the convention organizations, namely the mission agencies and the literature associations which supplied Sunday School materials to Northern Baptist Convention churches. This enabled the Liberals not only to control the materials being taught to the preachers-in-training but also to new converts overseas and to the children in the churches. The infiltration of the mission boards would be one of the main ignition sources for the theological blazes that would erupt in the Northern Baptist Convention during the 1920s.

Liberals then brought in high-profile Liberal "ringers" like the infamous Harry Emerson Fosdick, and inviting them (and their churches) to join the Northern Baptist Convention. Fosdick was America's best known and best loved Liberal, and the attempt to lure him into the Northern Baptist Convention alarmed the Fundamentalists. They rightly wanted nothing to do with an arch-heretic. With Fosdick came one of America's richest men, John Rockefeller. Now the Liberals had the names and the money on their side, while all the Fundamentalists had were their convictions.

Liberals were aware that the only threat to their power was the Fundamentalists, and they went to great lengths to keep them happy or to shut them up. Like throwing an old dog a bone, the Liberals would invite the Fundamentalists to "cooperate" with them in Northern Baptist Convention programs and would butter up the poor Fundamentalist with flattery and some degree of recognition and maybe a few unimportant posts within the convention. This mollified many short-sighted Fundamentalists into thinking the Liberals weren't all as bad as they thought. This was the all-important "softening up process" used successfully in secular warfare. Before a war breaks out, a nation will broadcast a steady stream of propaganda with the goal of breaking the enemy's will to fight and resist. When the big convention battles of the 1920s came, most of the Fundamentalists were harmlessly on the sidelines, emasculated by the Liberal softsoap.

⁶ Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America*, page 146. Beale has Chicago's start date as 1891 on page 178 of *In Pursuit of Purity*.

⁷ It was a Northern Baptist, Walter Rauschenbusch, who developed this theological precursor to New Evangelicalism.

The World's Christian Fundamentals Association

This first organized nondenominational group of Fundamentalists was the World's Christian Fundamentals Association, otherwise known as the WCFA. It was formed in 1919 as a direct result of the Niagara Bible Conferences. Beale classifies it as a nonconformist fundamentalist organization,⁸ meaning it would not stress separation. It would have sought a cooperative relationship with Liberalism in hopes of purifying them of their errors instead of separating from them altogether. The reason for such a stand would have been its background. Since the Niagara Conferences dealt with doctrinal rather than ecclesiastical issues, ecclesiastical separation was never emphasized. With the emphasis on doctrine and Bible topics, the need to separate from the rapidly-growing apostasy would have been considered as a side issue or a distraction. Its prescription against Liberalism was to preach it out of the denominations and schools rather than to effect a clean break from it. This is seen in surveying the 16 messages of the first WCFA meeting in Philadelphia. None of these sixteen messages dealt with separation from apostasy. Its doctrinal statement is also devoid of any mention of separation as a remedy against Liberal and Modernist infiltrations.

The Association declined rapidly in the 1930s due to increasing denominationalism among Fundamentalism. The formation of the National Association of Evangelicals in 1942 was the last nail in the WCFA coffin. The true value of the WCFA was that it was the first interdenominational effort among Fundamentalists. Such interdenominational and trans-denominational cooperation would be vital in the decades to come.

Conclusion

The Fundamentalist was caught napping in his watch-tower at the turn of the century. Instead of fulfilling his role as the watchman per Ezekiel 3 and 33, the Funda-mentalist allowed the Liberal to grow in his influence and power until he grew too strong to be driven out.

Separation is of no value unless it is accompanied by spiritual discernment. The Liberals easily made their inroads without the help of the Fundamentalist. Separation could not have stopped the infiltration of Liberalism, but it could have enabled the Fundamentalist to put up a strong unified front to battle it. Separation would have also prevented Fundamentalist cooperation with an apostatizing denomination. At the first realization of Liberal infiltration, the Fundamentalist should have realized his denomination was doomed. It would have come to the point of "either he goes or I do." And since the Liberal would not leave, it would have been the Fundamen-talist who must needs have gone without the camp. Yet it took as much as 40 years for some Fundamentalists to wake up and realize how the Liberal played them for fools. A proper application and understanding of separation would have allowed the Fundamentalist to make his escape from an enemy denomination with a whole skin. As Beale would observe, this period was like a boxing match. The Fundamentalist was not going for the knockout of the Liberal but was trying to win on points.⁹ Too much of a gentlemanly

8 Beale, page 5.

9 Beale, page 188.

attitude, along with just plain spiritual blindness and fear, allowed the Liberal in the door. Liberalism got in, and the Fundamentalist did not drive him out. Too much toleration and

the lack of vigilance and discernment boxed the Fundamentalist into his denominational corner. It would become necessary to separate from the Liberal as the Fundamentalist would do in the next era of Separatist Fundamentalist history.

The 1920s would force a major shift of tactics among Fundamentalists in their fight against Liberals and Modernists. Before 1923 and the separation of the Baptist Bible Union, Fundamentalism tended to be nonconformist. It acted more as a Puritan movement within the rapidly decaying denominations. Puritans do not hold to separatist ideals, believing them to be too radical. They believe that error can either be purged or purified. It would not be until 1923 and the Baptist Bible Union that Fundamentalism would become separatist in disassociating itself from apostasy.¹⁰ Nonconformist Fundamentalism was still the norm for the Fundamentalist Fellowship of Northern Baptists and most Presbyterian bodies, but it gradually lost ground to the more militant, separatist wing as the nonconformists were unsuccessful in driving the apostates out.

9 Beale, in *In Pursuit of Purity*, marks the division between nonconformist and separatist Fundamentalism at 1930 on page 5. I feel the Baptist Bible Union separation of 1923 would mark a better time division.

CHAPTER 3 First Steps Toward Obedience: Separation From 1920-1930

By 1920, four distinct philosophies of separation had emerged among Fundamentalists. George Marsden lists these views:

1. A "premillennial extreme" which states the world is getting worse and is past saving. The only answer is separation from apostasy. This view was promoted by A.C. Gaebelien and I.M. Haldeman.
2. The "central tension" position which "walked the tightrope." This was more optimistic than the "premillennial extreme" in radical separation was not needed but rather a strengthening of those things that remained. R.A. Torrey, James Gray, and later, W.B. Riley, would adopt this stance. To them, separation would be secondary to evangelism.¹
3. The "preservation of Christian civilization" position promoted by William Jennings Bryan. He stressed the importance of Christians getting more involved in government. This idea is embodied in the Christian Reconstruction/Dominion Theology movement.²
4. The "transformation of culture" by the Word position. Just preach and do right and every-thing should come out all right. A strong stand is needed but not an accompanying militancy. This was popular among the Presbyterians, especially B.B. Warfield and J. Gresham Machen.³

This fragmentation showed that the early Fundamentalists still didn't know what to make of the doctrine of separation. This indecision led to an inability to properly define the doctrine and thus to execute it. There was a recognition of it now with the Liberal threat so clearly manifested. After several years of prodding in the dark during this decade, Fundamentalists finally decided to enact a policy of separation.

Separation would be defined in the 1920s by the Baptists and the Presbyterians with other groups looking on. The biggest battles were among the Baptists, although the more reserved Presbyterians also provided much in the way of fireworks.

The Fundamentalist Fellowship

The Fundamentalist Fellowship of Northern Baptists (known as the "FF") was the first organized attempt at separation by Baptists. Its problem was that it aimed at a "cooperative separatism" rather than a complete separatism from Liberals. It developed as a Fundamentalist faction within the Northern Baptist Convention (the "NBC") to promote Fundamentalist issues and to attempt to stall Liberal progress. Instead of separating from the massive Liberal infiltration of the NBC, the FF would attempt to rid the Convention of the Liberal leaven by using its own denominational by-laws.

The Fundamentalist Fellowship saw itself as a reform movement as well as a protest movement that would operate within the NBC. No one foresaw the need nor did

1 This is the same philosophy as the Jack Hyles/Sword of the Lord wing of neo-fundamentalism.
2 This movement was very popular in the 1980s-1990s but has seemed to have "cooled down" since.

3 Marsden, pages 124-138.

anyone express the desire that an exodus from the Convention would one day be

necessary. The Fundamentalist Fellowship was not blind to the leaven with the Northern Baptist Convention. They saw the dangers but were unwilling to face the consequences of total separation. Denominational loyalty played a large part in the unwillingness of the FF to condemn the Convention they loved and in which they were raised. Instead of calling for separation from the Liberals, the FF called only for Fundamentalists to "restate, reaffirm and reemphasize the Fundamentals of our New Testament faith." A reaffirmation of doctrine would accomplish nothing, and the Liberals were not hindered in their work. The Liberals knew where the FF professed to stand on the issues but continued in their programs.

The Fundamentalist Fellowship was crippled from the beginning by this lack of determination to exercise separation. At their organizational conference in Buffalo in 1920, there was "no clarion call to face the real problems and decide scripturally what to do."⁴ They liked to talk about separation but were unwilling to enact it. They clung to the desperate hope that the Convention could be saved from the Liberals if the Fundamentalists would only organize and exert a forceful public presence at the yearly Convention meetings. This strategy was a failure as the FF did not stop any Liberal program or oust a single Liberal preacher from his church.

The Baptist Bible Union

Fundamental Northern Baptists grew impatient at the continual failures of the Fundamentalist Fellowship on the floor of the annual conventions. Year after year, the Liberals kept the FF tied in knots by frustrating every motion the Fundamentalists submitted. The last straw for many Fundamentalists was the defeat by the Liberals of the motion adopting the New Hampshire Confession of Faith as the official doctrinal statement of the NBC in the 1923 convention. It became painfully obvious that the philosophy of a half-hearted separation practiced by the FF was not going to work. Fundamentalists saw no hope in saving their beloved Convention and realized that their only course of action was either surrender (which was never an option that was considered seriously) or separation. Those who choose separation left the NBC to organize the Baptist Bible Union in 1923.

This would be a good place to offer an observation of a problem that so often plagued Fundamentalists. When the Fundamentalists saw the need for an organized fellowship within the NBC, they organized one in the Fundamentalist Fellowship. When the FF failed and separation from the NBC became a priority, what did these Fundamentalists do? They started another fellowship, the Baptist Bible Union. When that died, what did these Baptists do? They started the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches. When New Evangelicalism ruined the GARBC in the late 1980s, what happened to those who separated? They started another fellowship! Church history clearly teaches that compromise often starts in the ranks of Fundamentalism that is organized beyond the level of the local church. Separation is the answer to apostasy within a denomination or group. The establishment of a similar group assures a repeat of history as the next generation will be forced to separate from the group their fathers organized when they separated. Fundamentalists must realize that God does His work

4 Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America*, page 151.

through the ministries of local churches, not organized fellowships. In my teaching of church history, I have developed a law that states, "Any ministry, including Bible colleges, mission boards, or preachers' fellowships, that is not under the direct control and authority of an independent local church will eventually apostatize."⁵ The independent local church that has no entangling associations is the strongest bulwark against apostasy, while the organized fellowship or association is the weakest.

The men who left the Fundamentalist Fellowship to organize the Baptist Bible Union were determined to make a clean break from the Northern Baptist Convention. Not all of the men of the Fundamentalist Fellowship jumped ship; many stayed to battle on within the NBC. It would not be until 1947 that the last of these hardcore Baptists would finally learn their lesson and separate as they formed the Conservative Baptist Association.

The Baptist Bible Union was built on a foundation of separatism. Their purpose was to provide Fundamentalists with "information, inspiration and fellowship" regarding the fight against Liberals. Beale does point out that the BBU was weakened from its position on separation by William Bell Riley, who was a weak separatist.

If it had not been for the strong influence of Riley, the BBU would have promoted a stronger, more Biblical form of separatism.⁶ Another reason for the BBU modification was its inclusion of not only Northern Baptists but also Southern Baptists and Canadian Baptists who knew little of the struggles many of the Northern Baptist men in the Union had lived through. These Baptists may not have seen the need to be what they may have considered "ultra-militant and ultra-separatist." As long as the Union was separatist, that was good enough. Despite the modified position, the BBU was probably the strongest voice for separatism up to this time. The stand of the BBU was considered too militant for the Fundamentalist Fellowship as many of them did not support the new group.

The fall of the Baptist Bible Union by 1930 was unfortunate but not the disaster that it could have been. Upon its ashes arose the strongly separatist General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, which filled the vacuum in separation for over 40 years. By this time, Fundamentalists knew that their only hope was to make this doctrine their foundation and organize all practices around it, lest they apostatize back into the morass of Liberalism from which they had left. The painful 1920s had taught the Fundamentalists that separation did work and was the answer and was their only hope for maintaining purity in the churches.

An Analysis of Baptist Separatism

The Baptists, both Northern and Southern, had come through a difficult period. In 1920, no separatist organization existed. By 1930, the Baptists had experienced divisions over matters linked to separation.

Two major forms of Baptist separatism emerged from this period. First was Cooperative Separatism, practiced by the Fundamentalist Fellowship. This failed policy advocated separation in name only from Liberals. Northern Baptists did not want to be

⁵ The Lord said He would build His church in Matthew 16:18, not His denomination or college.

⁶ Beale, *In Pursuit of Purity*, page 211.

identified with the apostate elements in their denomination but were unwilling to separate from their apostate denomination. The Fundamentalists thought if they simply established themselves and organized properly, they could both maintain their identity as Fundamentalists and fight against the Liberals. The Fundamentalist Fellowship wanted to be known as separatists without paying the price involved with the implementation of separatist policies and practices. They learned through their repeated failures the folly of following a cooperative course within the NBC, so they simply abandoned the Convention. They realized that they could not recapture the NBC from the Liberals and that it was a waste of time and money to continue fighting an entrenched enemy. The best way to escape the influence and power of the Liberals was to start a new organization which banned Liberals. The Baptist Bible Union was a step in the right direction although its founding was based on a weaker motivation. It was not a holy jealousy over pure doctrine and a hatred of apostasy that drove the BBU to separate. It was a feeling of resignation and defeat. They saw their only hope of staying true to Christ lay in separation. We do not condemn their actions but rather point out their still less-than-perfect understanding about the proper motive behind separation. The proper motive for separation is not a realization of organizational doom but rather a desire to maintain doctrinal and practical purity. These Baptist Fundamentalists were learning but like babies, they were learning by taking slow, tentative steps.

Presbyterian Separatism

Presbyterian Fundamentalists also had their battles during the 1920s but with worse results. Presbyterian Liberals have no respect for a professed separatist who is unwilling to back up his rhetoric with action.

Unlike the Northern Baptists, Presbyterians had a history of writing doctrinal statements and creeds to systematize their doctrine. Baptists always resisted a uniform doctrinal statement as a perceived threat to the doctrine of soul liberty and the priesthood of the believer. In 1910, the Presbyterian General Assembly adopted five elements that were deemed necessary for orthodox doctrine. These doctrinal positions later became known as the "Five Fundamentals." These positions included the following:

1. Inerrancy of the Bible in the original manuscripts,
2. The virgin birth,
3. The vicarious atonement of Christ,
4. The bodily resurrection of Christ,
5. Reality of miracles.⁷

This was the early yardstick to measure a man's orthodoxy. If he held to all five points, he was considered orthodox, if not a Fundamentalist. Unlike the Baptists, the Presbyterians had a yardstick to measure a man's orthodoxy by way of a creed. While it may have helped identify the enemy, the creeds did not stop the apostates from carrying on their programs.

The leading Presbyterian Fundamentalist of the 1920s was J. Gresham Machen,

⁷ Ibid., page 149.

who taught at Princeton and helped found Westminster Theological Seminary. Although he never adopted the title of Fundamentalist, Machen certainly manifested the spirit of a Fundamentalist in his fight against Presbyterian Liberalism. Machen's work, *Christianity and Liberalism* consisted of his observations regarding the dangers of Liberalism and what constituted orthodoxy. This was one of the most useful books to come out of the 1920s as Fundamentalists of all denominations looked to it to define exactly who was their enemy and what he believed.

For all of Machen's valid observations regarding Liberalism, he also held to the idea that Liberalism could be driven out of denominations. Machen defined Liberalism and warned of its dangers but offered no real answers as to what to do concerning it. The refusal to deal with separation was based on the same reason Baptists were so reluctant to enact separation; it would necessitate separation from one's denomination and would require the Fundamentalist to become a true independent. In these days, there were few true independents as everyone belonged to something. Such consequences were unthinkable to the Christian in the 1920s, so the only realistic answer was to drive the rascals out.

Machen reflects this attitude in his book. He knew his enemy but didn't know how to fight him. Toward the end of *Christianity and Liberalism*, Machen lists four duties of every Christian in the light of the threat of Liberalism. Machen's fourfold plan of fighting Liberalism included the following:

1. Encourage those who are engaging in the intellectual and spiritual struggle.
2. Church officers should perform their duty in deciding upon the qualifications of candidates for the ministry.
3. Church officers should show their loyalty to Christ in their capacity as members of the individual congregations.
4. Most important of all, there must be a revival of Christian education.⁸

We notice nothing said about separation from apostate denominations. Again, denominational loyalty often ranked ahead of obedience to separation. There were separations from seminaries and synods, but those involved never claimed to be obeying the Biblical commands to withdraw from disobedient brethren.

Machen's work is important because it was so influential among his fellow Presbyterians. His refusal to deal with separation in denominational Liberalism caused the stunted growth in the understanding and implementation of separation among Presbyterians. Machen suggested three possible attitudes in dealing with Liberalism; one could either stand for Christ, stand for Modernism, or be neutral.⁹ With separation overlooked as an option, it is no wonder that many Presbyterians did not consider it. Presbyterians lagged about 15 years behind the Baptists in enacting separation. By 1930, the General Association of Regular Baptists had emerged from the ashes of the Baptist Bible Union. It would not be until the late-1930s and early-1940s and Carl McIntire, that the Presbyterians would finally get a taste of true Biblical separation. When the Presbyterian preachers did separate, they were defrocked and lost all pensions and monetary support. This price, and the fear of paying it, hindered the

⁸ Machen, pages 173-176.

⁹ *Ibid.*, page 45.

Presbyterians from following too closely on the heels of the Baptists.

Conclusion

Separatist Fundamentalism finally began to grow legs during the 1920s although obedience was slow. In 1920, separation was still unexplored territory. By 1930, the first rounds in the separation battles had been sounded. The Baptists plowed the virgin territory with the Presbyterians following at a safe distance. The examples of the Fundamentalist Fellowship and the Baptist Bible Union were important first steps to the next generation of what to do and how to do it when it came to dealing with Liberalism. And the lesson was beginning to sink in. Liberalism could not be expelled nor could Fundamentalists cooperate with it and hope to remain faithful to Christ. The one act that Fundamentalists had hoped to avoid was finally forced on them. The coming-out movements had begun.

CHAPTER 4 Separation From 1930- 1950: Illegitimate Children

The turning point for separation came during this period with a simultaneous strengthening and softening of the separatist positions. Among the Baptists, the General Association of Regular Baptists and the Conservative Baptists began to lay foundations for Baptist separatism. Carl McIntire began to organize Presbyterian separatism. Nondenominational groups such as the Independent Fundamental Churches of America, the American Council of Christian Churches, and the National Association of Evangelicals also lent support to separation. There also arose the most serious threat to the young separatist movement yet in the form of New Evangelicalism.

During the 1930s, we find separatist Fundamentalism represented by four major groups: the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, the Bible Presbyterian Church, the Bible Protestant Church,¹ and the Independent Fundamental Churches of America.

The Regular Baptists

After the downfall of the Baptist Bible Union in 1932, the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches (GARBC) was born. This group, centered in the Midwest, grew from a group of Orthodox or Regular² Baptists who did not associate with Liberalism. From those formative years of the 1930s, the GARBC was the strongest separatist group in America. The early attitude of the GARBC toward the Northern Baptist Convention was to separate fully and move away from its liberal doctrine, its political organizational structure, and its social gospel approach.³ In its list of objectives, dated 1933, the GARBC clearly desired "separation from Northern Baptist work of any kind."⁴ Beale observed about the early spirit of the GARBC that it was founded "to provide a militant, missionary-minded, biblically separated haven of Fundamentalism in the midst of a dying world."⁵ Separation became such an important theme within the GARBC that in the early days, it was a test of one's faith. If a man claimed to be a Regular Baptist, those claims were tested by his position on separation. Armed with this strong separatist attitude, the Regular Baptists took the point during these critical, formative years of Fundamentalism.

Carl McIntire and the Bible Presbyterians

The first separatist Presbyterian voice was Carl McIntire. McIntire led a separatist group out of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church in 1937 and formed the Bible Presbyterian Church. Not only was a new organization started, but a new school in Faith Theological Seminary in Philadelphia. Separation had now come to the

1 The Bible Protestant Church was made up of Methodist dissenters who refused to enter the Methodist Union of 1939, which gave birth to the apostate United Methodist Church.

2 The term 'Regular' to the founders denoted historic Baptists in contrast to the 'Irregulars' who were now tainted with denominationalism and modernism." Calvin Odell, *The General Association of Regular Baptist Churches and Its Attendant Movement*, page 15.

3 Ibid., page 25.

4 Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America*, page 221.

5 Beale, *In Pursuit of Purity*, page 276.

Presbyterians for many of the same reasons it had visited the Baptists: increasing apostasy and the inability of the Fundamentalists to cope with it. Questions regarding mission policy, use of alcohol, and eschatology helped widen the breach between the two factions.⁶

Presbyterian Fundamentalism has never been as sectarian as Baptist Fundamentalism. Fundamental Baptists often viewed with suspicion Fundamentalists of other denominations. Separation was sharply defined to include those who did not hold to the "Baptist distinctives." Baptists would support other Fundamentalists but would be reluctant to work with them. The composition of the Fundamentalist Fellowship, the Baptist Bible Union, and the GARBC were testimonies to the tight-knit Baptist family. Presbyterians were more open in their relationship with other Fundamentalist groups. Faith Seminary included Baptists and Bible Church men on its board of directors and among its students. Fundamentalists of other denominations also served in leadership positions in McIntire's various organizations, including the American and International Council of Christian Churches. Presbyterian definitions of who qualifies as a Fundamentalist were much broader than the Baptists definitions as McIntire's activities demonstrate.

McIntire led his Presbyterians on a rough, rocky and sometimes uncertain ride over the terrain of the issues of the day. Regardless of how people may size him up, his adherence to the doctrine of separation helped mold the Fundamental Presbyterian movement in America. McIntire's problems over his long career stemmed more from his crusades against Communism and some questionable tactics and administrative policies, though his practices and adherence to the basic principles of separation remained fixed.

This raises another observation which must be made. Adherence to separation does not prevent a man from going wrong on some issues. McIntire was a strong separatist during these years, yet his contentions with the American Council of Christian Churches, the International Council of Christian Churches, the World Congresses on Fundamentalism, and other groups are well known. His abrasive and often dictatorial manner was not tempered by his obedience to separation. Separation may prevent one from becoming an apostate, but it will not necessarily give a man a true Christian disposition or temperament. Separation kept McIntire a Fundamentalist, but it never made him any easier to work with.

McIntire brought a unique perspective on twentieth century separation. He always thought of the modern separatist movement as a new Reformation along the same lines as the separation from the Church of Rome four hundred years earlier.

There is today what is called the "separation movement." It is also called the Twentieth Century Reformation Movement. Divisions and breaks similar to those which took place in the Roman Catholic Church of the sixteenth century are taking place in the Protestant churches of the twentieth century. The reasons for the breaks are similar ... People are going "without the camp" in order that true churches may be preserved.⁷

6 Ibid., page 324.

7 Carl McIntire, *The Testimony of Separation*, page 3.

McIntire followed this conviction and practiced it in much the same way as the other Reformer whose memory he invoked, Martin Luther.

The American and International Council of Christian Churches

McIntire's early promotion of separation from liberalism came in 1941 with the formation of the American Council of Christian Churches (ACCC). The stated purpose of the ACCC was to give a testimony of the principles of separation and function as a Fundamentalist counterbalance to the National Council of Churches, which was claiming, at the time, to be the sole representative of all Protestantism.⁸ The ACCC was valuable as it served as the first Fundamentalist organization that transcended denominational boundaries and sought to promote separatism. The International Council of Christian Churches was formed in 1948 and served a similar purpose as the ACCC by opposing the World Council of Churches.

The ACCC, although spearheaded by the Presbyterian McIntire, was trans-denominational. Robert Ketcham, of the GARBC, served as President in 1944. The GARBC did lend its support to the work of the ACCC, encouraging its member churches to join the ACCC without the organization itself joining.⁹

The Independent Fundamental Churches of America

This interdenominational group traces its origins to the start of this period of Fundamentalist history to 1930. It served as a home for many Fundamental Presbyterians and Congregationalists as well as nondenominational preachers. Membership included churches, individuals, mission boards, camps, conference centers, and schools. It started in a Fundamentalist mode but began slipping toward non-separatist New Evangelicalism due to an infusion of a younger generation of men who did not share the battles and convictions of the founding fathers of the movement. This early Fundamentalist strength was manifested in the early support the IFCA lent to Carl McIntire and his ACCC.

The first split of the IFCA over militancy and the related theme of separation was led by Marion Reynolds in 1950. This was also the period when New Evangelicalism began the process of infiltration into the IFCA.

The early separatist spirit of the Independent Fundamental Churches of America can be seen in their Statement of Faith and Doctrine, point 9, which states:

“We believe that all the saved should live in a manner as not to bring reproach upon the Saviour and Lord; and that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices, and associations is commanded of God.”

The IFCA held to this principle of separation until the 1970s when they began receiving more pastors from New Evangelical schools such as Dallas Theological

8 Preamble to the Constitution of the American Council of Christian Churches, September 17, 1941, New York, NY, and Beale, pages 324, 368.

9 Odell, page 27.

Seminary and Moody Bible Institute.

Methodist Separations

In 1939, the Methodists displayed a rare (for them) exercise of separation. Many Fundamental Methodists decided to abandon their denomination when the Methodist Episcopal Church voted to merge with the Methodist Protestant Church to give birth to the Methodist Church. This marriage was liberal which left the Fundamentalists alienated, so a separation ensued. The protesting groups that separated formed the Southern Methodist Church.

Methodists, although not known for their separatism or their Fundamentalism, have a small but faithful representation. Beside the two groups mentioned above, other Fundamentalist Methodist groups include the American Association of Bible Believing Methodists, Ashbury Bible Churches, the Evangelical Methodist Church (of America), Fellowship of Independent Methodists, the Fundamental Methodist Church, and the Association of Independent Methodists. The creation of these groups can be directly traced to this separation from the apostate merger of this period.

The National Association of Evangelicals

The most dynamic and promising interdenominational organization during this period had to be the National Association of Evangelicals (NAE), which organized in 1942. The unstated goal of the NAE was to serve as a counterbalance to the National and World Council of Churches. The NAE was born in the same crucible as was the ACCC, for they both shared similar goals of a more united and organized Fundamentalism. Yet the ACCC and the GARBC never supported the NAE, believing (rightly so) that they were better able to organize Fundamentalism.

We should notice an important difference between the ACCC and the NAE which contributed to the slide into apostasy on the part of the NAE. The ACCC required its member churches to separate from apostate denominations, while the NAE did not. The NAE was founded with many strong Fundamentalists who hoped it would serve as an organization for trans-denominational fellowship. Many of them saw it as an updated version of the old World Christian Fundamentals Association.¹⁰ Included in the ranks during those early years were William Ward Ayer, Bob Jones, Sr., David Otis Fuller, John R. Rice, and Harry Ironside. Despite this seemingly solid foundation, the NAE was founded on a platform of compromise.¹¹

Marion Reynolds describes what the basis of this "platform of compromise" was: a misunderstanding in the difference between a Fundamentalist and an Evangelical.

¹⁰ Dollar, History of Fundamentalism in America, page 233.

¹¹ Marion Reynolds, "The National Association of Evangelicals 50th Anniversary." Foundation, page 5.

“Evangelicalism is a movement that transcends denominational and confessional boundaries, emphasizes the conformity to the basic tenets of the Christian faith ... and a mission outreach of compassion and urgency...Though used throughout Christian history, the term evangelical is now normally associated with a group arising out of Fundamentalism which distinguished itself on the issue of separation. Evangelicals, though theologically conservative, have not avoided contact with secular culture and diverse religious traditions...Fundamentalism...arose...to reaffirm orthodox Protestant Christianity and to defend it militantly against challenges.”¹²

Based on this passage, an Evangelical is a non-militant Fundamentalist who does not practice separation. He, therefore, cannot properly be called a Fundamentalist. In the jargon and confusion of labels, many Fundamentalists who did lend their support to the NAE mistook a theological conservative for a Fundamentalist.

Reynolds continued in his evaluation of the history of the NAE in his “Foundation” magazine of March-April 1992, that the NAE was formed because Evangelicals were uncomfortable both with those who espoused the theologically liberal “social gospel” and Fundamentalists who neglected Christian ideals for negative attacks on others.¹³ A major compromise was made by the founders of the NAE in 1942 to accommodate a desired numerical growth as well as respectability. This was a decision not to require separation from liberal churches or denominations as a condition of membership.¹⁴ This exposes the true motivation behind the formation of the NAE: respectability before the unsaved world rather than faithfulness toward God. Yet the promise of such a potentially strong organization caused many Fundamentalists to overlook these flaws. Once it was recognized, there was a mass exodus of the Fundamentalists who saw that the NAE had misrepresented itself as an organization in which a Fundamentalist could feel comfortable. Yet a simple reading of the 7-point Statement of Faith would have revealed the glaring omission of any mention of separation. Any organization which neglects to deal with separation in its articles of faith cannot properly be considered an organization which Fundamentalists can cooperate with or support. The NAE must be considered as a “middle of the road” organization from the start, occupying the no-man’s land between Liberalism and Fundamentalism. Its main problem then was its lack of a stand on separation. It assumed a neutral position on apostasy and separation. As John Ashbrook said, “The NAE united to fight for right without ever declaring war on wrong.”¹⁵ It is surprising that some Fundamentalists like Dollar missed this problem with the NAE, incorrectly insisting the bigger problem with the NAE was its eschatological position.¹⁶

12 Ibid., page 6.

13 Ibid., pages 7.

14 Ibid.

15 John E. Ashbrook, *New Neutralism II*, page 15.

16 Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America*, page 234.

The Birth of Modern New Evangelicalism

The formation of the National Association of Evangelicals should have been a warning sign to Fundamentalists of what lay ahead. The NAE tried to pass itself off as a Fundamentalist organization, but their ruse was quickly demolished. The NAE, although shunned by many Fundamentalists by the mid-1940s, was to spawn and foster another threat to Fundamentalism in the form of a theological system called New Evangelicalism. Although it is not in any way a Fundamentalist movement, New Evangelicalism would prove to be so dominate over the next fifty years as to emerge as a greater threat to the Fundamentalist movement than Liberalism ever could have been. It must then be properly defined and understood in studying the history of Separatist Fundamentalism. New Evangelicalism can be defined best by the man who first coined the term, Dr. Harold John Ockenga:

“While reaffirming the theological view of Fundamentalism, (New Evangelicalism) repudiated its ecclesiology and its social theory. (New Evangelicalism) sets forth a ringing call for a repudiation of separatism and ... summons to social involvement ... It differs from Fundamenta-ism in its repudiation of separation and its determination to engage itself in the theological dialogue of the day.”¹⁷

The New Evangelicals acknowledged this themselves. In 1956, “Christian Life” magazine listed an eightfold definition of New Evangelicalism. The last point read that the New Evangelicals had “a growing willingness ... to converse with liberal theologians.”¹⁸ We therefore identify a New Evangelical as a Fundamentalist who has sacrificed that one thing that defined his Fundamentalism: the doctrine of separation. While he may believe the same doctrines as the Fundamentalist, the New Evangelical has no claim to the name as he does not act like a Fundamentalist. As we have already discussed, Fundamentalism is not merely adherence to a system of doctrine but is also an adherence to a way of life and ministry. This confused many Fundamentalists in their evaluation of the New Evangelical. The compromiser talked and preached like a Fundamentalist but did not act like one. Weaker Fundamentalists who had a misunderstanding of the nature of true Fundamentalism downplayed the importance of the orthopraxy and concentrated only on the orthodoxy. This failure to judge the New Evangelical on both levels led to what would be known as “secondary separation” which plagued Fundamentalism in the 1970s and 1980s.

Another motivation behind the formation of this new philosophy was a realization of the inability of Fundamentalism to defeat Liberalism. As examples, the New Evangelical pointed to the Northern Baptist and the Presbyterian struggles of the 1920s. The separatism espoused by the Fundamentalists had not worked in defanging the Liberals. If confrontation did not work, perhaps infiltration would.¹⁹ Instead of treating the Liberal as Satan incarnate, the New Evangelical would sit down and talk it over with the

17 John E. Ashbrook, “Thirty Years of New Evangelicalism” The Ohio Bible Fellowship Visitor, (December 1976): pages 1-2. We must also note that Ockenga was a leading figure in the NAE and helped to influence that organization in the compromises of New Evangelicalism.

18 -----, “A Critique on the Fundamentalist Phenomenon: New Evangelicalism Restated”, Fundamental Baptist Fellowship of America News Bulletin, November/December 1981, page 1.

Liberal, trying to adjust the theologies in question to a more acceptable form. This is simply defined as "compromise."

The Threat of New Evangelicalism

After the Fundamentalist defections from the NAE and New Evangelicalism in the late 1940s, these men had to redefine their position regarding the new movement. Just how did New Evangelicalism differ from Fundamentalism?

Did these issues really matter or were the Fundamentalists splitting theological hairs in emphasizing the differences?

As we pointed out, the primary difference between the two camps was their attitude toward separation. The New Evangelical repudiated separation in the belief that it hindered true social action and dialogue with Liberals. What the New Evangelical repudiated, the Fundamentalist clung to as being necessary to the exercise of New Testament Christianity.

The threat of New Evangelicalism existed on many fronts. It offered an intellectual respectability so often missing in Fundamentalism. Fundamentalists often repudiated academics, stressing service and spirituality over scholarship. This was caused by the geographical and cultural climate at the pole of the Fundamentalist movement, Appalachia and the South. The more intellectual urban centers and New England gravitated towards the new movement which preached that it was not a sin to hold an earned doctorate or to know Hebrew. The Fundamentalists were pictured as backwater hillbillies who butchered the King's English while they hollered about hellfire. Many Fundamentalists, disturbed at the new label, drew closer to New Evangelicalism to gain more academic respectability. This ultimately would involve making Fundamentalism respectable to the lost world, which would dominate many Fundamentalists in the 1970s.

Church growth would also be a major temptation for the Fundamentalist to water down his separatism. New Evangelicalism preached a milder gospel with fewer standards. This was much more popular with the average, nominal Christian who was repulsed by the more demanding message preached by the Fundamentalist and his standards (mislabeled as "legalism"). To get the crowds, many Fundamentalists realized that they would somehow have to pry the people out of the New Evangelical churches. This would involve a shift in emphasis from doctrinal preaching to more relational preaching, such as how to understand your wife or how to be happy. The promise of an easier ministry with less opposition would also appeal to many battle weary Fundamentalists. After years of fighting compromise and apostasy with few tangible results, many Fundamentalists would grow weary of fighting and would adopt a position of neutrality. This was an easier position which generated fewer enemies and less criticism. All that was required was ceasing to enact separatism while still professing to believe it.

19 David Beale, S.B.C: House on the Sand? pages 193-194.

Conclusion

This era signaled a fragmentation of Fundamentalism to such a degree that it has never recovered. To offset the numerous separatist organizations which sprung up during this period, Satan gave birth to the National Association of Evangelicals and New Evangelicalism. Any gains made by Fundamentalism were now nullified by an increasing defection out of the separatist camp. This started in the 1940s but would not reach its peak for another 30 years. While New Evangelicalism did carry many weak Fundamentalists captive, those who survived the initial overtures were forced to redefine their views on separation and thus became stronger in their beliefs and practices. They would need all the strength and support they could muster. The next period of 1950-1970 would be the calm before the storm of the controversies of the 1970-1980 period to follow. These controversies traced their foundation back to this era which we have just surveyed.

CHAPTER 5 Growing Pains: Separation From 1950-1970

The die was cast for the separation battles of the 1970s and 1980s during the period of 1930-1950. This twenty-year period of our study was a one of consolidation of forces, getting their footing, arming themselves, and enlisting allies. During this period of consolidation among both separatists and New Evangelicals, the doctrine and practice of separation continued to evolve.

The Conservative Baptists and the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship

When we last left the Northern Baptist Convention, the Fundamentalist Fellowship was continuing to fire away its small-caliber guns at the ever-growing Liberal erosion. The exodus of the Baptist Bible Union left the Fundamentalist Fellowship weaker and more dispirited than ever before.

The last straw for these long-suffering Fundamenta-lists within the Northern Baptist Convention was ironically a near victory in the 1946 national meeting. The Fundamentalist Fellowship came within 350 votes of implementing a reform program to halt the slide of the Convention. This would be as close as the Fellowship would ever get to a victory. To come so close and yet fail was the crushing blow that woke the Fellowship to the reality that they could not win. A quarter-century of fighting had been wasted.

There was still that hard-core element that refused to face reality and leave the Convention. An example of this attitude was voiced by Richard Beal, who pastored the First Baptist Church of Tucson, Arizona.

“Ours is not a separatist movement. Why should we surrender to liberalism the great institutions built up by orthodoxy. Our loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ demands our loyalty to our denomination.”¹

Misplaced loyalties like those expressed above did great damage to the Fundamentalist movement. Men who saw their first loyalty to a denominational machine instead of Christ were willing to support that denomination even if it meant disobeying Christ. Only a proper loyalty to Christ can result in obedience and the implementation of separation.

Those in the Fundamentalist Fellowship were finally beginning to learn that lesson. Their misplaced loyalty to a man-made convention had brought them nothing but grief. They had been loyal to the convention, and what did they have to show for it? The conventions had not been loyal to them, or to the Scriptures. The Fundamentalists finally came out in September, 1946² with 300 churches and changed the Fundamentalist Fellowship of Northern Baptists to the Conservative Baptist Fellowship. This name change was inspired by the desire to "identify the Fellowship with the Conservative Baptist movement and to separate from its former

¹ Beale, *In Pursuit of Purity*, page 291.

² Various dates for establishing the CBA have been given. We will adopt Richard Clearwater's date of 1946 since he was there at the birth and was active within the CBA (see footnote 3 below).

identification with the Convention.”³ The divorce was complete as the new Conservative Baptist Association (CBA) withdrew from the Northern Baptist Convention and began to plot an independent course.

The CBA still refused to embrace separatism wholeheartedly. It started as an unseparated and non-conformist organization. The difference between separatist and non-conformist must be highlighted. A separatist organization cuts ties to the apostate group from which it separated. The nonconformist simply goes his own way. Separation is not necessary for him to be nonconformist.

The nonconformist Conservative Baptist saw himself in a different light. While admitting he had problems, he still maintained he was a separatist.⁴ Myron Cedarholm, an early CBA leader, maintained that the CBA "rejects fellowship with unbelief; it refuses support to religious inclusivism."⁵

This early support of separatism did not last long. The Conservative Baptists did draft the Portland Manifesto in 1953 where they called for the practice of Biblical separation. The Manifesto contained the desire to "provide a fellowship of churches ... unmixed with liberals."⁶ Yet the Manifesto was reversed a mere ten years later. The desire was there for separation, but its roots were shallow in the hearts of the leaders of the CBA.

The Portland Manifesto was a clear attempt to try to make some type of stand on separation. It clearly states that the CBA was:

“Separatist in spirit and objective. Separatist in spirit means: the sincere heart attitudes, motives, impulses, desires, expressions, prayers, and actions of the individual, or individuals comprising a church or organization to give with protest the least possible cooperation to all forms of the inclusive policy as named above which will be determined in degree of cooperation by the particular circumstances that prevail.”

This statement had an obvious flaw in that they do not advocate total and complete separation from apostasy ("inclusive policy," even their description of the apostasy they were fighting was weak), but rather a protest leading to the "least possible cooperation." This weak stand on separation is a primary reason why the CBA surrendered to the New Evangelicals as quickly as they did. But at least they tried to take a stand on separation, even if the non-separatist wing undermined their attempt.

The separatist General Association of Regular Baptists saw this lack of dedication to separation. When the CBA separated from the Northern Baptists, it sought a meeting with key Regular Baptists to discuss the possibility of a merger. It proved futile as the Regular Baptists viewed the Conservative Baptists as a mixed multitude.⁷

3 Richard Clearwater, "Forty Years of History Looks Down Upon Conservative Baptists," *Central Conservative Baptist Quarterly*. Spring 1962, page 18.

4 B. Myron Cedarholm, *Problems of the Conservative Baptist Association of America: A Solution*, n.p., n.d., page 5. In this work, Cedarholm maintained the CBA was a separatist organization. While the CBA had separated, it certainly did not have the separatist's heart.

5 Ibid.

6 Beale, *In Pursuit of Purity*, page 293.

7 Ibid., pages 291, 292.

One reason for the softness of the CBA toward separatism was the slowness of Fundamentalist leader William Bell Riley to embrace the practice. Riley was a leader in the Fundamentalist Fellowship and was one of the most influential men in Fundamentalism, but he did not withdraw from the Northern Baptist Convention until 1947, the year of his death. Although he did finally repudiate the Northern Baptists, he contributed to its further erosion as well as to that of the CBA by appointing a young evangelist named Billy Graham to succeed him as the president of the Northwestern Schools in Minneapolis, Minnesota. This appointment of Graham would be the link between the non-separatist and nonconformist Conservative Baptists and the New Evangelicals.

The continued slowness of the separatists within the declining CBA continued to show. The Conservative Baptists rapidly fell into compromise with New Evangelicals after the repudiation of the Portland Manifesto in 1963. It took two more years for another "coming out movement" to emerge within the CBA. As a result of the decline of the CBA, the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship (FBF) emerged in 1965. The FBF's introductory pamphlet describes the background of their separation from the CBA:

"The Fundamentalist Fellowship organized the Conservative Baptist Foreign Missionary Society within the Northern Baptist Convention. The Convention retaliated and declared the new mission society outside the framework of the Convention. In 1945, the FBF (then called the Conservative Baptist Fellowship) opened an office in Chicago and created a monthly medium of publicity, "The News Letter" and began the publication of papers and pamphlets dealing with the issues of the Convention. In 1946, a resolution called "The Johnson Resolution" was adopted by the Fellowship and became the plan of action bringing into being the "Committee of Fifteen." In Winona Lake, Indiana, September 17-20, 1946, the committee recommended withdrawal from the Northern Baptist Convention. The Fellowship met in Atlantic City, May 19-20, 1947 and organized the Conservative Baptist Association of America" ... the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship functioned only in the dissemination of literature. In 1955, because of a lack of a united separatist stand, the Fellowship reaffirmed itself as completely independent...By 1960, the Conservative Baptist Association and Societies were completely lost to Neo-Evangelicalism and in 1965 the "hard core" separatists withdrew from the CBA and renamed their group the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship."⁸

By the end of the period 1950-1970, the Conservative Baptists had separated and were separated from. The emergence of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship, coupled with the continuing strength of the General Association of Regular Baptists, continued to hold the point for Baptist separatism until both groups weakened by the late 1980s and early 1990s.

8 -----, "Significant Years in the History of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship", Fundamental Baptist Fellowship of America, n.d., pages 4, 5.

Continuing Strength Among the Regular Baptists

The General Association of Regular Baptists remained true to their separatist ideals during this period. This can be seen in a 1968 pamphlet entitled, *The Position, Attitudes, and Objectives of Biblical Separation*, authored by Paul R. Jackson, himself a strong separatist out of the same mold as GARBC patriarch Robert Ketchum. Jackson, as National Representative of the GARBC, was entrusted to speak for the entire association on the issue of separation. On page 10 of this pamphlet, Jackson wrote:

“One of the great Biblical doctrines of the faith is separation from the world and from apostasy ... We have a responsibility to walk separately from our brethren who insist upon being unbiblical in these areas of their conduct, and we do so without in any sense condemning them to Hell.”

The Regular Baptists would say a hearty "amen" to Jackson's statements, at least for another 20 years.

The Baptist Bible Fellowship

The Baptist Bible Fellowship was born in 1950 as a result of a split from men disturbed by the tactics and practices of J. Frank Norris, the leader of the "Texas Fundamentalists," and his World Baptist Fellowship. We mention them in this study because of the size to which they grew, and the influence they had among Fundamental Baptists.

Unfortunately, this influence was not exerted in a positive way regarding separation. The BBF has never been regarded as a strongly separatist organization, despite the history of Norris' titanic struggles against Southern Baptist apostasy. Many BBF pastors, in splitting from Norris, may have also desired to split from his separatist tactics, which sometimes resembled barroom brawls. Their success and numerical growth worked against them as the BBF pastors emphasized church growth and evangelism with the encouragement of John R. Rice. That emphasis usually results in a downplaying of ecclesiastical separation. In the 1970s, many BBF pastors were supporters of the weak separatism of the Sword of the Lord. As a result, the BBF suffered its own problems of New Evangelicalism during the 1980s and 1990s. The Baptist Bible Fellowship will then always be remembered more for their huge churches and evangelism than for their separation from apostasy.

Presbyterian Separation

The Presbyterians, along with the Baptists, continued to split and splinter over separation. Carl McIntire's Bible Presbyterian Church (BPC) continued to trudge on and set the standard for Presbyterian separatism in America. The separations which fractured McIntire's group did not stem as much from the issue of separation as it did on separation from Carl McIntire. Many wearied over his deep involvement in political crusades as well as his near-tyrannical domination of the BPC and the American Council of Christian Churches. Doctrine and Liberalism were not the major issues in the

1956 split which formed the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, nor in the 1971 split which was led by Allan MacRae. The American and International Council of Christian Churches also found themselves in the same ship concerning McIntire. McIntire founded both groups but was expelled due to problems with personality and practice, not with doctrine.

Love him or hate him (and many hated him), McIntire's groups were the major American Presbyterian bodies to maintain a consistent stand against compromise. The Evangelical Presbyterian Church has merged into the nonmilitant Presbyterian Church of America. MacRae's group never identified with militant Fundamentalism according to Beale.⁹ Those who separated from McIntire usually ended up the worse for it.

One of the stronger American Presbyterian groups was not native to America. The Free Presbyterian Church of Northern Ireland, led by Ian Paisley, planted several churches in the United States. The FPC has always been a strong separatist organization which has actively opposed compromise wherever it found it. Unfortunately, the Free Presbyterians were not very influential and remained numerically small. American Presbyterians may have been reluctant to identify with a "foreign" denomination. Yet it functioned as an alternative to the McIntire brand of Presbyterian separation.

There was another strong Presbyterian separatist voice during this period which was quickly hushed due to strong New Evangelical pressure. Donald Barnhouse, pastor of the Tenth Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, started his ministry as a strong and vocal opponent of the compromises within the Presbyterian Church during the 1930s and 1940s. His voice and stand were silenced by 1954 when, due to the continuing and mounting pressure to level off his attacks against apostasy and compromise, he finally surrendered. The price of continuing the attacks against his apostate denomination had gotten too high. Barnhouse never separated from the church he had denounced so strongly and it eventually pulled him down. This is another demonstration of the danger of not separating from apostasy. The influence of the compromising group will eventually overcome even the strongest Fundamentalist eventually.

Compromise, like sin, also affects the thought process of a Fundamentalist. Barnhouse, before his 1954 surrender, was well familiar with the verses which commanded separation from apostasy, which included Romans 16:17; 1 Timothy 6:3-5; and 2 John 9-11. Yet, after his surrender to New Evangelicalism, he brazenly offered \$1000 to anyone who could produce one verse of Scripture that commanded separation! Once the die is cast, the compromiser will go to any lengths to defend his sin, even to the point of ignoring certain Scriptures and making himself a public laughing stock. The sad case of Donald Barnhouse stands as a warning beacon to all separatists who are considering a similar retreat.¹⁰

⁹ Beale, *In Pursuit of Purity*, page 326.

¹⁰ Ashbrook, *Evangelicalism: The New Neutralism*, pages 6-8.

Rumblings Among Pentecostals

Pentecostal groups have not been considered since the introductory chapter of this study of the period before 1900. Their emphasis on separation took the form of separation from worldliness and carnality. That began to change with the advent of Charismaticism.

Pentecostalism had been favorably disposed to healing and continuing revelation from the start of the movement. When these doctrines were kept in their proper niches, all went well in the various Pentecostal groups. With the Charismatic movement and its associated errors, the doctrines of healing, continuing revelation, and tongues took preeminence over holiness and preaching. This led to a doctrinal and a practical degeneration which started in the 1950s. Pentecostal leaders began warning against new doctrines as early as the mid-1930s. This shift in doctrine went from the early emphasis on holiness to healing between 1947-1960 and signs, wonders, miracles, and new revelation after 1960.¹¹

An example of how the second-generation Pentecostals were shifting away from the separatist views of their fathers can be seen in the treatment of Oral Roberts in this period. He started his healing ministry in 1947 as an ordained minister of the Pentecostal Holiness church. Before, he served in four pastorates from 1941 through 1947. His over emphasis on divine healing disturbed many in the Pentecostal Holiness church who viewed it as a shift away from holiness and purity.¹²

If this "healing revival" was not bad enough, Roberts shortly claimed to receive new and continuing revelations from the Holy Spirit that superseded the Scriptures. There was some rumble of discontent, but few Pentecostals were willing or able to stand against Roberts in the light of his great popularity and seeming success. The political machinery within the Pentecostal Holiness Church silenced opposition to Roberts and decided to promote him rather than discipline him. Many Pentecostals felt that

Roberts' popularity would help "bring Pentecostalism further out of the cultural backwater."¹³ When the issue over Roberts, his healings, and his audible voices came to a head in 1953, the General Conference of the Pentecostal Holiness Church voted to overwhelmingly support the heretic. Only a tiny minority stood against Roberts and for doctrinal purity. The die was now cast for the bulk of the Pentecostal churches to continue in their compromise and apostasy.

This shift to Charismatic heresies began to disturb many Pentecostals regarding the direction of their movement. Yet there would be no widespread separation within Pentecostalism. Even those who expressed their doubts would be neutered by denominational pressures or would be swept away by the Charismatic tide. Very few of those of a separatist heart would survive these onslaughts to make a total exodus from a rapidly degenerating system.

11 Spence, *Pentecostalism: Purity or Peril?* page 93.

12 Ibid., pages 50, 125-128, and P.G. Chappell, "Roberts, Granville Oral," *Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, pages 759-760.

13 Ralph Scales, "Oral Roberts Joins the Methodists," *Christianity Today*, April 12, 1968, page 34.

Not only did Pentecostals become increasingly infected with the heresies of the Charismatic Movement, but New Evangelicalism also launched an attack. The compromise-laden National Association of Evangelicals lured the Pentecostals into their fold in 1943, and thus they were moved into the evangelical mainstream. This association with compromise, coupled with the shift in doctrinal emphasis, ruined the Holiness Movement.

Methodists and the United Methodist Church

The final chapter in Methodist separatism was written in 1968 when the United Evangelical Brethren Church merged with the Methodist Church to form the apostate United Methodist Church. Fundamental Methodist reaction was an immediate condemnation of the unholy union and to separate from it. Those who separated from the 1968 merger joined with those groups which resulted from the 1939. The Fundamental Methodist movement, small as it was, was now past the point of no return. They, like the separatist Baptists, Presbyterians, and Independents, are forced to tread the lonely and unpopular course of the pilgrim separatist.

The Fundamental Methodist separatists understood their duty in the wake of the apostasy in their church. Even before the 1968 fiasco, Donald McKnight of Street, Maryland wrote the following:

“Some believers argue that they can reform the Methodist Church from within. God does tell us to purge out the unbelievers. But when the yoke becomes unequal (II Corinthians 6:14) ... no beach head from which reform may be attempted (remains).”¹⁴

McKnight also observed that the faithful Methodists were engaged in a reformation, but at that time (mid 1960s), it was weak and struggling.¹⁵

Conclusion

There was little in the way of new ground plowed during this period dealing with separation. The Baptists, through the Conservative Baptist Association and later the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship, did struggle with it, while the Regular Baptists remained faithful. Presbyterians made no significant strides toward a higher quality of separation while the Methodists did in separating from the United Methodist Church. The National Association of Evangelicals lured in the Pentecostals, thus destroying much of what separatism may have remained in those bodies. The other groups declined slowly but steadily, such as the Independent Fundamental Churches of America. The American Council of Christian Churches, along with its sister International organization, did remain constant in denouncing the Liberalism of the National and World Council of Churches.

¹⁴ Donald McKnight, "Methodism and the National Council of Churches," *Sword of the Lord* unknown date but was prior to 1968, unknown pages.

¹⁵ Ibid.

As we observed in the introductory remarks of this chapter, the period 1950-1970 was one of consolidation for the battles of the 1970s and 1980s. Most men and organizations found a home in relation to separatism in this period, which would determine their position in the upcoming period of Fundamentalist history.

CHAPTER 6 Separation Diluted: Separation From 1970-1980

The strongest battles over the proper understanding and implementation of separation took place in this decade. Not only do we have the increasing power of New Evangelicalism, but secondary separation, John R. Rice, and Jerry Falwell dominate this period. We will begin our consideration of separation in the seventies by examining the teachings of the most influential man among Fundamentalists of this decade, Dr. John R. Rice.

Separation and Dr. Rice

The literary accomplishments of John R. Rice during his lifetime are astounding and worthy of respect from all Fundamentalism. Not only did he found and edit the *Sword of the Lord* for 46 years, but he also authored over 200 books and pamphlets. To say that he influenced several generations of Fundamentalists would be an understatement.

His influence in the arena of separation was most profound but damaging. Rice, though claiming to be a Fundamentalist, never adopted a militant separatist attitude. He did advocate separation, but only from apostates and not from disobedient brethren. He did not support separation from disobedient brethren because they were brethren. Rice himself defined his understanding of the doctrine of separation:

“But what is called 'secondary separation' means not only must the Christian be separated from liberals, modernists, unbelievers, but he is to be separate from anybody who does not separate enough from unbelievers. Those who insist on secondary separation say that if a man leaves the denomination because of some modernists in the denomination, then he ought also separate and break all fellowship with others who do not leave the denomination.”¹

Rice went as far as to say that the Bible did not teach that Christians should separate from disobedient believers.² This idea of secondary separation teaches that to separate from apostates was first degree while separating from disobedient Christians was second degree.

This separation of separation was done to give men an excuse to cooperate with Southern Baptist and New Evangelical soulwinners. John Ashbrook condemned this distinction by accusing those who coined the term as "seeking to develop grounds for opposing what the Scriptures teach about separation."³

Rice and other cooperating evangelists made the distinction into the two degrees of separation to justify their use of Southern Baptists and non-Fundamentalists in their union campaigns. To get these union meetings off the ground, Rice and those like him needed as much support as possible. If the Southern Baptists were willing to support his meetings and if they also desired to see souls saved, can they really be apostate? Sure there is some modernism in their conventions, but these men do not agree with it and

1 John R. Rice, *Come Out or Stay In?* pages 217, 218.

2 Dollar, *The Fight For Fundamentalism*, page 133.

3 Rice, pages 221-226.

oppose it. Since these were therefore "good men," Fundamentalists ought to reach out to them and to cooperate with them as they struggle against the compromise in their denominations, despite the fact that they won't separate from the apostate group. In this age of the union campaign, a philosophy of pragmatism was invoked in the belief that if the practice of separation prevented these meetings from taking place and hindered in soulwinning, then separation had to be sacrificed on the altar of soulwinning. The practice, and results of Rice-style "soulwinning" trumped any Scriptural teachings on separation.

Rice penned his own attitude toward separation in relation to evangelism when he wrote in the September 3, 1971 issue of the *Sword of the Lord*, "The man who wins the most souls pleases God the most" and "It is unfortunate that the bodies in America that make the most about the 'apostasy' often win few souls."⁴

Rice's dogma caused a stir to those Fundamentalists who had fought the separation battles and knew what they were talking about from first-hand experience. They took exception to Rice's reasoning by saying that if a man refused to go all the way in separation, he was not a "good Christian" but was rather a disobedient brother who needed to be admonished and separated from according to 2 Thessalonians 3:6.

Who should we separate from? Should we separate from a disobedient brother who refuses to separate from an apostate denomination? Certainly. By his refusal to separate from apostasy, the disobedient brother is giving indirect support and endorsement to the apostasy. His tithe is also being used to support that apostasy. While he might be a soulwinner with a burden for revival and be doctrinally orthodox, he is disobedient, because he will not obey the Lord in separating from the unclean thing.

Rice violently disagreed with that definition of separation. To Rice, the most important element in judging whether a man is a "good Christian" or an apostate is by how many souls he wins. If separation hindered soulwinning and cooperation among Fundamentalists, then separation had to go. Rice clearly stated 'I would have fellowship with Southern Baptists who believe the Bible and ardently win souls ... without supporting a program I know is wrong.'⁵

Two problems in Rice's position forced separatists to respond: his promotion of this soft separation in the *Sword*, and his attacks upon those who disagreed with him. Rice, by virtue of his newspaper, was able to put his teaching on separation into the hands of thousands of pastors and students. Since his was a weak, non-Biblical position, more militant Fundamentalists felt compelled to respond and oppose Rice. To those who did take a stand against this compromise position on separation, Rice launched into bitter attacks, referring to such as men as "hell-raising Pharisees," "self-righteous Pharisees," "horseflies"⁶ and "hinderers of soulwinning."⁷

The source of Rice's compromise can be traced to two sources. First was his intense soulwinning desire. While there is certainly nothing wrong in wanting to see sinners saved, the problem arises when that burden supersedes the desire to obey God

4 Rice, "What Is Wrong With Secondary Separation?" *Sword of the Lord*, August 6, 1971, page 12.

5 Ibid., page 235.

6 Don Jasmin, "Disappointment," *Voice of Fundamentalism*, December 1978/January 1979.

7 Rice, *Come Out or Stay In?* pages 234, 235.

and to put faithfulness to the Word of God first. Second was Rice's "outsider" status during the 1920s and 1930s when the separation battles were the hottest. Rice, a native Texan, opposed the ministry of J. Frank Norris of the First Baptist Church of Fort Worth. Norris blazed the path for separation from the apostate Southern Baptist Convention, which Rice never supported (and apparently never forgave him for). Instead of associating with Norris and attending his Bible Institute, Rice left the Texas Fundamentalists and attended the University of Chicago, the Theological Black Hole of Baptist Seminaries. How much of separation did Rice learn at Chicago? He certainly would have developed a stronger view of the doctrine if he had been willing to at least consider Norris' arguments on the need for separation. This led to a lack of exposure to separation ideals during those formative years of Rice's ministry.

Questions Regarding Interdenominationalism

Everyone likes to run with his own kind. In a spiritual sense, people usually gravitate toward those of like faith and practice. This usually ends up in some form of denominationalism, where Baptists associate largely with Baptists, Presbyterians with Presbyterians, and so on. Cross-denominational contact tends to be limited in these groups.

As we have noted, Fundamentalism is a movement that cannot be tied to one denomination. Men of nearly every non-Romanist denomination have contributed something to the movement. Fundamentalists have always realized there are godly, faithful men in other denominations. The question arose as to how much fellowship could there be across denominational lines?

It is true that there are doctrinal and practical differences between Fundamental Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostals, Presbyterians, and Bible Church men. While they may differ on eternal security, baptism, and church government, they do agree on the Bible as the final authority in matters of faith and practice as well as separation from apostasy. So if a Fundamental Baptist and a Fundamental Methodist disagree on doctrine and practice, how can they work together? They both realize they should cooperate with each other but on what basis?

This question began to surface during this period as another result of the union campaigns which were most popular from 1920-1980. If an evangelist entered a town to hold a city-wide campaign, he would need the help of all Fundamentalists in the town. One denomination would probably be too small to support such an extended evangelistic effort, hence the need to bring in Christians of all stripes. John R. Rice and Oliver B. Greene were among the best-known Baptist union evangelists of the day, following in the steps of Dwight Moody, Billy Sunday, Reuben Torrey, and Bob Jones, Sr. It was these evangelists who pioneered the renewed effort toward Fundamentalist interdenominationalism.

The concept was hardly new. The National Association of Evangelicals (for the brief period when it may have been Fundamentalist) and the American Council of Christian Churches also sought to bring all Fundamentalists together under one banner, regardless of denomination. Such efforts were usually attacked by certain groups within the affected denominations who were weary of working with men who didn't think

enough of their denomination to join it. They felt it to be a form of compromise to reach out beyond their denominations.

Opponents to cross-denominational cooperation have been vocal in their concerns to the practice. Ernest Pickering, while president at Baptist Bible College of Pennsylvania, wrote a booklet entitled, *Inter-denominationalism*, in which he rejected the movement. In his book, Pickering pointed out four weaknesses of inter-denominationalism. First, it narrows the message of the church in forcing churches to compromise their message in certain doctrinal areas. Second, it usurps the mission of the church, especially in missions. Whereas the New Testament appoints the local church to carry out the Great Commission, interdenominational organizations have become substitutes for the church. Thirdly, it undermines the financial support of the church as tithes and offerings bypass the local church and find their way into interdenominational coffers. Pickering especially condemned the "far-off radio preacher" who sapped the local church of the offerings which rightly belonged to it. Lastly, it destroys a proper loyalty to the church.⁸

While every denomination had its xenophobic element, the Baptists have led the way in opposing inter-denominational cooperation. Most of this opposition stems from the "Baptist Bride" or "Landmarker" theory in that the only true New Testament Church is a Baptist Church. If a church is not Baptist, then it is not New Testament, no matter how Fundamental it claims to be. This backhanded slap at non-Baptist Fundamentalists has hindered this vitally needed cooperation. This attitude has caused Fundamentalism to be more compartmentalized into watertight denominational sects.

The Controversy With Jerry Falwell

As if Fundamentalists didn't have enough to worry about with "secondary separation" and the continuing encroachment of New Evangelicalism, another threat arose from within the ranks in the person of Pastor Jerry Falwell of the Thomas Road Baptist Church of Lynchburg, Virginia. He, as a professed Fundamentalist, made a switch to New Evangelicalism during this period. When his New Evangelical leanings became apparent, many Fundamentalists expressed a shocking unwillingness or ignorance to take a stand on the issue of how to react to a man who changes his colors. Many Fundamentalists condemned Falwell while others staunchly defended him.

Falwell's defection was a sign of a deeper problem within Fundamentalism. Many men who embraced the movement did not do so out of a deep conviction of the need to practice separation. Their motivations were anything but a desire for purity. Without strong foundations, many of these weaker Fundamentalists wavered when assaulted by pressures to relax standards on separation in order to grow super-churches or to become popular and influential among their fellowship or association.

We will not take the space to document Falwell's compromises during the 1970s but will rather concentrate on Fundamentalist response to it. Falwell's defection into New Evangelicalism raised a serious problem for Fundamentalists. Not since Billy

⁸ Ernest Pickering, *Interdenominationalism*, pages 9, 10. Also see Ernest Pickering's article entitled "Baptist Principles vs. Interdenominationalism," *The Baptist Heritage Journal*, Volume 1, Number 1, pages 79-86.

Graham in the 1950s had such a prominent Fundamentalist leader compromised on such a grand scale. What was to be done about it? While the answer was obvious in that Fundamentalists should have reprovved and then separated from Falwell, many men were slow to act. Falwell was a popular preacher who still claimed to be Fundamentalist despite his problems. He had a solid Fundamentalist background, and many of his friends were reluctant to turn loose of him. His influence via his far-flung radio and television network made him too valuable an asset for many to condemn. Thus the battle raged regarding the proper response toward Falwell.

There were two camps concerning Falwell. First was the strong and united front of opposition, led by Bob Jones University, Carl McIntire, the South Carolina Baptist Fellowship, and the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship. Those who supported Falwell in his compromises included John R. Rice and the *Sword of the Lord*, Southwide Baptist Fellowship (to a degree), and the leadership of the Baptist Bible Fellowship. The opposition complained about the failure of Falwell to separate from New Evangelicals, Southern Baptists, and Charismatics. Falwell's supporters pointed out how much good Falwell was doing, and how many souls were being won.

We see a principle that would dog Fundamentalism starting in this period, that of pragmatism. Was Falwell an exceptional preacher? Yes. Was he a soulwinner? Yes. Did he wield much influence which could have been profitable for the Fundamentalist movement? Yes. Based on these conclusions, was it right to look the other way while he regularly violated the principles of ecclesiastical separation? No. Many men disagreed. Preachers consumed with church growth and nationwide revivals continued to support Falwell, hoping the ends would justify the means. If a national revival would stem from compromise, then it was worth sacrificing separation. Those who put faithfulness and obedience to the scriptures paramount evaluated Falwell's ministry and concluded that he was an unrepentant compromiser and reprovved him.

As we mentioned in our brief consideration of the compromise of Dr. Donald Barnhouse in 1954, compromisers will always seek to justify their actions and defend their compromises. This is due to a nagging conscience which forces them not only to defend their actions to their brethren, but also to themselves. Falwell did this by attempting to redefine both separation and Fundamentalism from their historical definitions. Falwell proceeded to try to redefine Fundamentalism into "Historic Fundamentalism" and "Reactionary Fundamentalism." Falwell defined the "Historic" Fundamentalist as one who supported his separatist philosophy and pragmatism. If compromise would further the Fundamentalist cause, then it was right. Those who insisted upon a narrower and stricter interpretation of separation were labeled as "Reactionary" Fundamentalists who represented a "tangential element" of "hyper-Fundamentalism."⁹ This history revisionism now gave Falwell a theological foundation, albeit a very weak and unsteady one, to continue his programs of cooperation with New Evangelicals to further his quest to make Fundamentalism "respectable" to a lost world.

The debate over Falwell polarized the Fundamentalist camp. Those who withdrew fellowship from Falwell remained strong through this period while his supporters sank further into compromise.

9 Jerry Falwell, Ed., *The Fundamentalist Phenomenon*, pages 145, 160-163.

The World Congress of Fundamentalists of 1976

While debates raged concerning Rice and Falwell and their views of separation, other Fundamentalists were solidifying their positions. In commemoration of the first recognized meeting of Fundamentalists in 1876 at Swampscott, Massachusetts, a call went out for a similar gathering of Fundamentalists to be held in Edinburgh, Scotland. Thus, was the first World Congress of Fundamentalists conceived. Two thousand Fundamentalists made the trip to Scotland to redefine Fundamentalism in the wake of the growing apostasies and defections within the movement.

While issues of separation were dealt with in Edinburgh, separation took a secondary place. This is not as bad as it may sound, since it was the inspiration and authority of the Word of God that was the primary emphasis of the gathering.¹⁰ Separation did make it into the resolutions concerning the definition of a Fundamentalist. According to the resolution, "A Fundamentalist is a born-again believer in the Lord Jesus Christ who ... exposes and separates from all ecclesiastical denial of (the) Faith, compromise with error and apostasy from the Truth."¹¹

Something was still lacking. In the summation of Fundamentalism, the resolution did not mention separation. Consider this quote:

"Therefore, Fundamentalism is militant orthodoxy set on fire with soulwinning zeal. While Fundamentalists may differ on certain interpretations of Scripture, we join in unity of heart and common purpose for the Faith and the preaching of the Gospel, without compromise or division".¹²

This definition of Fundamentalism is missing the important ingredient of the necessity of separation from error. There was still a hesitancy on the part of the delegates to deal specifically with separation due to the stir it would have caused among professing Fundamentalists who did not go or who were not invited to Scotland. The above definition may have been thought to be adequate at the time, but evaluated in the light of the subsequent defections from Fundamentalism by Truman Dollar and Jack Van Impe (who were active at the Congress), it was wanting.

While not the major item on the agenda at the first Congress, Fundamentalists still recognized the importance of the doctrine of separation and dealt with it, although in a limited way. The apostasy was recognized but not to the point of alarm. It was felt a Biblical foundation needed to first be laid before more specific issues concerning Fundamentalism could be addressed. And face these issues they would, for in the following years, issues involving separation would continue to grow in number and severity.

10 The purpose of the Congress was to give "a united witness to the infallibility, inerrancy and verbal inspiration of the eternal Word of God." See Elmer L. Rumminger, "Special Report: World Congress of Fundamentalists," *Faith For The Family*, September/October 1976, pages 3-10.

11 Ibid., page 9.

12 Ibid.

Other Observations of Separation

Other groups with a representation of Fundamentalism continued to evolve and adapt their understandings and positions on separation. The Baptists once again led the way in strengthening as well as diluting separation. The General Association of Regular Baptists and the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship remained consistent in their philosophy of separation and exposed the compromises in other groups. In the other corner were Baptist groups that were slowly eroding the foundations their forefathers had set.

The *Sword of the Lord* under the leadership of John R. Rice, was the strongest and most vocal force within Fundamentalism to call for a re-evaluation of the practice of separation. He would maintain that obedience to separation must be secondary to evangelism and church growth. The Great Commission was more important than Romans 16:17, 2 Corinthians 6:14,15, and 2 Thessalonians 3:6. Many Baptists agreed and began adjusting their practices of separation to fit into a soulwinning mold.

The two major Baptist groups that followed Rice were the Southwide Baptist Fellowship and the Baptist Bible Fellowship. In the 1970s, neither was known for their strong stand on separation, yet both groups had a healthy number of professing Fundamentalists. While few if any official resolutions dealing with separation were produced by these groups, their actions spoke louder than any words could have revealed as to their true attitude toward separation. We have already mentioned the compromises and defection into New Evangelicalism of Jerry Falwell, who was a member in good standing in the Baptist Bible Fellowship. His compromises throughout the late 1970s were well documented. Yet it was not until September 23, 1987, that any kind of an official resolution censuring Falwell was passed by the national body of the Baptist Bible Fellowship. And that vote was much closer than it should have been, with 108 delegates voting against Falwell, while 74 supported him.¹³ The closeness of the vote regarding an obvious compromiser revealed the lack of separatism in the hearts of these professing Fundamentalists. The resulting resolutions produced by this meeting, which took place in New Castle, Delaware, clearly identify the "obvious" heretics, such as the Southern Baptist Convention, New Evangelicalism, and Fuller Seminary, but the apostasy in their own fold was ignored.¹⁴ This reveals another flaw of many Fundamentalists during this period. Many were willing to rebuke apostasy as long as it did not hurt themselves personally or hurt their association. When that apostasy hit home, for the sake of "unity" and "avoiding unnecessary controversy," these same Fundamentalists were silent. This was the case of the Baptist Bible Fellowship in that they tolerated Falwell's compromises for over a decade. Why? He was too large a personality. To expel him from the Fellowship would cause a loss of income, influence and prestige. He was also a soulwinner and a shining example of church growth and building a Sunday School. May we rebuke a man who has done such great things? Although Falwell was mildly censored in 1987, he remains a member in good standing within the Baptist Bible Fellowship to this hour.

There were other examples of compromise with disobedient brethren by the Baptist Bible Fellowship, with individual BBF churches, as well as the national

13 E. L. Bynum, "BBF Censures Jerry Falwell," *Plains Baptist Challenger*, November, 1987, 1.

14 *Ibid.*, 2.

leadership associating with New Evangelicals such as S. M. Lockridge,¹⁵ Billy Graham,¹⁶ as well as Southern Baptists.¹⁷

The group that can point back to the separatist legacy of J. Frank Norris abandoned that legacy by the 1970s, although many individual churches and pastors fought that drift.

Things were no better with another group that was close to the *Sword*, the Southwide Baptist Fellowship. This is a loose group of professing Fundamental Baptists who organized in 1956 to provide Fundamentalists with much needed fellowship. George Dollar, who drafted the original statement of faith, insists that the Fellowship dealt with "points of separation" in the earlier days,¹⁸ but a serious decline occurred during the 1970s. Dollar admits this inherent weakness toward separation in the person and leadership of Dr. Lee Robertson, former pastor of Highland Park Baptist Church in Chattanooga, Tennessee, an influential force with the Southwide Baptist

Fellowship. Dollar says of Robertson that he "has never, in his church or schools, provided outspoken leadership in leading churches out of the Southern Baptist Convention" and that he was silent on "issues of compromise, collaboration with New Evangelicals, and the new forms of the middle-of-the-roadism."¹⁹ If the Fellowship was supposed to be faithful to separation as they claimed, then why was such a nonseparatist tolerated in the leadership?

Consideration of the Southwide Baptist Fellowship is important because of its size, especially in the South. John R. Rice supported the Fellowship in the *Sword* and Jack Hyles, pastor of America's largest Baptist church, was also an active supporter. The recorded softness of these men toward separation has infected the entire Fellowship as demonstrated by the refusal of the leadership to deal with the encroaching New Evangelical influences within the group.²⁰ This softness was clearly documented by Rodney Bell in the October 1977 issue of *Faith For The Family* where he reported the 1976 annual meeting included New Evangelicals, Warren Wiersbe and S. M. Lockridge.²¹ Bell was right when he concluded that the Southwide Baptist Fellowship was weakening militant Fundamentalism²² and that weakness would carry into the 1980s.

In examining the Southwide Baptist Fellowship's statement of Faith, dated 1972, there is a recognition that they are to "contend for the faith." No direct statement regarding ecclesiastical separation has ever been issued. Resolution Number 4 from the 1970 meeting does mention "separation from the world and ecumenical involvement" but does not deal with separation from disobedient brethren.

15 G. Archer Weinger, "BBF Has Dr. S. M. Lockridge as Speaker," *Blu-Print*, July 10, 1979, page 1.

16 Allen Dickerson, "Southern Baptist Speaks in BBF Church," *Maranatha Baptist Watchman*, December, 1986, page 4.

17 Ibid.

18 Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America*, page 243.

19 Ibid, page 244.

20 Dollar recognized a "slight trace of New Evangelical sympathy" within the Fellowship (ibid.)

21 Rodney Bell, "Southwide's Compromise Examined," *Faith For The Family*, October 1977, page 6.

22 Ibid.,

Why is there no mention of militant separation? Since Southwide was so closely affiliated with the *Sword of the Lord*, Rice's influence was no doubt a prime factor. The over-emphasis on evangelism and church growth forced these men to neglect the one doctrine that threatened such a philosophy, the doctrine of separation from disobedient brethren. Bell observed that among this branch of super-aggressive non-separatist Fundamentalists "soulwinning was seen as a "cure-all for the church and the criteria for spirituality."²³ They believed soulwinning could prevent and cure apostasy. If a man was busy in winning souls and promoting his Sunday School, he would be too spiritual to fall away and too busy to apostatize. The last days of John R. Rice and the fall of Jerry Falwell and Jack Hyles proved such a theory to be false.

Non-Baptist Separatist Observations

The reason so much space has been devoted to the *Sword of the Lord* and the Baptists during the 1970s is because that is where the battles were fought. Other denominations suffered minor separation skirmishes, but nothing on the scale of the Baptists. Even Presbyterians and Methodists got involved in the Baptist struggles over Rice and Falwell. Their denominations, however, long since dead or near death, offered no battles for the separatist Presbyterian or Methodist. Their cord had been cut, and they were continuing to drift farther away from their mainline denominations. These small separatist groups, led by Carl McIntire, the Free Presbyterians of America, and the Evangelical Methodist Church, continued to voice their support for separation but were drowned by the din in Lynchburg and Murfreesboro. No major intra-denominational battles scarred these Protestant groups during this period.

Nor did the Pentecostals make much noise as they continued to be engulfed by the Charismatic Movement. Except for a remnant which separated from the Pentecostal Holiness Church in 1974, led by O. Talmadge Spence, little separatist activity was seen on the Pentecostal front. The interdenominational Fundamental groups also suffered retreats in separation. The Independent Fundamental Churches of America began their shift toward New Evangelicalism as early as 1971, when they began to relegate the doctrine and practice of separation to an insignificant place. Started by separatists, this group has suffered from what Dollar referred to as a "hatchet job" by New Evangelicals who succeeded over a period of 20 years to soften up the IFCA to the point of compromise. The lure of increased membership, more money, greater respectability, and a wider circle of influence has destroyed the separatist and Fundamentalist legacy of the once noble band.²⁴

Conclusion

The 1970s was marked by a spirit of pragmatism. If it works, do it. The ends justifies the means. When the burden shifted from obedience and holiness to soulwinning, politics, and church growth, separation could not help but suffer, and suffer it did. Fundamentalism was split over the issues of separation during this period. This split did have an interesting effect upon the faithful camp which continued to pepper the

²³ Ibid., page 8.

²⁴ Dollar, *A History of Fundamentalism in America*, page 225.

softer brethren with exhortations to faithfulness. Although they were smaller, they got much stronger as the deadwood was purged. This "little flock" of separatists would enter the 1980s somewhat united but would not survive the decade without their own casualties.

CHAPTER 7 Separation Reaffirmed: Separation From 1980-2000

As we move into a consideration of the more recent scene, the men and the issues become more personal and practical to us. We readily admit that no preacher is perfect, and that every man will stumble occasionally. We must not gaze upon momentary aberrations of men and organizations but analyze long-term and habitual practices and philosophies.

Bob Jones University and the *Sword of the Lord* Conferences of 1988 and 1989

Except for the controversy regarding the ministry of Jack Hyles, no other event so polarized Fundamentalism as the *Sword of the Lord* Conferences which were held for two years on the campus of Bob Jones University in Greenville, South Carolina.

The question regarding the conferences was, "What is a school with a strong history of separatism doing hosting a conference sponsored by an organization with a weak history of separation?" The two institutions broke fellowship during the 1970s over concerns expressed by Bob Jones, Jr., and Bob Jones III regarding John R. Rice's continuing fellowship with Southern Baptists and New Evangelicals as well as Rice's interpretation of separation. When Rice died in 1980, the issue remained unresolved.

Curtis Hutson ascended to the editorship of the *Sword* and continued the practices of Rice regarding separation. Hutson continued to renounce ecclesiastical separation as Rice had since it tended to interfere with soulwinning and church growth. He refused to separate from Jack Hyles, even after his moral and doctrinal problems surfaced in the late 1980s, and continued to move in non-separatist circles, such as the Southwide Baptist Fellowship.

Much confusion resulted as Fundamentalists evaluated this attempted reconciliation between the separatist and non-separatist wings of Fundamentalism. Bob Jones University extended an invitation to the *Sword* to hold its annual national conference at the University. Even more confusing was the participation of Rod Bell, president of the militant and separatist Fundamental Baptist Fellowship, in the meeting. Two separatist organizations in Bob Jones University and the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship, now openly espoused fellowship with two non-separatist groups in the *Sword of the Lord* and Southwide Baptist Fellowship, although little had changed on either side regarding ecclesiastical separation. This Conference has been identified as the start of departure from the practice of militant Fundamentalism and separatism on the part of all groups involved.¹

The desire to reunite two groups that had broken fellowship was certainly commendable, but without a significant shift toward obedience to separation on the part of the *Sword* and Southwide, there was no Biblical foundation to make the attempt. This Conference was the first large-scale attempt to reunite these various factions and to present a more unified front before the world, but it failed and caused harm to Bob Jones University and the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship. Why was the attempt made in the first place? It was admirable that both sides desired to patch the rift, but it was

¹ Gary Webb, "The Decline of Militant Fundamentalism," preached during the 5th Annual Conference on the Fundamentals of the Faith, Maranatha Baptist Church, Elkton, Maryland, March 11, 1993. I heard this message while it was preached.

suggested that more carnal motives were at the heart of the attempted reconciliation. The stronger of the two, Bob Jones University, may have desired to appeal to the *Sword* readership in its desire to maintain the numerical strength of its student body, hoping *Sword* pastors would recommend the school to their students. The *Sword* would have desired to rid itself of its stigma of a soft, weak organization by drawing closer to a school with a militant history. Such attempts, for whatever reason, were doomed to fail because the issue of ecclesiastical separation was ignored.

Allen Dickerson summed up a militant, separatist view of the Conference:

“Some of the leading preachers in the Southwide Baptist Fellowship and the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship of America combined their preaching talents to make the Sword of the Lord Conference on Revival and Soulwinning, held ... on the campus of Bob Jones University ... Up until recently there has been quite a difference between the Southwide Baptist Fellowship, which has always had a history of being soft on ecclesiastical separation and the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship, which hitherto has taken a strong stand on ecclesiastical separation ... What strange days we are living in. I never cease to marvel at the confusion that has settled like a deep fog upon the ranks of Biblical Fundamentalism ... History bears the record that when men and movements depart from ecclesiastical separation, they rarely, if ever return”.²

What was the issue? Bob Jones University, which had set the standard for Fundamentalists for over 40 years, had compromised. A BJU graduate, Pastor Gary Webb of Carrboro, North Carolina, summarized the issues:

“During the Sword Conference, (Bob Jones University's) solid testimony for separation was broken down as they invited a number of disobedient brethren...to preach at that Conference. Let's start with the head man, Curtis Hutson. The spring he came to preach that summer, I read a booklet he had written on Biblical Separation. The second-half of the book dealt with the question of 'secondary separation'. Brother Hutson said he did not believe the Bible taught 'secondary separation'. He did not believe the Bible taught you should separate from disobedient brethren. Gary Coleman preached there, right after he had a Southern Baptist in his pulpit. Walt Handford preached there, who regularly has New Evangelicals...in his church. Clyde Box and Raymond Barber preached there after they had preached in Falwell's 'Fundamentalism '84'...(New Evangelical) Word of Life established a booth there...This *Sword of the Lord* Conference was a departure from a former clear stand. In so doing, it also brought many men from the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship into this compromise position.”³

2 Allen Dickerson, "Combining Talents," *Maranatha Baptist Watchman*, August, 1989.

3 Webb, *ibid*.

When militant Fundamentalism compromises with non-militant Fundamentalism, it will be the militant wing that suffers. In the aftermath of the Sword Conferences, Bob Jones University suffered a loss of credibility, and the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship suffered a split. These are high prices to pay for compromise!

Many graduates and students were disturbed by Bob Jones University's participation in the Conferences. Not only did it field much criticism but also suffered a loss of spiritual discernment. Compromise dulls the spiritual discernment of the guilty party. As a result of the compromises which started in the Conferences, the school began a slow drift away from its separatist heritage by inviting no fewer than three New Evangelical speakers and ministries to its platform from 1991 through 1992. Included were the ministry of Larry Burkitt, Ken Ham of the Institute for Creation Research, and John Ankerberg, a Southern Baptist.⁴

The Fundamental Baptist Fellowship suffered for their compromise by enduring a split soon after the Conferences. Prominent leaders within the FBF, including Executive Director, Chuck Cofty; Research Secretary, Don Jasmin; and Mid-Atlantic Coordinator, Allen Dickerson, all raised concern over the future direction of the Fellowship. When their concerns were not adequately addressed, each left, taking their strong separatism with them.

Compromise with compromisers is thus illustrated to be unprofitable for the separatist involved. While the *Sword* and Southwide also suffered in the years following the Greenville meetings, their problems cannot be traced to the Conferences. The weaker groups do not suffer in the same manner or due to the same circumstances as the stronger groups. If anything, the *Sword* and Southwide Baptist Fellowship benefited from the Conferences due to their association with the separatist Bob Jones University and Fundamental Baptist Fellowship. These two stronger groups, however, suffered due to that same identification but in a negative vein.

The Jack Hyles Issue

The ghost of Jerry Falwell surfaced in 1989 in the person of Jack Hyles, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Hammond, Indiana. The problem was the compromises of a national Fundamentalist leader. The issue was different; Falwell slid into New Evangelicalism while Hyles suffered with moral cover-ups, possibly adultery, heresy, and self-deification.⁵ The problem was the same - how should Fundamentalists react? The issue of Hyles' moral problems would have been overlooked by the national Christian media except that he pastored the largest church in the United States and thus carried heavy influence among Fundamentalists. When serious charges were leveled at Hyles, such as adultery, he arrogantly denied every accusation and consolidated his base. Some Fundamentalists defended Hyles, ignoring the charges. Most Fundamentalists could not follow that example and separated from Hyles and his ministries. This is an example of separation over moral issues, or personal separation. Should we separate from a man guilty of moral sins? Do we have the same justification to separate from an immoral brother as we do from a heretical or disobedient one? The

4 Ibid.

5 Robert Sumner, "The Saddest Story We Ever Published," *Biblical Evangelist*, May 1, 1989, and "The Hyles Reply!" *ibid*, August 1, 1989.

answer was clearly "yes" as many preachers dropped Hyles when he refused to acknowledge his sin or to deal with it.

Personal separation was the issue with Hyles, although heretical teachings also began to filter out of Hammond, such as messages Hyles preached regarding the "eternal humanity of Christ" and "the necessity of backsliding." The heresies were bad enough, but the main concern was on the orthopraxy of Hyles. How could Fundamentalists support a man who was guilty of moral sin, and who suffered from an unhealthy case of ego? Hyles began to make claims that if he fell, Fundamentalism would go down with him, and that his church, First Baptist of Hammond, was the greatest church in the history of Christianity.⁶

Is this type of proud and haughty spirit also a basis for separation? If Hyles was guilty of no immorality or heresy, then this attitude alone would certainly be a cause for separation. This unbiblical, unchristian spirit only breeds trouble. Those who do not display a Christ-like spirit towards their critics are also to be avoided since their attitudes will cause others to stumble and will cause related troubles to develop in the ministries affected.

Many Fundamentalists refused to separate from Hyles due to personal loyalty to him or to "soulwinning" or to their version and understanding of Fundamentalism. This misplaced loyalty is a violation of Scripture where Christ is to be the focus of our loyalty. Yes, Hyles is a soulwinner (at least he reported a multitude of professions and emphasized it) and possesses a dynamic personality and charisma. Yes, he pastored America's largest church and was very influential in Fundamentalist circles. But, is he obedient to the Scriptures in his doctrine and practice? Many men refused to separate from Hyles for various reasons. Hence, as Falwell before him, Hyles managed to further divide an already fragmented Fundamentalism. Bitter words continue to fly from both sides, and both camps continue to drift further apart because of differing positions regarding the need to separate from a single individual and his ministries.

The Softening of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship

The Fundamental Baptist Fellowship entered this period separatist, but that position would be challenged after the *Sword* Conferences. Before the Conferences, the FBF had a reputation as a strong separatist organization. This stemmed from the 1984 "Manifesto on Biblical Separation." Although the document is not incorporated into their main doctrinal statement, the FBF has always tried to put it in practice. The compromise at the *Sword* Conferences struck a blow to the adherence to the Manifesto, but they have been trying to get back to the spirit of it during the 1990s. The Manifesto states in part:

6 ----, "In Perils of Jack Hyles and His Pastor's School," *Christian News*, February 24, 1992, page 17.

“The Word of God...calls for complete severance from apostasy, unbelief, heresy, false religions, and all forms of inclusivism, or compromise therewith...the Word of God clearly calls for the maintenance of the purity of the local church, free from the tares of unbelief, the leaven of false doctrines, and an unbiblical ecclesiasticism...we declare to the world that we are separatists in spirit, action, and objective...We repudiate the concept of "second degree separation," which we believe is a convenient excuse to exercise tolerance toward believers who are tolerant of unbelievers in common religious endeavor.”

The Southern Baptist Convention, the National and World Council of Churches, the ecumenical and charismatic movements, Neo-Orthodoxy and New Evangelicalism are specifically mentioned as objects from which to separate.

About the time of the *Sword* Conferences at Bob Jones University and the disclosure of the Hyles problem, yet another issue confronted Fundamentalists, especially Baptists within the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship. Several leading men of the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship began to express concerns regarding the future direction of the organization in the wake of the *Sword* Conferences. Would the FBF be cooperating with the weak *Sword of the Lord* and Southwide Baptist Fellowship? Would this lead to a decline in the militancy of the FBF and hence a weakening of separation?

The Fundamental Baptist Fellowship suffered a split in 1989-1990 when several key men left over fears of a softening of the once-militant stand of the group. Allen Dickerson, mid-Atlantic regional moderator, Don Jasmin, research secretary for the FBF *News Letter*, and H.C. "Chuck" Cofty, executive director of the FBF, all left. Cofty expressed the major reason for the split as the drift away from militancy and separation. He pointed out the neglect to include any language regarding militancy in the stated purpose of the FBF as written in the March/April, 1990 *News Letter*. The secret of the unity of the FBF was given as "the unselfish purpose and intent of those who attend," not separation. This was a far cry from the "Manifesto on Biblical Separation" proclaimed by the FBF in their February, 1985 *News Letter*.

We will make a brief mention of a lesson learned by the men who were involved in this split from the FBF. Unlike previous separations from the Northern Baptist Convention, the men who left the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship did not organize a new fellowship to replace it. They decided to organize on an informal and personal basis, if at all. There has been no stronger separatist group formed to compete with the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship since the division.

Another disturbing sign regarding the slip of the FBF was in their literature. The FBF ceased publication of its useful and informative *News Letter* to a slicker publication called *Frontline*. Reaction toward the new look of the official FBF voice was largely negative because it reflected a more "Madison Avenue" philosophy to Fundamentalist journalism. Full color pictures replaced the once informative articles of Archer Weniger and Don Jasmin. Bob Jones University fell into a similar predicament with its *BJU Review* replacing the useful *Faith For The Family* monthly. The newer *BJU Review* portrayed the University more in the mold of a New Evangelical liberal arts school rather than a preacher-training center. When the heart begins to soften in an organization, then the resulting publications reflect the change.

There were signs of some hope within the FBF that they were attempting to return to their strong base of separation. In 1992, they issued a "Resolution on Unity and Separation" where they reaffirmed their conviction that the "Scripture ... demands separation from unbelief and apostasy ... We believe it is always necessary to separate from unbelief and at times even to painfully separate from Christian brethren when the testimony of Christ and the purity of the Gospel are involved."⁷

In 1993, there were further signs of a possible strengthening of the FBF in that they were sharing their mailing list with the American Council of Christian Churches. As a former member of the FBF, I received a form letter from ACCC headquarters inviting me to participate in ACCC meetings. The letter explained that the FBF was sharing its mailing list with the ACCC and that the FBF was encouraging its members to cooperate with the ACCC. That the FBF was drawing closer to the strongly separatist ACCC was an encouraging sign. The FBF also supported and promoted the 1992 annual meeting of the ACCC in West Chester, Pennsylvania. Bob Jones University also promoted the meeting, showing their continued willingness to be identified with the militant, separatist position, despite their problems.

The Fall of the Regular Baptists

The fall of the once-separatist and militant General Association of Regular Baptist Churches is indeed one worth weeping over. We have already considered the birth of the GARBC in 1932 and noted its separatist beginning. But time and tide took their toll in the form of New Evangelicalism, secondary separation, and Calvinism.

Jerry Huffman, editor of the *Calvary Contender*, traced the GARBC path to compromise as including increasing ties and cooperation with New Evangelicals and the purging of strong separatist leaders from seminaries and mission positions.⁸ Evolving weakness in the practice of separation from continuing exposure and infiltration of New Evangelicals caused the serious doctrinal problems with Calvinism (which many Fundamentalists opposed) which contributed to the split of the GARBC. As early as 1976, Calvinism was causing problems in GARBC schools.⁹ It also led to a toleration of scandals and coverups within the GARBC when \$20 million was squandered away from the GARBC-related Baptist Mission of North America.¹⁰ New Evangelicalism had infected the GARBC with a toleration not only for error and compromise, but also of theft. This infiltration had also sapped the GARBC of the weapons to fight these errors. Not only did New Evangelicalism soften up the GARBC, it also stole their armor and weaponry to defend itself.

There was a separation in 1988-1989 by Fundamentalists as they did what their fathers had done over five decades earlier. They separated and formed the Independent Baptist Fellowship.

7 Jerry Huffman, "FBF Opposes New Evangelicalism," *Calvary Contender*, July 15, 1992. It is unfortunate that Huffman titled this article such in believing that such a resolution only applied to New Evangelicals! Either the FBF intentioned their resolution to apply only to New Evangelicals and not compromising fundamentalists or Huffman misinterpreted the intent of the resolution.

8 Jerry Huffman, "GARBC Path to Compromise," *Calvary Contender*, April 1, 1989, page 2.

9 John R. Rice, "Regular Baptists Have Our Most Sincere Sympathy," *Sword of the Lord*, February 27, 1976.

10 D. A. Waite, "A Baptist Mission Falls," *Bible For Today News Report*, July 1990, page 2.

The World Congresses of Fundamentalism 1980, 1983, 1986, 1990

Following after the first World Congress of Fundamentalism in 1976 were four other similar meetings. The 1980 meeting was held in Singapore and the Philippines, the next two at Bob Jones University, and the last one in London, England.

As noted earlier, the 1976 Congress acknowledged separation but did not deal specifically with the doctrine in much detail. As they did in 1976, the Congress affirmed a Fundamentalist as one who "exposes and separates from all ecclesiastical denial of that Faith, compromise with error, and apostasy from the Truth." They went further in 1983 by issuing a good declaration of the doctrine of separation.

A gradual weakening of a strong separatist stand seemed to result from the 1990 meeting in London. Problems regarding a "diminishing stress of Fundamentalism's heritage and undergirding Biblical principles," shortened panel discussions where current trends were discussed and the proliferation of weaker voices were noticed by some Fundamentalists.¹¹ Talmadge Spence noted that the World Congresses of 1986 and 1990 seemed to be struggling with the issue of Biblical separation.¹² As the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship and Bob Jones University, the World Congresses suffered voluntary retreats of various degrees from a militant separatism during this period.

An Exception to the Rule: Francis Schaeffer

One law involved in the history of the Church and of Fundamentalism is that when a man or an organization goes into apostasy, he seldom repents and returns to his former strong stand. Such was the case with influential Christian philosopher, Francis Schaeffer.

Schaeffer was an important Christian thinker and author of 23 books. He started his ministry in the 1940s as a Fundamentalist but drifted away from it due to divisions among Fundamentalist leaders and a perceived lack of love within Fundamentalism. He then positioned himself between Liberalism and Fundamentalism by adopting New Evangelicalism.

Schaeffer was never comfortable with his compromise. Pangs of conscience are evident in his books as he became increasingly critical of New Evangelical compromises with Liberalism. His last book, *The Great Evangelical Disaster*, written in 1984 shortly before his death, was his most important as he all but condemned the movement he had been involved in for over four decades.

In the November 20, 1984 issue of the *Sword of the Lord*, Marion Reynolds reviewed the book. Reynolds evaluated the book as "the plaintive plea of a brother who never could fully deny his Fundamentalist heart even though his head and feet were in the evangelical camp."¹³ In the book, Schaeffer warned against latitudinarianism

¹¹ Copy of a letter in my files from Jerry Huffman, editor of the *Calvary Contender*, dated October 27, 1990. In the letter, Huffman also expressed similar concerns regarding Fundamental Baptist Fellowship meetings.

¹² O. Talmadge Spence, "Scriptural Separation: The Endangered Species," *Straightway*, May, 1992, page 1.

¹³ Marion Reynolds, "The Great Evangelical Disaster," *Sword of the Lord*, November 30, 1984, page 1.

(broad fellowships), evangelical accommodation to socialism and ecumenical apostasy, academic infiltration, and feminism.

The Great Evangelical Disaster was Schaeffer's penance for 40 years of compromise. He left Fundamentalism for the wrong reasons but came back for the right ones. He saw the intensifying compromise of the New Evangelicals and realized that their path would take them to destruction. When they refused to heed his warning, Schaeffer woke up to their apostasy. He felt a burden and need to get this last book out as a warning of the sins of the New Evangelical mentality. He basically said, "The Fundamentalists were right after all." The problem was that it took him 40 years to admit it. He also did not have a chance to enjoy his rediscovered faith in separation and Fundamentalism as death took him shortly thereafter.

The lesson is that men can come back from apostasy but with only "two legs or a piece of an ear" (Amos 3:12) They often do not come back with a whole skin. They usually wait until they are near death to repent as they have no desire to die and leave a legacy of an unrepentant compromise behind. They also know that they must soon stand before God in the bema judgment, and they certainly do not want to face their compromise in such a light. Doves drive into compromise, but only a trickle returns. The road to compromise is an eight-lane interstate highway, while the road from compromise is a trail in the woods.

We also notice that when Schaeffer came back to Fundamentalism, he came alone. His wife and son stayed in the Egypt of compromise. Individuals return from compromise, not churches, schools, mission agencies, or organizations. We do not look for ecclesiastical bodies to turn from compromise, but we do hope to see a remnant of individuals exercising separation by coming out and staying with separatist Fundamentalism.

Continued Strength Within the American Council of Christian Churches

While all these issues were burning, one ray of hope continued to burn from the American Council of Christian Churches' lamp. As we have already seen, they started off as strong separatists under the leadership of Carl McIntire, and they have stayed that way. Despite the usual problems that such organizations face, the ACCC has continued to hold a consistent practice of separation through even these difficult periods in Fundamentalism.

A good directory of separatist organizations can be compiled by examining the list of the constituent members of the ACCC. In 1991, they included the following:

Asbury Bible Churches
Bible Presbyterian Churches
Evangelical Methodist Churches
Fellowship of Fundamental Bible Churches Fellowship of Independent
Methodists
Free Presbyterian Churches of North America
General Association of Regular Baptist Churches¹⁴

¹⁴ The documented New Evangelical infiltration of the GARBC could stand as a test of separation within the ACCC as how they will deal with a constituent member who has suffered from compromise.

Independent Churches Affiliated
Tioga River Christian Conference¹⁵

The ACCC continued to stick to those early practices which helped make them great. They are still holding to their original purpose of separation and are still endeavoring to help Bible-believing Fundamentalists separate from liberal churches.

The Southern Baptist Convention

Little has been said regarding separation and the Southern Baptists for the simple reason that ecclesiastical separation has never been an issue among them. Even today, with the apostasy raging in their schools and leadership, there is little serious talk concerning a separation on the part of "Conservatives." It has been noted that Southern Baptists in the 1990s are fighting the same battles that the Northern Baptists fought in the 1920s. Perhaps this is so, as there is a Conservative (not to be identified as Fundamental) wing of the Convention that is putting up something of a fight against the Liberals. We see history repeating itself in the development of several Southern Baptist versions of the Fundamentalist Fellowship. There are several inter-Convention Conservative groups, mainly on the state levels, trying to promote doctrinal orthodoxy within the Convention. Will any of these groups emerge as a separatist organization and leave as the Baptist Bible Union and later the Fundamentalist Fellowship did? Time will tell, but we pray that a faithful remnant will play the role of the Baptist Bible Union and fully separate from an apostate denomination.

A Last Look at New Evangelicalism

We have detailed the beginnings of this compromise movement in Chapter 4 but have not said much about it since. This is because it has little place in any discussion of separation except to note its repudiation of it. It stands on the outskirts of Fundamentalism as the woman of Proverbs 7 and 9, calling unto men to turn aside and follow her into sin and folly. The siren song of New Evangelicalism is alluring to many Fundamentalists as she preaches the way to an easier road through respectability, numerical growth, and increased finances. This insidious philosophy continues to snipe at fundamentalism by continually complaining that the Fundamentalist is too dogmatic, too rigid, and is twenty years behind the times in his insistence upon ecclesiastical separation.

Fundamentalists seemed to have learned their lessons regarding the danger of New Evangelicalism. The fall of Jerry Falwell continues to stand as a warning beacon to Fundamentalists of what can happen if one adopts a tolerant attitude toward compromise. Fundamentalism's current internal problems stem more from personalities and pragmatism than doctrinal compromise. There are continuing compromises within

¹⁵ An earlier brochure published by the ACCC also listed the Congregational Methodist Church, Ukrainian Evangelical Baptist Convention, Westminster Biblical Fellowship, and World Baptist Fellowship. Since their brochures are not dated, we do not have the dates that these groups withdrew or were expelled from the ACCC.

Fundamentalism, but we do not foresee any large-scale defections into New Evangelicalism as was witnessed in the 1970s. We will continue to see various men and ministries drift away from militant positions and adopt a weaker stance of fundamentalism. There has been enough preaching regarding the errors and sins regarding the compromises of New Evangelicalism so that Fundamentalism as a whole is well aware of the dangers.

So what will be the future course of New Evangelicalism? It will continue to degenerate from its associations with the Church of Rome and the Charismatic Movements. It will continue to grow weaker doctrinally and morally as the hedge against sin continues to be dismantled. We will also see a strengthening spirit of pragmatism within the movement. Missions emphasis is very strong in New Evangelicalism, maybe too strong. In order to evangelize the world, New Evangelicals will find it necessary to cooperate with the Roman Catholic Church and the Charismatic Movement for resources and manpower. The ultimate demise for New Evangelicalism may be through their over emphasis on missions and evangelism. They are willing to compromise whatever stand they may yet possess in order to fulfill the Great Commission. We expect that the Ecumenical Movement will continue to sap the New Evangelicals of what little strength they have. Let the Fundamentalist take note and beware: over emphasis on missions and evangelism, as currently seen in New Evangelicalism, can lead to abandonment of separation in order to fulfill such a vision.

Separation and the Charismatic Movement

Such a title as given above is an oxymoron. The Charismatic Movement has never accepted the doctrine of separation nor have they even seen any need to seriously consider it. Since the Charismatic Movement is one built on experience rather than on doctrine, we are not surprised to notice their failure to consider any doctrine to be worthy of serious study and consideration. Charismatics are more concerned with experience, healing, tongues, and evangelism to concern themselves with ecclesiastical separation or doctrinal purity. Separation is totally foreign to this movement, and there are no prospects of change at all.

Separation and the Ecumenical Movement

The Ecumenical Movement is in the same pit that the Charismatic Movement finds itself concerning separation. Ecclesiastical separation would totally destroy the Ecumenical Movement of Protestants and Baptists back to Rome. The very foundation of this philosophy is the reuniting of those groups that separated from the Church of Rome during the Reformation. Doctrinal and practical differences are to be worked out and assimilated into a super, one-world church with the Pope at the head. There can be no separation of any kind within such a movement. Those who support the Ecumenical Movement will spurn separation as a doctrine fomented by Satan to keep the Body of Christ divided and to prevent their reunification. The last thing the Fundamentalist worries about is reuniting the Protestants with Rome. Nor does the Lord worry too much about it since such practices are never commanded by the Lord. Look for no emphasis

on separation in any group or denomination which preaches a return to Rome. For them to do so would destroy the movement which they love so dearly.

Concluding Observations

Dealing with these issues listed above is not an enjoyable pastime for a Fundamentalist. A man with the right kind of heart does not rejoice in the fall of men and ministries, but he rather separates from them with a broken heart. But, if there is any good which comes out of these apostasies and defections, it is that for every man who fails, it strengthens someone else. For every man who compromises, another man plants his feet deeper in the ground and further resolves to continue to stand against the compromise of the day.

What caused these compromises? In the case of Bob Jones University, it may have been their desire to maintain their enrollment by reaching out to an untapped reservoir of potential students in churches which supported the *Sword*. The struggle to maintain enrollment and income is a great temptation to any school. Jack Hyles' problems may be traced to the death of John R. Rice in 1980, who was Hyles' mentor and "father-figure." With Rice no longer looking over his shoulder, Hyles' naturally aggressive spirit and ambition ran unchecked. The pastors and schools which continued to support Hyles, even after he disqualified himself from spiritual leadership, no doubt did so due to misplaced loyalties. Their first loyalty was to a "successful" pastor rather than to the Scriptures. Their unbalanced dedication to evangelism and church growth were also important factors which were more important to them than separation. The Fundamental Baptist Fellowship may have been a victim of its own history. Remember, it is linked to the weakly separatist Conservative Baptist Association which did not separate from the Northern Baptist Convention in 1923 but remained in that apostate denomination until 1947. They then suffered their own split in 1965 when the separatists left a Conservative Baptist Association which was infiltrated with New Evangelicalism. The Fundamental Baptist Fellowship enjoyed a revival of separation in the 1980s, but it faded in the 1990s. In the case of the Regular Baptists, decades of gradual New Evangelical weakening of their separatist foundation led to their compromise and doctrinal problems with Calvinism. They simply were not strong enough to deal with either threat so both succeeded in destroying a once-proud organization.

This period of Fundamentalism witness then underwent a further polarization between the strong separatist pole and the weaker nonmilitant wing. Fundamentalists who placed loyalty above obedience followed their heroes and alma mater in their pathway of compromise. Those individuals, churches, schools, and organizations which continued to judge all things by the Scripture, analyzed and evaluated the major separatist issues of the period and decided that the only Biblical response was to separate from the errors. These groups continue to intensify and strengthen their separation and accompanying motivation of doctrinal and practical purity.

Men and movements who entered this era weak, only weakened more. Revelation 22:11 gives a good illustration of how the Fundamentalist entered and will exit the last decade of the twentieth century about separation. The verse says, "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still." If we were

to paraphrase the verse, we could say, "He that is militant and separatist, let him be militant and separatist still. He who is nonmilitant and weak, let him be nonmilitant and weak still." Let a man continue in the mold into which he has poured himself. Few positions regarding separation changed; they only intensified, often for the worse. Few men moved from a weak to a strong position on separation, but many moved from the strong to the weak. The seeds and roots of compromise which may have been lingering for years came to fruition during this period.

CHAPTER 8 Separation Summarized: Observations and Conclusions

We have thus completed a brief survey of the attitudes toward and the practice of Biblical Separation. We stand in a unique position at this point in church history which has been denied to others, as we are able to gaze backward from our lofty positions into Fundamentalist history and judge men and movements from the vantage of a fuller and more complete understanding of separation resulting from more years of experience. The men who fought the battles of the 1920s and 1950s did not have such an advantage.

Great privilege such as this is accompanied by great responsibility. Seeing we have access to such history, the Lord would place a greater responsibility on us to use it aright. We cannot plead ignorance or lack of experience about separation as the Fundamentalist Fellowship might have been able to do. We have a century of separatism laid out before us. History demands we accept its lessons as we implement its lessons into our modern orthopraxy.

The issues of the hour also compels us to a full and proper understanding of separation. The issues abound on every side: New Evangelicalism, the "Neo-Fundamentalism" of the late Jack Hyles and the *Sword of the Lord*, socialism, the "one-world movement," the proliferation of new English Bible versions, the subtle compromise of Fundamentalist schools, the lowering of standards and the decline in morality. The age demands a forceful and determined response from Fundamentalists and other Bible believers and that response must be fixed upon separation.

We have defined separation as the withdrawal from doctrinal and practical error, motivated by the holiness of God. Personal separation is the believer's avoidance of sin in his life. Ecclesiastical separation is withdrawal from theological systems, organizations or individuals who hold incorrect doctrine or religious practice.

At this point, we will acknowledge the verses that teach and command separation, although this is not the place for a detailed exposition of them. We list them to display our awareness of them, and that we acknowledge their teaching and commands. Let those who continue to oppose this doctrine and practice consider the following verses:

Amos 3:3 Can two walk together, except they be agreed?

Romans 16:17 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

1 Corinthians 5:11 But now I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat.

2 Corinthians 6:14-17 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.

Galatians 1:8 But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

Ephesians 5:11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them.

2 Thessalonians 3:6 Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

2 Thessalonians 3:14,15 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed. Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

2 Timothy 2:19 Nevertheless the foundation of God standeth sure, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his. And, Let every one that nameth the name of Christ depart from iniquity.

Titus 1:13 This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;

Titus 3:10 A man that is an heretick after the first and second admonition reject;

2 John 1:9-11 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

These are not the only verses that deal with separation, as the doctrine runs throughout the entire length of Scripture. It must never be thought of as an isolated doctrine. It is one of the major and reoccurring doctrines of the Bible.

The Two Brands of Separatism

As discussed in Chapter 2, separation has been practiced in two major forms: nonconformist and militant. The nonconformist philosophy of separation was practiced by the World Christian Fundamentals Association, Fundamentalist Fellowship of Northern Baptists, the National Association of Evangelicals, and the Conservative Baptist Association of America. This was non-separatist Fundamentalism. These men would hold to their doctrinal and practical convictions against Liberal attacks but refused to surrender their denominations to the apostasy. They would remain within and fight the error instead of separating from it. This "stay in and do battle" attitude was eventually incorporated into New Evangelicalism in their philosophy of infiltration of denominations rather than separation from apostasy. This was the predominate philosophy up to 1923.

The other wing of separatism was the militant philosophy practiced by the Baptist Bible Union, General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, American Council of Christian Churches (and their affiliated churches), and the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship. Realizing the futility of fighting an entrenched enemy, these Fundamentalists separated and established their own denominations, schools, and mission boards. They became a religious movement unto themselves as they separated

from the apostasy within mainline Christianity. Separatist Fundamentalism was born in 1923 when the Baptist Bible Union separated from the Northern Baptist Convention.

Then there was the "middle-of-the-road" separatists led by John R. Rice. They advocated separation from apostasy but not from "disobedient" brethren (whoever they might be). This pragmatic, situation-oriented separatism caused much confusion, even to this hour, as the line of demarcation was blurred. No longer was the question of separation black or white but rather became a dull gray. Separation was relegated to a secondary importance behind soulwinning and church growth. The *Sword of the Lord*, and the neo-Fundamentalism of Jack Hyles and his followers are the main proponents of this philosophy.

Lessons to Learn

Compromise is subtle in its infiltration. Many historic Fundamentalists who were otherwise diligent in their watchman's towers missed the enemy until he appeared within the city gate. Ignorance and a naive spirit contributed to these failures. Fundamentalists must be fully educated and briefed upon the appearance and the modus operandi of the enemy. Ignorance is no longer an excuse for compromise, if it ever was at all.

Some Fundamentalists spent their days living in a sort of "Fantasyland" where all "clergymen" were godly and all Liberals wore signs around their necks to identify themselves. In this strange land, no one would think of hijacking a school or denomination. No one would deliberately misrepresent themselves into making thinking people believe they were Orthodox when they really were not. Many Fundamentalists were godly gentlemen who could not bring themselves to recognize some of the dirty, underhanded tactics their enemies employed. Today, Fundamentalists must not be surprised at anything they see or hear. Satan does not fight by "Gentlemen's Rules." He pokes in the eye, throws rabbit punches, and kicks in the groin. The trend of both human history and church history is negative so the Fundamentalist must adopt the attitude and outlook of a realist.

The Fundamentalist must also have the strength of his convictions. He must not allow himself to knuckle under from the intense and continual pressure from both the secular media or the Christian media. Some schools may attempt to modify a graduate's position through the alumni association. The "Old Ladies' Society" in some churches will attempt to pressure the pastor from a strong stand. Some Fundamentalists developed battle fatigue from the constant bombardment from the bleachers and surrendered without firing a shot. Others hardened their position every time someone attacked it. It has always taken backbone to serve God, regardless of the age.

A Fundamentalist must fight whether he wants to or not. When we were saved, we were drafted into the Lord's army. Soldiers are for fighting. The Fundamentalist has plenty to fight so he should have no trouble finding a battle. No one respects cowards, deserters, and draft-dodgers in wartime. There is no such animal as a "non-militant Fundamentalist". That should rather read "New Evangelical." Men who refused to fight when the enemy stormed their positions were herded off to the prisoner-of-war camps to be indoctrinated by modern propaganda. Such men were never the same afterwards.

Seven Flavors of Separatists

In his *Straightway* paper dated May 1992, Talmadge Spence listed seven observations regarding Separatists. Seven different philosophies and practices of modern separation are listed, and it would fit within the spirit of this concluding chapter to reproduce these observations.

First, there are some who have had a bad experience in the past with certain Fundamentalists who were too militant without a magnificent spirit. Because of this, there was the tendency to go to the other extreme in their later ministry and remove themselves from a biblical and necessary separation.

Second, some have simply become tired of the battle and have fled the scriptural teaching and practice of biblical separation entirely. This is a violation of a biblical trust placed in our hands by our forefathers who fought to the end so bravely and valiantly for our mutual cause.

Third, others have resorted to pragmatism in their ministries and therefore forfeited the claim to scriptural separation as a matter of default.

Fourth, there are others who never really believed in biblical separation at all ... they simply went along with the lip-service of the matter when it was more popular to be militant against compromise and apostasy.

Fifth, some who practiced a kind of separation in the beginning of their ministries never knew the true definition of this doctrine, and their personal anger in the war burned them away. They assumed that being angry with the enemy was one and the same as being biblically militant.

Sixth, others inherited from their predecessor to their ministry a war-torn battlefield and simply would not proceed with this principle any longer. They believed they must carve out an entirely new forest and make a name for themselves, and giving up separation was the price they paid to achieve it!

Seventh, some have come to believe that early Fundamentalists did not believe in the practice of scriptural separation at all. They believe they are called of the Lord to correct that earlier false image and bring a fresh emphasis, like soulwinning, to the front of Fundamentalism to take its place. They are suffering from evangelism without revivalism.¹

It is not the intent of this study to attempt to pigeon-hole men and ministries into one of these seven areas. None of the seven observations of separatists should be the one a true Biblical separatist should desire to call his own. Let us make an eighth observation therefore. What is our observation regarding a true separatist? He is a man who is in love with Christ and the Scriptures and realizes his primary responsibility as a Christian is not to build the "Largest Sunday School" in your state or climb the denominational ladder or to become popular within his cliché. Rather, his task is to be faithful in what God has given him to do. He is to guard the faith, his ministry, and himself from errors of orthodoxy and orthopraxy. We see ecclesiastical and personal separation as the hedge, which protects him from these errors. Out of a holy jealousy and love for the things of God, he resolves, through the power of the Holy Spirit, not to

1 Talmadge Spence, "Scriptural Separation: The Endangered Species," *Straightway*, May 1992, 3.

compromise doctrine or practice and to keep himself pure by refusing to associate with any who do compromise. Purity and faithfulness are his motivations for the proper understanding and implementation of separation. Let us strive to be counted within the circle of this eighth group.

Implementing Separation

How then should we who desire to be named "separatists" approach the errors of our age? We recognize the difficulties involved and must guard against falling into similar errors from those from whom we are separating. We need to recognize the pitfalls which lie in our path as we seek to implement separation in our lives and ministries.

First, we must recognize the danger of ecumenicism. The desire for unity among feuding elements of Christianity is good, but when it is attempted at the expense of Biblical principles, then it is sinful. Better a divided church which is split over Biblical issues than a church united on a Satanic foundation.

Second, beware of a false piety. Unity is based on doctrine not love. Charismatics base their "unity" on love and wind up with a magpie nest of error. New Evangelicals and Neo-Fundamentalists accuse the Fundamentalist of heart problems and of hating the brethren. Separatists do not hate, but they do not love error. We must never compromise a Biblical position so we may "build bridges." God will bomb our bridges if love toward "the brethren" is more important to us than our love toward God.

Third, we must beware of theological and intellectual pressures to avoid compromise. It is easy to find a man with a Ph.D. who would be only too happy to explain to us why separation is unimportant in this day. These intellectuals would try to intimidate us with high-sounding words and fair speeches. We will be told that only "hillbilly Fundamentalists" still cling to outdated and outmoded positions on that "old-fashioned" doctrine of separation.

Fourth, we must be on our guard to compromise separation for money, influence, or power. Having taught at Maryland Baptist Bible College in Elkton, Maryland, I have seen and personally felt the temptations to lower the standards in order to attract more students. The devil whispers, "If you would only drop the dress code or liberalize your dating standards, you could have 100 students!" In a school of 30 students, this is a major temptation. We would then ask ourselves "Yes, we could have many more students if we lowered our standards but what caliber of student would they be?" Strong students are attracted by strong standards and stands. Weak students naturally gravitate toward the weaker school. The quality of a school is reflected by the type of students it attracts.

The larger schools are faced with the same temptation, but in reverse. They built a large student body with a strong position. They are obsessed with keeping the numbers at a certain level to assure income and prestige, so the standards may be lowered to attract a broader spectrum of student. Either motivation is sinful, as the desires of the flesh overrule the demands of the spirit.

The last trap is yielding to pressure from the outside. The separatist is under constant bombardment from the "brethren" to renounce his righteousness and follow their counsel. Job's friends, although well-intentioned, pressured Job to confess to sins

he was not guilty of in order to, as they perceived, "get back on God's good side." If our stand is right, and if we are certain that we have not sinned, we must, like Job, maintain our integrity even, if we end up on the ash heap.

With what spirit should we manifest and implement our separatism? It must be with both a militant spirit and a magnificent spirit. We are not mad at anyone, although many of the brethren grieve us. We are upset with the world, the flesh, and the devil. We do not hesitate to battle Satan wherever he raises his head. If sin is in the camp, expose it. If Achans are in the camp, they must be cut off if they refuse to repent. We must be militant but not solely for militancy's sake. There is a warfare, and truth is fallen in the street.

Recommendations For Developing A Separatist Mentality

What helps to engender a separatist philosophy? First is love of the Bible and the God of the Bible. A man in love with Christ and His Book will not be easily tempted to follow some strange woman wearing the garb of compromise.

Keeping up to date with what is going on is important. If knowledge is power, then ignorance is suicide. Subscribing to periodicals is important. One should not only read Fundamentalist magazines but also those from across the separatist spectrum. The best way to know what the enemy is doing and saying is to read his literature.

The Christian must also thoroughly acquaint himself with Church history so he may spot historic trends which are reappearing today. The old saw about "Those who are ignorant of the lessons of history are doomed to repeat them" is true. Our Fundamentalist Fathers have walked the road before us and have fought the same battles we are fighting today. We are expected by the Lord to benefit from their example.

Union with a strong, separatist, independent, Fundamental church is a must. The Christian must have fellowship with Christians of like faith and practice and he must be led by a strong shepherd-pastor. This includes fellowshiping with the right kind of Christians who can help you fight your battles better and to take a more solid stand. There is no greater teacher than that of a good example.

He must also pray and seek for the right kind of heart, so he may fight his battles joyfully. We must learn to fight and stand with a song in our heart, not with the complexion of a dried prune. An unmagnificent spirit shows we are fighting for the wrong reasons. We will not last long in that state. Ask God to deepen your love for Christ and to intensify a desire for the holiness of God. Let a holy jealousy instead of a carnal hatred motivate your actions.

We dare not neglect the godly spirit which we must manifest. Our motivation is the holiness of God. We do not strut our separatism as does a barnyard rooster or a peacock his plumage. We acknowledge our virtue is not within ourselves but rather in the Book we hold dear and the demands of that Book. We fight and stand to warn those who may be allured and enticed into compromise. We also desire to rescue those who have fallen into the spiritual quicksand of compromise. We do all this for the Lord's sake and for His honor and glory, not for ours. Unless our separatism is centered around these things, then our separatism amounts to nothing more than sounding brass and tinkling cymbals.

APPENDIX 1 What Fundamentalists Have Said About Separation

Part 1- What Individuals Have Said

Although the practices and philosophies of separation have varied from age to age and from person to person, every Fundamentalist has acknowledged the importance of the doctrine. The best way to gauge the importance of separation is to let those men who fought the battles and who promoted the practice speak for themselves. This appendix is then offered as an overview of beliefs and opinions regarding the doctrine of ecclesiastical separation as expressed by leading Fundamentalists throughout the 20th century.

"There are two distinct areas in the matter of Biblical separation. The reason for both areas is the holiness of God." John Ashbrook, *Axioms of Separation*, page 3.

"Fundamentalists believe that the doctrine of separation (or sanctification) is inherently part of the scriptural teaching of God's holiness." David Beale, *S.B.C. House on the Sand?* page 212. (Beale also emphasizes the link between separation and sanctification in *In Pursuit of Purity*, page 6.)

"The greatest need of the Church today is a company of separated saints who will refuse steadfastly to be swayed by the world's program or the visible church's apostasy." M. R. DeHaan, "M. R. DeHaan on Separation," *Flaming Torch*, March/April, 1984, page 3.

"Separation ... is to the whole ministry of the Word of God and the service of Jesus Christ what sanitation and sterilization are to surgery ... If it is neglected both in its preaching and in its implementation, I know of no way that we can preserve the purity and the power of our churches." Paul R. Jackson, *The Position, Attitudes, and Objectives of Biblical Separation*, pages 2, 3. (Jackson was one of the strongest voices for separation in the history of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches.)

"Separation ... is the very foundation and basis of a fundamental witness and testimony." Bob Jones, Jr., *Cornbread and Caviar*, pages 203-204.

"There is today what is called the 'separation movement'. It is also called the Twentieth Century Reformation movement. Divisions and breaks similar to those which took place in the Roman Catholic Church of the sixteenth century are taking place in the Protestant churches of the twentieth century. The reasons for the breaks are similar ... People are going 'without the camp' in order that true churches may be preserved." Carl McIntire, *The Testimony of Separation*, page 3.

"Biblical separation is not optional; it is not schismatic; it is not sinful; it is commanded by God in both the Old and New Testaments ... Biblical separation ... is commanded for the believer's good and God's glory ... Failure to practice Biblical separation is rebellion against God and disobedience to His Word!" Marion H. Reynolds, "Biblical Separation Is Not Optional .. It Is Commanded By God!", *Foundation*, Volume 4, Issue 3, 1983, page 22.

"Salvation and separation go hand-in-hand, and to ignore or eliminate either is to fall into great error and danger." Rolland C. Starr, *What The Bible Says About Separation*, page 6.

"Separation is provided for in all historic Christian churches. The question of separation ... is not an arbitrary choice ... All Bible-believing denominations have historically accepted this responsibility of maintaining the purity of the church." Francis Schaeffer, "Dr. Francis A. Schaeffer - The Separatist," *The Blu-Print*, November 27, 1979. (Of course, Schaeffer abandoned his strong separatist stand to support New Evangelicalism. He returned to a separatist position shortly before his death.)

"Biblical separation is the fence built around the Fundamental doctrines of the Word of God in order to keep the enemy from infiltrating, diluting, and eventually destroying the true message of the Word of God." James E. Singleton, "Biblical Separation," *The Projector*, January-February 1987, page 1.

"Any definition of separation which does not take as its premise the goal of exalting the Lord Jesus Christ is not worthy to be called Biblical separation." O. Talmadge Spence, *Pentecostalism: Purity or Peril?* page 105.

"To be absolutely accurate historically, when we insist upon a strict biblical witness in Christianity, we are neither proposing nor practicing separation!" Chester Tulga, *The Case For Separation In Our Times*, page 13.

"Truth cannot be perpetuated through compromise and compromise cannot be avoided without separation." John C. Whitcomb, "Separation ... The Basic Issue," *Maranatha Baptist Watchman*, November 1988.

Part 2-. What Organizations Have Said

"God commands His people to be separate from all unbelief and corruption. These commands are clear and positive." Preamble to the Constitution of the American Council of Christian Churches, 1941.

"We believe in obedience to the Biblical commands to separate ourselves unto God and from worldiness, ecclesiastical apostasy and 'disorderly' brethren." Dean Burgon Society, Articles of Faith, Operation and Organization of the Dean Burgon Society, page 6.

"The FBF reaffirms its belief that the Foundation of separation in the Bible is the Holiness of God. God's Holiness demands separation from false gods, or ecclesiastical separation. It also produces an imitation of God's Holiness in the believer's life, or personal separation ... Though we must separate from some in fellowship and service, we are commanded to do so in an attitude of love, compassion and brotherly kindness." Resolution adopted by the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship "Regarding Biblical Separation" at Maranatha Baptist Bible College, June 12-14, 1984.

"We believe that the saved are called into a life of separation from religious apostasy, and from all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices and associations." Fundamental Baptist World-Wide Mission, Purposes, Statement of Faith, Policies, Practices of Fundamental Baptist World-Wide Mission, page 4.

"We propose ... to raise and maintain a testimony to the truth of the gospel and to the purity of the Church; to raise a standard of Biblical separation from worldliness, modernism and apostasy; to emphasize the Biblical teaching that a breakdown of the divinely established lines between Bible believers and apostates is unscriptural ... " Constitution of the General Association of Regular Baptist Churches, amended 1972.

"Separation is a clear principle of Scripture ... The doctrine of Separation includes:

1. The Mark of God's Holiness ...
2. Personal Separation ...
3. Ecclesiastical Separation, whereby we preach against Apostasy and withdraw from brethren who enter into memberships, affiliations and fellow-ships which seek to unite separatist fundamentalists with those who deny Bible doctrines ...
4. 4. Political Separation ... Articles OF Faith of the Independent Baptist Fellowship, Section K.

"It is our conviction that obedience to the Biblical doctrine of separation is God's only provision from apostasy." Minnesota Baptist Convention and Pillsbury Baptist Bible College, "Pillsbury College and the Biblical Doctrine of Separation," Pillsbury Bulletin, November 1980, page 1.

Part 3 Separation in Modern Organizations and Churches

The final aspect we wish to survey concerning separation is how it is incorporated into doctrinal statements and articles of faith of denominations and church organizations. A very useful tool for surveying such articles and statements is *American Religious Creeds*, edited by J. Gordon Melton. This two-volume work lists over 450 modern statements and articles of faith.

In examining these, we find that very few religious organizations bother to insert any sections dealing with ecclesiastical separation. Most church organizations have no official position on separation whatsoever. If they do at all, the extent of their separation deals only with personal separation, such as from lodges or worldliness. Most Pentecostal groups will emphasize this type of separation.

The Baptist Missionary Association, which includes many, but not all, Missionary Baptist Churches, lists in their doctrinal statement under "Some Things We Do Not Believe," point 2, "We do not believe in pulpit affiliation with heretical groups." This is ecclesiastical separation without actually saying so.

The Portland Manifesto of 1953, drafted by the Conservative Baptist Association of America, clearly states that the CBA was:

"Separatist in spirit and objective. Separatist in spirit means: the sincere heart attitudes, motives, impulses, desires, expressions, prayers and actions of the individual, or individuals comprising a church or organization to give with protest the least possible cooperation to all forms of the inclusive policy as named above which will be determined in degree of cooperation by the particular circumstances that prevail."

This statement has an obvious flaw in that they do not advocate total and complete separation from apostasy ("inclusive policy," even their description of the apostasy they were fighting was weak), but rather a protest leading to the "least possible cooperation." This weak stand on separation is a primary reason why the CBA surrendered to the New Evangelicals as quickly as they did.

The American Council of Christian Churches stress in their doctrinal statement "the necessity of maintaining, according to the Word of God, the purity of the Church in doctrine and life."

The Independent Fundamental Churches of America, in their Statement of Faith and Doctrine, point 9, states"

"We believe that all the saved should live in a manner as not to bring reproach upon the Saviour and Lord; and that separation from all religious apostasy, all worldly and sinful pleasures, practices and associations is commanded of God".

This is a good statement but no doubt suffers much neglect and abuse as most of its current leadership comes from New Evangelical schools such as Dallas Theological Seminary and Moody Bible Institute.

The Fundamental Baptist Fellowship issued a "Manifesto on Biblical Separation," dated sometime in the early 1980s (probably 1984). Although the document is not incorporated into their main doctrinal statement, the Fundamental Baptist Fellowship has always tried to put it in practice. The compromise at the Sword Conferences struck a blow to the adherence to the Manifesto, but they have been trying to get back to the spirit of it during the 1990s. The Manifesto states:

"The Word of God ... calls for complete severance from apostasy, unbelief, heresy, false religions, and all forms of inclusivism, or compromise therewith ... the Word of God clearly calls for the maintenance of the purity of the local church, free from the tares of unbelief, the leaven of false doctrines, and an unbiblical ecclesiasticism ... we declare to the world that we are separatists in spirit, action and objective ... We repudiate the concept of "second degree separation", which we believe is a convenient excuse to exercise tolerance toward believers who are tolerant of unbelievers in common religious endeavor."

The Southern Baptist Convention, the National and World Council of Churches, the ecumenical and charismatic movements, Neo-Orthodoxy, and New Evangelicalism are specifically mentioned as objects to separate from.

The Ashbury Bible Churches also have a lengthy section on separation in their official documentations. Having separated from the apostate Methodist Church, they place a heavy emphasis on separation from apostate Methodism. They single out the National and World Council of Churches as well as the National Association of Evangelicals as apostate groups from which to separate.

It is a shame unto most Fundamental and otherwise Conservative and Orthodox groups that a marginal sect (or cult) would place a stronger statement of ecclesiastical separation in their doctrinal statement than they would. We say in Chapter 2 how the Church of Rome carried a stronger separatist mentality prior to Vatican II of 1962. The Christadelphians, a sect which originated from the Baptists and followers of Alexander Campbell, founder of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), place a strong and lengthy statement in the appendix to their "Declaration of the Truth" entitled "The Call To Declaration of the Truth" entitled The Call to Separation." Of course, the basis of their ecclesiastical separation has an incorrect doctrinal basis as they hold many false

doctrines, including a denial of the trinity and deity of Christ as well as soul-sleep, but they have determined to fellowship with groups that hold opposing positions. Other cult groups, such as the Jehovah Witnesses, hold even stronger positions against those they consider heretics. Their zeal for what they consider to be the truth puts many ecumenically-minded Fundamentalists to shame. A Fundamentalist may dialogue the truth with an apostate, but not a Romanist or a cultist.

APPENDIX 2 Denominational Divisions

The following table shows the seceding groups from their parent denominations. The reasons for these divisions differ but for the sake of completeness, we list the parent denomination, the name of the seceding group, and the year of division.

PARENT DENOMINATION	SECEDING GROUP	YEAR
Northern Baptist Convention	Fundamentalist Fellowship of Northern Baptists ¹	1920
Northern Baptist Convention	Baptist Bible Union	1923
Disciples of Christ	North American Christian Convention of the Disciples of Christ	1927
Northern Baptist Convention	General Association of Regular Baptist Churches	1932
Presbyterian Church of the USA	Orthodox Presbyterian Church	1936
Orthodox Presbyterian Church	Bible Presbyterian Church	1937
Methodist Church	Southern Methodist Church	1939
Methodist Church	Bible Protestant Church	1939
Methodist Church	Evangelical Methodist Church	1946
Northern Baptist Convention	Fundamentalist Fellowship	1947
Bible Presbyterian Church	Reformed Presbyterian Church	1956
Bible Presbyterian Church	Evangelical Presbyterian Church	1961
Conservative Baptist Association	Fundamental Baptist Fellowship	1965
Conservative Baptist Association	New Testament Association of Independent Baptist Churches	1966
Presbyterian Church in the U.S.	Presbyterian Church in America	1973
General Association of Regular Baptist Churches	Independent Baptist Fellowship	1990

1 Although there was no direct separation of the Fundamentalist Fellowship from the Northern Baptist Convention until 1947, this 1920 "separation" can be considered the first step in a 27-year process of their separation.

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