

# ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT THE CHANGES WE ARE SEEING IN FUNDAMENTALISM?

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December 20, 2010

**QUESTIONS** – Is there a difference in a man who makes a mistake or bad judgment call, and the development of a man's patterns that turns one onto the slippery slope of compromise? When we see those obvious changes, especially by our friends, why is it that we talk more about our friends than to our friends? (We all know that many of us, especially preachers, are often "walking news in shoes"!) When we discern that compromise is driving our friend's ministry decisions, how long do we allow the changes to go on without speaking to him about our concerns? As we pray about when and how to address these tender issues, we should always do it as the Lord leads, and in the spirit of **Galatians 6:1**. *Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted, keeping in mind:*

**(Proverbs 17:17)** *A friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.*

**(Proverbs 27:6)** *Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.*

When these changes (what some are calling "making different applications") continue to be justified and practiced, it backs us into a corner, and forces us to make decisions. Isaiah certainly felt this way in his ministry.

**(Isaiah 58:1-2)** *Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins. Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God.*

So, is it wrong for your pastor to voice his concerns about how he sees the present trends and how they will eventually (if not already) affect us? Due to my own history (which I will address in this article), the many questions that have surfaced recently, and multiple communications with some of my friends (that I love and appreciate), I feel it prudent to speak to our church family about my concerns in our fundamental movement.

**INTEGRITY** – Isaiah's call to ministry and commitment to truth gave him the courage to preach and lead the people at a crucial time. His leadership was extremely strong, but not without compassion. The day came that he had to make a choice to be quiet or speak to the dangers that were ever before them. At this moment his principles of integrity began to burnish.

1. He could not be silent when truth was on the altar.
2. He could not shade, color or twist the commandments of God's Word or God's ways.

3. He held to the fact that Biblical truth is immutable; therefore, wrong will never be right at any time or for any reason.
4. He, like King David, had learned there was more to consider than just a leader's "skillfulness". Therefore, he was not intimidated by a man's education, his intellectualism, his influence, his power, his position, his pocketbook, his opinions or his social status.
5. He was not manipulated by the popular politics of his day, nor the threats and pressures of his contemporaries. Therefore, principle prevailed. When he was backed into a corner, he evaluated the situation, and with balance, did the right thing to maintain that which was right.
6. He never considered the line of least resistance, nor thought, "Now, what is the easiest way?" or, "What is the way that will make the least trouble?" or, "What is the most profitable way?" or, "What is the most popular way?"
7. He did not compromise in the name of compassion, for the purpose of co-existing, or for the sake of keeping peace. He gave great advice to Hezekiah when Sennacherib made his claims against Judah.
8. He, like Paul, was not passive when truth was in jeopardy. As truth swings on the hinges of confrontation, Isaiah was willing to "*contend*" and often found himself in the arena of conflict.
9. He, like Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, made his choice to show his zeal for biblical truth and his disgust for compromise. He was willing to obey God with a hard judgment call that exposed every fiber of his character.
10. As an Old Testament fundamentalist, he spoke aggressively and with authority, not waiting or watching to see what others would do, or when they were going to do it.
11. He was strong in his stand against compromise and sin, knowing that his message would fall on deaf ears. A "*voice in the wilderness*" is often silenced by the continual "winds of change", but not so with this prophet. He was not concerned about being "black balled", or whether or not he would get another invitation to the palace or the temple. He listened to God and with the right disposition, proclaimed his messages and held his position.
12. He took the call of God seriously, saw his responsibility, and stood, with consistency. His influence provided the spiritual leadership for kings and priests, whether they agreed or disagreed with his message.
13. He knew that keeping silent was nothing more than approval.

Isaiah loved his brethren! However, the time came when he could not be silent any longer. God entrusted him with the trumpet and he faithfully sounded the warnings. He gives us an

example to follow. It is in the spirit of Isaiah that I prayerfully write this open letter to our church family.

**HISTORY** – A look at the fifty-four year history of Eagledale/Crosspointe and one knows we are unashamedly called Bible-believing, independent, fundamental Baptists, who, without apology, have faithfully stood on the revealed Word of God as separatists. We have stood with historic fundamentalism which has always been driven by the inerrancy of the Scriptures. ***We Have Come This Far by Faith*** is the title of a message that our Pastor Emeritus, Dr. Warren Dafoe, preached in our new building in 2008. That message can be purchased at our Book Nook or listened to online. He reminds us of our humble beginnings and the hunger we have always had for truth.

I began my pastoral ministry in 1979. Early on, the Lord brought preachers into my life who helped shape my thinking as the Lord developed a young man for the pastorate. These men accepted me as a young fundamentalist who had a hunger for truth and a desire to be consistent in doctrine and practice. They were not perfect men, but they were wonderful mentors who became my rope-holders. Some are in heaven now, and I feel indebted to every one of them. Recently, I wrote about one of my rope-holders in my weekly Pastor's PEN. I have included it at the foot of this letter.

**RESPONSIBILITY** – It is a privilege to have the call of God on my life and to be entrusted with the precious saints of Crosspointe Baptist Church. It has never been a desire to promote myself as a national leader in fundamentalism, but I am a pastor -- your pastor; and therefore, I am responsible for the sheep in my fold. My passion is to be the best under-shepherd I can possibly be to you. This includes providing for and protecting the precious sheep God has in our fold. You are well-taught, wise and thinking believers. Our strong pulpit ministry has nurtured you, allowing you to discern the landscape of fundamentalism. You are not afraid to ask questions and want straight answers to them. I am here to continue loving and leading you in a culture that is always changing. It is my desire to continue the great legacy of Crosspointe Baptist Church, as we move forward in the work of Christ. We could have changed our music and taken "Baptist" out of our name when we moved across town in 2008, but we did not. By God's grace, we have no intentions except to maintain our historic, fundamental, separatist position, as we continue standing on the inerrant Word of God. We have never been afraid of terms that help describe who we have always been, who we are and, by God's grace, who we will be until He comes. Terms like, independent, fundamental, militant, separated, soul winning, dispensational, Baptist describes who we are... ***"The Church That Believes the Bible and Loves People!"***

**CONFRONTATION** – In 1987 I became the pastor of Troy Baptist Temple in Troy, Ohio. TBT financially supported two schools -- Tennessee Temple University (my alma mater) and Cedarville University. By 1988 I was so bothered by the direction, associations and music of both institutions that I got appointments with the presidents to talk with them about my concerns. As an alumnus of Temple, I lovingly voiced my concerns about the patterns of compromise I was seeing to Dr. J. Don Jennings, the new president. During our three hour meeting I asked questions about his decisions, associations, and the direction he was taking the school. I listened as he justified lowering the standards of music and dress in the student body, and having an SBC pastor preach in a recent Missions Conference at Highland Park Baptist Church ("because he is a conservative that has always stood for truth in the SBC"). I

am sure he saw my eyebrows go up when he told me that he had booked Dr. John MacArthur to speak to the seminary. Even though he repeatedly said he was a fundamentalist, at best he was a changing one. He said, "Rick, in reality we are standing in the same place". However, that would only be true if I began having "conservative new evangelicals", and "conservative-fighting" Southern Baptists preach in our pulpit. The real truth was we stood in different camps, and we both knew it. Upon returning to Troy, I wrote to him listing the three reasons why TBT could no longer financially support the school and send students. I still have his return letter in my files. He scolded me for my decision, attributing it to a lack of intellectualism, and called me a "fool". As I read his countenance that day, it seemed to say, "This is the kind of graduate we do not want to produce in the future." His five year tenure pushed Highland Park Baptist and Tennessee Temple University onto the slippery slope of compromise. I would have never believed in my lifetime HPBC and TTU, whose founder, Dr. Lee Roberson, separated from the SBC in 1947, would vote go back into the SBC in 2007. Fifty years of independent fundamentalism was reversed. How sad! Visit the website of TTU today and you will see what a ministry looks like when it hits bottom. The slippery slope of compromise always ends in the same place.

Though I was "blackballed" by my alma mater as a young fundamentalist, God was leading many "co-laborers" and "fellow soldiers" into my life. Today I enjoy an enlarged family of fundamentalists that believe in and, without apology, practice ecclesiastical and personal separation. These men have become my friends and my rope-holders. Like Epaphroditus, they are my "*brothers*", my "*companions in laborer*", and my "*fellow soldiers*", that I "*receive in gladness and hold such in reputation*".

As for my appointment with Dr. Paul Dixon a few weeks later, it was just more of the same. We differed greatly when it came to our definitions of a fundamentalist and new evangelical, as well as, our position on music, and personal and ecclesiastical separation. In 2003 Dr. Dixon retired and the leadership was given to Dr. William E. Brown, after following a 10-year presidency at Bryan College (SBC) in Dayton, Tennessee. Shortly thereafter Cedarville's Board of Directors voted to become a recognized SBC school. Anyone with half-an-eye open can see the downward spiral of both these schools. This is what happens when we start giving up ground, and justifying change.

You can see the same pattern in Liberty University who a few years ago voted to become a recognized SBC school. When you look at Cedarville and Liberty today you see increased enrollment that can be attributed to their base being broaden. However, with this growth came historic and positional changes that were never considered in the early development of these ministries. As someone has wisely said, "We are only one president, or one pastor away from compromise that leads to disaster.

**OBSERVATIONS** – Over the last few years, I have watched, with growing concern, the obvious change in the historical and doctrinal positions among our fundamental Baptist brethren. These changes are confusing and difficult to get our minds around because we have a history of standing together as we, "*contend for the faith once delivered to saints*". I believe

there comes a time when we can admonish our brothers when obvious decisions are being made that are normally not made.

**(II 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”.*

Why do we have to “note” [to mark or distinguish] these men? Why do we “admonish” [to gently caution or warn] them as a brother? Keep in mind that they are not our “enemy”; they are our brothers. This open letter lends itself to many reasons, but one that is heaviest on my heart is the obvious influence that these men have on the “weakest among us” (our 18 to 22 year-old young people) leading them into the most “doubtful of disputations”.

**(Romans 14:1)** *“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.”*

**FRIENDS** – These are our friends that we have preached with in different venues. We listen to each other (iron sharpens iron), we preach for each other, we send our students to their institutions, we take our kids and families to their camps, and we join their fellowships. We have a history of writing articles, books, and resolutions admonishing and urging each other to be cautious about compromise and the dangers of it! At the top of this list is ecclesiastical separation and music.

As I read the blogs of Dr. Kevin Bauder, I see an attempt to re-write the history of fundamentalism in America. No one has that privilege. Are we not hypocrites when we deprecate the secular intellectual for attempting to re-write our American history, only to set ourselves up to do the same with the history of Baptist fundamentalism? We are who we are, regardless of how some may want to re-define or re-name us. These types of changes have a way of lowering personal standards of holiness, and will change our music, our worship, our dress, and even our choices of entertainment. I recognize that in the fragments of fundamentalism, there are some who may push an envelope, over-emphasize, and/or become imbalanced (even heretical) from whom we distance ourselves. Therefore, I loathe being lumped together with those who take hyper views in regards to the text issue, Calvinism, and dispensationalism.

Then I look at the changes that Dr. Tim Jordan has made of late, especially in the area of ecclesiastical separation. Dr. Mark Dever, Pastor of Capital Hill Baptist Church (SBC), is slated to be the keynote speaker at Calvary Baptist in Lansdale, Pennsylvania’s 2011 Advance the Church Conference. I was not taken aback to read that Dr. Bauder would be one of the speakers at ATC (he has told us clearly in to which camp he fits), but I was surprised when I read that Dr. Dave Doran was on the platform with Dr. Dever (a mix we have never seen until now). I emailed Dr. Doran, asking him to explain his decision to preach with Dr. Dever. In his answer he justified it on the basis of Dr. Dever being a “conservative” that fights for biblical truth in the SBC.

The most recent changes that concern me are the messages on music and the letters sent to me by Dr. Matt Olson, who is also my friend. I have spoken to Dr. Olson about my concerns, and we agreed to agreeably disagree as to his reasons for having Dr. Rick Holland (who

serves as Staff Elder at Grace Community Church, where Dr. John MacArthur is Pastor-Teacher, Staff Elder) speak in chapel at Northland International University. We came to another impasse when he explained his reasons for having Dr. Bruce Ware, a professor from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary teach a block course to the graduate students.

My heart breaks! Never did I believe that we would be placed in such a corner in our fundamental circle as we are being placed in today.

**THINKING BACK** – My home church, Mikado Baptist Church in Macon, Georgia, came out of the SBC many years ago. I am thankful for the influence of my pastor, Dr. George Palmer, who led the church to “take the vote” and have our church name taken from the national and state roster of the SBC. My wife Dolly was saved in a Ron Comfort revival meeting in 1982, after we were in our ministry in Mannington, WV. She may have died and gone to hell with the way her SBC pastor handled her VBS “salvation” decision when she was twelve.

What do I tell my children -- Beth Anne, a 1998 graduate of Ambassador College, who has served on staff at Baptist World Mission for thirteen years, and my son, Bert, a 2005 graduate of Ambassador Baptist College, who serves as the youth pastor at the Grace Baptist Church in Columbus, Georgia? Do I tell them we made a mistake leaving the SBC? The SBC of yesterday is the SBC of today! There were conservatives in it when Mikado pulled out, and there are conservatives within it today.

**CHANGE** – Who really is changing as we see this new wave of picking and choosing, applying and justifying, defending and mitigating, “mixing and mingling”? If it is right for us to “platform fellowship” with new-evangelicals and those in the SBC, why have we not had them preach in our colleges, seminaries and fellowships over the past sixty years? A Southern Baptist teaching theology in a fundamentalist church, college or seminary has his roots in Southern Baptist soil, and when transplanted temporarily to a fundamental church or school brings that soil with him. If our position has been wrong, then we have missed the placating of well-organized denominationalism with its comforts and retirement benefits. Perhaps we should go to those retired fundamental Baptist missionaries, who have sacrificed term after term on a foreign field, who may be physically and financially struggling in some nursing home, and apologize to them, admitting the Lottie Moon Missions Program would have been a better choice for them. Can you see the shifting of the sand and how it strikes at the foundation of our fundamental Baptist history?

**FACTS** – I want to assure you that the reason for this open letter is pastoral. It is my biblical responsibility to inform my people of any patterns of danger that may have a direct affect on them and their family.

Just because a man like Dr. Dever is seen by some as a “conservative Southern Baptist, who fights for truth in the SBC”, does not mean he fits in as a separatist and should be called a fundamentalist. Matter-a-fact, he would not want to wear that name tag. He is a leader among Southern Baptists:

- He serves on the Board of Southern Theological Seminary under the direction of Dr. Al Mohler. (Dr. Mohler signed the ecumenical Manhattan Declaration and watches

over the Billy Graham School of Evangelism and Home Missions at Southern Seminary in Louisville, KY.)

- Dr. Dever also willingly teaches at Gordon-Conwell College in Massachusetts, long known as a leading institution for New-Evangelicalism and compromise.
- To add to the matter, Dr. Dever is quite reformed and a-millennial, which, of course, is a far-cry from the position promoted by the founders of Calvary, Detroit, Central and Northland.
- He has spoken in the past and is slated to speak in the future with Dr. C.J. Mahaney, one of the founders of the Together For The Gospel Conference where he states that his desire is to start churches that are reformed in theology and charismatic in doctrine. T4G has attracted an assortment of our young men, exposing them not only to doctrinal error, but also a steady diet of Sovereign Grace Music.

Dr. Rick Holland is the organizer of “Resolved,” a conference for teens which exposes them to speakers like Al Mohler, John MacArthur, C.J. Mahaney, Steve Lawson, and the list can go on and on. This conference proudly and strongly advocates Calvinistic doctrine, attracting many young people with Lawson’s contemporary music styles.

**TIMING** – Since time began men have been pushed into a corner and forced to consider the decisions and directions of other brethren. Some look at the landscape (choices, associations and patterns) evaluate the situation with the information they have, and eventually, with great concern, make their choice to separate. They will do that in their timing and at different intervals. I am not trying to influence anyone in this article; I am only seeking to follow how the Lord is leading me as pastor of Crosspointe, keeping my principles of integrity as best I can.

**CONCLUSION** – The many changes in these ministries sadden my heart. While I may not always agree with Drs. Bauder, Jordan, Doran, and Olson, they are my brothers and not my enemies. We know the rich Baptist history of their present ministries; we recall the influence their founders had on fundamentalism, and we appreciate the strong separatist leadership of their predecessors. We love these men, and admonish them to examine these decisions that reflect a change of direction and reconsider their choices. This only adds to our fragmentation, as Satan gains victories through confusion.

A look at Baptist history in America will certainly prove that our fears are not unfounded. Also, we see the influence these leaders have on the younger men coming behind us, the confusion it causes in our churches, the friendships it jeopardizes, and the fellowship that it strains. Of greater significance is how it grieves our Lord. How sad!

Please do not be surprised as we see more of this “mixing and mingling” by those we may have stood shoulder to shoulder with at one time. Be assured, I do not have a personal axe to grind with any of these men. My motive is to stand as consistently as possible on the biblical principles that I have always stood on. These principles of truth govern my observations and drive me to the conclusion to show our church family my concerns.

In short, we are what we have always been, a Bible-believing, fundamental, Baptist church. We look at the obvious patterns of these men and realize that is not who we are. We will simply stay the course! We are not going to manipulate our friends or seek to make decisions for them. We will love them and pray for them as we navigate through these changing times together, maintaining our historic separatist position as fundamentalists.

Because I care how you and your children turn out,

Pastor Arrowood

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### **Pastor's PEN – November 16, 2010**

**ON MY SOAP BOX** – Of late, I have been very concerned as to the shift among those who are tolerating “dangerous patterns” in their ministries and associations when it comes to ecclesiastical separation and music. I am somewhat taken aback by those who have replaced their predecessors only to give up ground on these doctrines that make fundamentalism so distinct. It is obvious that post-modernism ushered in neo-evangelicalism in the 40’s and 50’s, and separation (II Cor. 6:14-7:1) was necessary as ecumenical evangelism swelled under leaders like Evangelist Billy Graham. In the 50’s and 60’s, good men were forced to separate from lifelong friends due to corporate compromise. More separation came as good men either left or led their churches out of the Northern and Southern Baptist Conventions because of heretical doctrine and worldliness. Then the new neo-evangelicalism repackaged itself under the guise of seeker friendly, as Promise Keepers failed to keep their promise and Evangelicals and Catholics came together under the banner of “leave your doctrine at the door and let’s love each other”. The effects of contemporary music gripped the hearts of those who were tired of biblical standards and ecclesiastical separation, and universities such as Cedarville, Liberty, and Tennessee Temple have now yoked up with the Southern Baptist Convention. How sad! It looks like we are going to witness another round of this capitulation. It is, and will continue to be, obvious that some schools and churches accept the new attempt by some intellectual leaders to re-write our history, re-defining who we are, so that they can proudly wear their newest name tag - “conservative evangelical”! Perhaps this shift is motivated by the charismatic dangers of the T4G doctrine and the impact it has had on some of our younger fundamentalist. Or perhaps, it is fear; fear that if we do not change, we may lose needed “nickels and noses” and jeopardize our existence? I really do not know the answer. I do not know the hearts of these men. But this one thing I do know and am thankful for -- in 1977 as a young believer getting ready to leave for Bible College, I listened to Dr. Les Ollila preach all week (on the need of separation) at the Youth Fitness Conference at the *Wilds*. The last night of the meeting I went forward, and on my knees, with Doc O by my side, I asked the Lord, as the tears flowed, to help me to live a separated life, both personally and ecclesiastically. It was a right decision then, and it is right now! Nearly 34 years have passed and the battle has not changed when it comes to separation. By God’s grace, my desire is to stay the course and lead our church in the historical fundamental positions it was founded upon. In a day of shift and compromise, my heart’s desire is to “*hold the fort*” until Jesus comes!

RWA