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**Maintaining the Foundation
Rebuilding the Superstructure**

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Kirsopp Lake, a noted theological liberal, when describing Fundamentalism wrote these words:

It is a mistake, often made by educated persons who happen to have but little knowledge of historical theology, to suppose that Fundamentalism is a new and strange form of thought. It is nothing of the kind: it is the . . . survival of a theology which was once universally held by all Christians . . . The Fundamentalist may be wrong; I think that he is. But it is we who have departed from the tradition, not he, and I am sorry for the fate of anyone who tries to argue with a Fundamentalist on the basis of authority. The Bible and the *corpus theologicum* of the Church is on the Fundamentalist's side.¹

It is no surprise, therefore, that for generations there have been many who were firmly committed to what is commonly called Fundamentalism. This is because of the *integrity* of the *foundation*, the innate rightness of its principal tenets. Whatever the faults of Fundamentalism, there is a foundation undergirding her which cannot be matched by any other theological movement.

Jesus made very clear the indispensable necessity of a proper foundation (Matt. 7:24-27). Our own human experience confirms this. None of us would be *foolish* enough to invest the financial resources which are necessary in our day to construct a building without first insisting that a proper foundation be laid. First we would see to it that deep footings and a sound foundation were put in place, and thereafter, we would be

prepared to make the necessary investments for the erection of the edifice. And if it is true that foundations are indispensable architecturally, it is equally true that they are indispensable theologically.

Notwithstanding, though the foundation of Fundamentalism "standeth sure," the superstructure is suspect. And the unique thing about a foundation is that it is hidden from view, while the superstructure is visible to all. Perhaps this accounts for the sense of disillusionment which seems to prevail among so many young Fundamentalists. What they see and hear of Fundamentalism, with some obvious exceptions, is often disappointing to them. As one young correspondent recently wrote to me:

It seems to me that if Fundamentalism claims to be the most doctrinally pure form of Christianity which is most worthy of God's blessing, then Fundamentalism as a movement should be demonstrably superior to other groups. Ethical standards for pastors should be higher, Fundamentalist preaching should be superior, Fundamentalist schools should have a strong commitment to academic and spiritual excellence and Fundamentalist churches should exemplify the characteristics which made the early church so potent. Either Fundamentalism must move toward these ideals or it very well could become another form of dead orthodoxy. I appreciate your efforts to guide Fundamentalism toward the former alternative.

Today on the one hand second and third generation Fundamentalists see the superstructure of Fundamentalism as troubled and giving the appearance of disintegration, while on the other hand they see the superstructure of Neo-evangelicalism as triumphant and giving the appearance of revitalization. While superficial "appearances" are generally not reliable sources of "reality," nevertheless *the shock* of this realization can have a stunning effect on the young idealistic thinkers who are hungry for the kind of ministry which both glorifies God and quenches and satisfies human thirst and hungers.

Perhaps those of us in the older generation should face ourselves squarely here. It might be easier to excoriate second and third generation Fundamentalists for their "audacity" in asking certain of these questions, but it is probably not wiser. Instead we should be willing to listen with sensitive attention and then respond with Biblical precision. More than this, we must sense the *urgency* of this confrontation and its implications to the next generation of Fundamentalism if we fail to meet it sensitively and Biblically.

Our approach at Northland to the younger generation of Fundamentalists has been in essence as follows:

Before you "abandon ship," you must wrestle with the *profound implications* of this *simple equation*: Fundamentalism possesses a sure foundation *but* a troubled superstructure; Neo-evangelicalism possesses a significant superstructure *but* a troubled foundation. If you were faced with *only* these two options, where would prudence and wisdom come to rest? Which would you choose?

I hasten to add that we are not left with only these two options (for there is a *third* and more Scripturally authentic alternative), but if we were faced with *only* these two, which option would be nearer the teaching of our Lord Jesus and the tenor of Scripture—the choice of a significant superstructure, or the choice of a sound foundation? It is our conviction that the answer is obvious: *foundations* are absolute and indispensable; *superstructures* are relative and expendable.

This is not the same thing as saying that superstructures are immaterial or without importance, for we are called to "*flesh-out*" the Christian ethic and make it "incarnational," bringing into focus for the sake of a lost world the Person and precepts of the risen Christ (Matt. 5:16; II Cor. 3:2, 3; I Pet. 2:11, 12; Jas. 1:22-25).

But without a proper foundation no movement can long remain loyal to Jesus Christ. So the solution to our problems within Fundamentalism is *not to abandon* a sound foundation for a troubled one, *but to address* the issue of rebuilding within Fundamentalism an authentic superstructure in the place of one which is troubled. This represents a generational commitment. It is a task which will require of us discipline, devotion, and dedication. It will not be the way of "easy going self-indulgence," nor will it attract those who are "smitten with moral anemia." For such people the prospects for "rebuilding" are not very attractive. But for those who have confidence in the retrieving efficacy of divine grace, and who can visualize the dynamic potential of a revived Fundamentalism, whose foundation remains sound and whose superstructure becomes authentic, this intoxicating prospect becomes all the motivation they need to make whatever sacrifice is necessary to see it materialize.

I have already mentioned a "simple equation" which we urgently wish for young Fundamentalists to consider. Perhaps an expansion of that equation into its various parts will assist us in making the right choices with respect to this very critical issue. Let me share with you a brief characterization of each of the movements identified in our equation.

Examining New Evangelicalism

A Significant Superstructure

There is no doubt that there are some very impressive elements in the superstructure of Neo-Evangelicalism.

Expository preaching. First, among these elements would be a *rejuvenated interest* in and a *refreshing modeling of expository preaching*. From my perspective the old conventional classifications of sermons simply will not do any longer. All preaching is "*expositional*" preaching whether the exposition is dealing with a topic, a single text or an extended text. Expository preaching cannot be relegated to "one of many" modes of preachment. All preaching must be expositional because expositional preaching is nothing other than "exposing" or "bringing into focus" the meaning of the Biblical text. John Stott was right to define expository preaching in this way:

It is my contention that all true Christian preaching is expository preaching . . . To expound Scripture is to bring out of the text what is there and expose it to view . . . The opposite of exposition is "imposition," which is to impose on the text what is not there . . . Whether (the text) is long or short, our responsibility as expositors is to open it up in such a way that it speaks its message clearly, plainly, accurately, relevantly, without addition, subtraction or falsification. In expository preaching the Biblical text is . . . a master which dictates and controls what is said.²

Unfortunately, in many cases (certainly not all) Neo-evangelicals have outdone Fundamentalists in this connection. I have often wondered if perhaps this does not account for the proliferation of new-evangelical tape-ministries in fundamental contexts. There is a hunger among God's people for the clear, plain, accurate and relevant exposition of God's Word, and too often they simply are not receiving it from those who occupy Fundamentalist pulpits.

Models of evangelism. Second, among these elements in the Neo-evangelical superstructure, would be a willingness to *embrace creative and new models of evangelism* within the framework of the local church. While it is true that *doxology* (the glory of God) has sometimes given way to *soteriology* (the salvation of men), and this represents an imbalance which can lead to compromise, it is equally true that some of these models

are worth studying and, with certain modifications, could be embraced without compromise in a Fundamentalist framework.

We are not here advocating an abandonment of tried and true methods, but rather an openness to new and creative approaches so long as they fit within Biblical parameters. This might mean: (1) *encouraging* personal evangelism in all the normal connections of life rather than tying it exclusively to a structured program; (2) *establishing* a network of evangelistic Bible studies designed specifically to touch and reach women, singles, students or married couples; (3) *developing* a ministry of rehabilitation for drug addicts and alcoholics, which is thoroughly Christ-centric (rather than generically Theistic), and which is designed as a tool for Biblical evangelism.

Too often Fundamentalists have been unwilling to embrace such an openness for fear of criticism by their peers. Notwithstanding, while we must always be sensitive to honest and constructive criticism, we should never feed or foster pharisaical judgmentalism. If the need and resources are there and the Christian ethic can be honored, then we must be open to the Spirit's leading.

Compassionate ministries. Third, among these elements in the Neo-evangelical superstructure would be the *development of compassionate and need-meeting ministries* within the context of the local church. In this I refer to nothing more than developing a *mind-set of Biblical mercy*. Ministries of mercy are intrinsic to the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ. No one can read the Gospels without being moved by the compassion of our Savior for the suffering and the sorrowful. Within the circle of the Christian ethic there is room for "*Good-Samaritanish*" deeds. We might encourage certain of our people to offer their homes to the Lord to serve as "shepherding homes" for wayward girls or international students. We might develop specialized ministries to targeted groups such as ethnic communities, single-parents, fractured marriages or street people, as well as those who have special physical, emotional or mental needs.

It was Jesus who, in quoting Hosea, was bold enough to say: "I will have *mercy* and not sacrifice" (Matt. 12:7). He possessed a much greater concern for people than for ritual. And this is a concern which every one of us should share.

We are not talking here about the so-called "social implications of the Gospel." We are talking about *Biblical mercy!* Meeting the kinds of needs we have described is not "social" at all, it is *merciful*. And as Christians irradiate such mercy, they *conform* to the image and likeness of Jesus Christ, they *transmute* mercy the philosophical abstraction into mercy the practical manifestation, they *make incarnational* the Christian

ethic and they *develop* a moral magnetism which becomes a powerful tool in evangelism.

A Troubled Foundation

There is no doubt that there are some very disintegrative elements in the foundation of Neo-evangelicalism.

Tolerance of deviation. First, among these would be a *tolerance of doctrinal deviation* so long as it claims the "evangelical" name. No one who has read such books as *Reforming Fundamentalism* by Marsden, *The Great Evangelical Disaster* by Schaeffer, *The Battle for the Bible* and *The Bible in the Balance* by Lindsell or *Biblical Separation* and *The Fruit of Compromise* by Pickering can doubt the accuracy of that statement.

It is a disappointment, for example, to hear such Neo-evangelicals as Carl F. H. Henry dismiss the matter of inerrancy as something much less than the "watershed issue" that it actually is. He says:

The somewhat reactionary elevation of inerrancy as the superbadge of evangelical orthodoxy deploys energies to this controversy that evangelicals might better apply to producing comprehensive theological philosophical works so desperately needed in a time of national and civilizational crisis.³

And, he says: "Our evangelical leaders shifted the public reception of the evangelical movement from its role as a dynamic life-growing force to a cult squabbling over inerrancy."⁴

It is equally disappointing to witness Charles Colson's endorsement of Catholicism as though it were an authentic part of the body of Christ (especially in his book, *Kingdoms in Conflict*). This kind of theological elasticity simply will not do for those who take seriously the teachings of Scripture.

Willful ignorance. Second, among these disintegrative elements would be a willful ignoring of certain "*distasteful*" elements of the "whole counsel" of God—especially, but not exclusively, those dealing with the matter of separation. The spirit of accommodation which avoids controversy at all costs over doctrinal matters is well documented in the books already mentioned above. And it was none other than Harold J. Ockenga, the "father" of Neo-evangelicalism, who, in his introduction to Harold Lindsell's book, *The Battle for the Bible*, defined Neo-evangelicalism in this way: "It differed from Fundamentalism in its repudiation of separation and its determination to engage itself in the

theological dialogue of the day." But if "dialogue" smuggles in the assumption that our original premise regarding the cardinal doctrines might be wrong, then, every sincere believer in Scripture's inerrancy and Christ's deity must reject "dialogue" in the technical sense. Too many of the "darlings" of Neo-evangelicalism have made clear their contempt for Biblical separation both by their *polemic* against it and by their *pattern* of uncritical affirmations about, and affiliations with ecumenicity.

Acquiescence to secularism. Third, among these disintegrative elements would be a tendency toward mind-worship—an *acquiescence* to *secular ideology* especially in the areas of science, philosophy and psychology. Harold Lindsell's indictment of what he calls "concessive evangelicals" in his book, *The New Paganism* makes this point very clear. He describes men who have caved-in to what he calls "the enlightenment mentality" and have embraced "redaction criticism" of the New Testament and have begun to deny the historicity of Adam and Eve and open their minds to the "mythological" character of Genesis 1-11. His chapter on "The Fall of the Church" is most helpful in this connection.

The *authentic Christian mind* will always be subject to the authority of the divine Word. It recognizes that what appears to be logical and analytical is not always theological and Biblical. It also knows that caving in to secular ideology betrays a very real form of insecurity—our hunger for human acceptance above divine approval. It has never been more important that we "bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (II Cor. 10:5).

Examining Fundamentalism

A Troubled Superstructure

There is no doubt that there are some very disintegrative elements in the superstructure of Fundamentalism.

Exaltation of polemics. First, among these would be a tendency to exalt *polemics* or *apologetics*. Simply stated this means that Fundamentalists have a reputation for being better fighters than they are builders. They sometimes find it easier to attack another's point of view than to defend their own. Caustic criticisms of perceived error (what *polemics* often degenerate to) tend to *push* the undecided over the brink toward a less Biblical position—they are almost always counter productive. Careful defenses of believed truth (what *apologetics* are intended to be) tend to *prohibit* the undecided from going over the brink—they are constructively productive.

It seems to me that we would be wise to take very seriously the Biblical standards imposed upon spiritual leadership by the apostle Paul in I Timothy 3:3. In particular, I have in mind three specific marks of a spiritual leader.

1. "No striker" (*me plekten*) -- Paul's word is derived from *plesso* which describes someone who is pugnacious and quick-tempered, someone who explodes with his fists and is anxious to exchange blows in the face of provocation. This is precisely what the godly man is *not* to do. He must not assault others and neither is he to be a "bully."

2. "Patient" (*epiekes*) -- Matthew Arnold called it "sweet reasonableness." It is the word which describes gentle mercifulness, unselfish yieldedness or patient forgiveness. It is a portrait of *tempering* justice with mercy, of *refusing* to insist upon "my rights," of *forgiving* when one has a perfect right to condemn. It is too often a rare virtue in Christian circles and if it were more often present a world of hostilities could be avoided.

3. "Not a brawler" (*amachon*) -- This is the word which means quite literally, "peaceable"⁵, "tolerant" or "disinclined to fight." Vine suggests that it means "not fighting" and "not contentious."⁶

On the surface this is puzzling. We all know that no man can embrace the Christian faith without integrating into his life a dimension of militancy. He must always be prepared to defend the faith, and the refusal to do so on some bogus ground of pacifism is the highest form of pietism. So what does Paul have in mind? He means that God's man *never* explodes with anger, is *never* offensively aggressive (trigger-happy or looking for a fight) and *never* views confrontation as the first step in resolving a problem but the last step, coming only after all other means have been exhausted.

However, when all such means have failed and the preservation of truth is at stake this "peaceable" man who is "disinclined to fight" is prepared to stand and engage in the "*good fight*," i.e., the *noble* battle which defends truth in a fallen world. To be sure he is "not a brawler," but neither is a compromiser.

There is a valuable insight in this scenario. When a violent man fights, no one really pays much attention because that is what he always does. We do not expect anything different. But when a "peaceable" man fights, there is moral weight. It gains the attention of perceptive observers

for this is "not like him." It means that the battle must be vital and is therefore worthy of our support!

Confusion of abrasiveness with boldness. Second, among the disintegrative elements of the Fundamentalist superstructure would be a tendency to confuse *brazeness* or *abrasiveness* with *boldness*. There is a perception among some that we have not spoken biblically or boldly unless we have spoken meanly or harshly, but this is clearly contradicted by Scripture. Paul in Ephesians 4:13-16 deals with the theme of the pursuit of Christian maturity. At the very heart of this emphasis we find these words: "speaking the *truth* in *love*" (4:15). One of the supreme evidences of spiritual maturity is not only the proclamation of the right message (truth), but the projection of the right mood (love). This is a very needful balance without which we shall cease to be Biblical.

"Boldness" in Scripture never means "harshness." Instead it always means possessing the courage to tell the whole truth compassionately and comprehensively. We are never at liberty to make the Gospel more "*acceptable*" by either watering it down or eliminating those elements of it which seem to be the most "*objectionable*." We must always be prepared to tell the whole story, and the courage to do that is what the Bible calls "boldness." There is nothing in it which is incompatible with "speaking the truth in love."

Confusion of tradition with Bible truths. Third, among the disintegrative elements of the Fundamentalist superstructure would be the tendency to confuse *traditional forms* with *Biblical substance*. This problem is not new. Even Jesus was made to say: "Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition" (Mark 7:7-9). There develops a rigidity when it comes to maintaining certain forms, structures or rules; a hostility to the very thought of change. We fail to see that while the *message* is inflexible, the *methodology* is not-within Biblical parameters it can change without compromise. Failure to see this means that we begin to make non-absolutes absolute, with the result that "God's commandments" are set aside and our "own tradition" prevails.

At the heart of this problem is the inability to look at life *principally* instead of *mechanically*. Biblical Fundamentalism always recognizes, for example, the priority of "principles" over "rules" in the development of the Christian life. A *rule* is a temporal regulation which changes with the evolution of culture and the passing of time. A *principle*, on the other hand, is a foundational truth which is eternal and immutable, and which transcends all cultures and all times. Rules, structures and forms will and must change-principles never can. Our task is to take the eternal principles of Scripture and apply them to the real-life situations of our

culture and times, allowing those principles to dictate the forms and structures through which we carry out our ministries and the rules and guidelines by which we live out our lives. This will provide for adaptations of our ministry to our culture without contamination of our ministry by our culture, for only the *form*, never the *substance*, will be changed.

How does mechanical thinking develop? I believe it develops through a series of five steps. First, there is "*truth*" -- the eternal utterance of God revealed in Scripture. Second, there is "*mode*" --the channel through which truth expresses itself. Third, there is "*practice*" -- structured formations of mode. Fourth, there is "*tradition*" -- the entrenchment of practice. And fifth, there is "*truth*" -- the perception by traditionalists that the tradition carries with it divine authority. Perhaps the following chart will be helpful in visualizing this development:

TRUTH →	MODE →	PRACTICE →	TRADITION →	TRUTH →
Love for the lost	Evangelistic Outreach	Structured Program	"We've always done it this way!"	"The Apostle Paul did it this way!"
The Commandment of God		The Tradition of Men		
Defending this is <i>Thinking Principally</i>		Insisting on this is <i>Thinking Mechanically</i>		
Forms and Structures are adapted to Current Needs		Forms and Structures are Elevated to a Doctrinal Level and Placed in Cement		
This is <i>God-Revealed Truth:</i> "True-Truth"		This is <i>Man-Developed Truth:</i> "Temporal Truth"		

This means that some people who are defending "man-developed truth," actually think that they are defending "God-revealed truth." The "truth" they are defending is really four steps removed from what God said. The

real tragedy is that "God's commandments" are actually frustrated while our "own traditions" prevail.

Failure to preach expositionally. Fourth, among the disintegrative elements of the Fundamentalist superstructure would be the *failure to preach expositionally* while at the same moment adhering to the *highest possible view of inspiration*. Perhaps the greatest contradiction in Fundamentalism is this dialectic of *embracing* the highest view of inspiration and practicing the *lowest* level of communication. Were Scripture only a *compilation* of human thoughts about God composed by religious men, such an approach to preaching would be pardonable. But since Scripture is a *revelation* of divine truth from God unveiled to fallible men, such an approach to preaching is unpardonable. More than ever before, we who cherish and defend the doctrine of inspiration must commit ourselves to the act of expository communication. The blessing of God is not for either the demagogue or the orator, who can sway audiences and hold them spell-bound, but the expositor, who spends his life discerning accurately and delivering passionately, relevantly and clearly the content of God's Word to his people. God's blessing rests supremely on those who take quite literally Paul's mandate: "Preach the Word."

Confusing holiness with mechanics. Fifth, among the disintegrative elements of the Fundamentalist superstructure would be the tendency to confuse *Biblical holiness* with *mechanical codes* of conduct. I do not mean to suggest that codes of conduct are wrong, only that they fall far short of producing true spirituality. It has always been true that mere outward conformity can never produce sincere inward reality.

One of the grave problems associated with a focus on externals is the development of a preoccupation with the *trivial*. And the greatest danger of concentrating on the trivial is the overlooking of the *vital* (Matt. 23:23). In the verse we have cited, Jesus indicts the Pharisees for tithing on the herbs of the kitchen garden (the trivial), while simultaneously neglecting justice, mercy, and fidelity (the vital).

To put it in modern terms a man might dress modestly, groom conservatively, give liberally, pray correctly, attend faithfully, and still be a "jerk" spiritually. Why? Because he is at the very same moment *unjust* in his business, *unmerciful* in human relationships and *unfaithful* to his oaths, pledges and promises. "There is nothing easier in all the world than to observe all the outward actions of religion and yet be completely irreligious in the critical matters of life." So while we are holding on to high personal standards which are based on holy Biblical principles, we must never confuse Biblical holiness with mechanical codes of conduct.

Failure to simultaneously express holiness and love. Sixth, among the disintegrative elements of the Fundamentalist superstructure would be our *failure to simultaneously express holiness and love*. If ever there were a balance desperately needed within our ranks this is it. Somehow we need to develop the skill of expressing compassion without giving way to compromise. This is not easy. That is why we avoid it. It is much easier to opt for one or the other (holiness or love rather than holiness *and* love). But this unbiblical imbalance has been destructive to Christian ministry. Neo-evangelicals have opted for *unholy love*, and some *Fundamentalists* have opted for *unloving holiness*. But neither of these options will do. The imbalance in Neo-evangelicalism has tended to produce "*sloppy agape*," while the imbalance in Fundamentalism has tended to produce "*high-minded holiness*." Both are distortions of the image of God in which we are made and of which we are to be reflectors.

So then, God is our example for He is both holy and love; He is both the Judge who must penalize sin and the Lover who wishes to pardon sinners. In the great book, *The Cross of Christ*, there is a powerful insight regarding this so-called "strife of attributes."

This vision of God's holy love will deliver us from caricatures of Him. We must picture Him neither as an indulgent God who compromises His holiness in order to spare and spoil us, nor as a harsh vindictive God who suppresses His love in order to crush and destroy us. How then can God express His holiness without consuming us, and His love without condoning our sins? How can God satisfy His holy love? How can He save us and satisfy *Himself* simultaneously? We reply . . . in order to satisfy Himself, He sacrificed—indeed substituted—Himself for us.⁷

This can only mean that in our personal lives and ministries failure to express holiness and love simultaneously will turn us into *eccentric caricatures* instead of *authentic pictures* of the Christ we represent. And this can only mean that in order to express holiness and love simultaneously we shall have to do so sacrificially (even as God in Christ sacrificed Himself). Both harshness (unloving holiness) and softness (unholy love) will have to go, and for all of us this will require sacrifice. It is perhaps for this reason that so few Christians make the dedicated investment which is necessary to maintain this delicate balance of holiness and love simultaneously expressed in their lives. But without such an investment we can never be the authentic Christians we are called to be, nor can we have the authentic ministries we are called to have.

Tendency to be affirmational without being exegetical. Seventh, among the disintegrative elements of the Fundamentalist superstructure is the tendency to be *affirmational* without first being *exegetical*. It is sometimes true that we talk before we think. On occasion there have been those among us who have blurted out their demands without feeling the necessity to justify them. Only God has such a right. All the rest of us are obligated to explain "why." And if we do not, before long human affirmations begin to eclipse divine affirmations so that men end up speaking with the same authority as God. To be sure, it is not intrinsically wrong to be affirmational. No true Fundamentalist is timid about affirming his beliefs, but he is always certain that before he opens his *mouth* to the world in public he has opening his *mind* to the Word in private. He is prepared to endure the tedium of careful exegesis and diligent study so that he can speak with authority out of God's Word. As a matter of fact, our loyalty to Scripture demands that we defer to it by changing our minds if we judge that our previous affirmations have not been exegetically sound or precisely accurate. And once we have done so, then we must be prepared to courageously affirm our thoroughly Biblical views.

Condoning sins of the flesh and overlooking sins of the spirit. Eighth, among the disintegrative elements of the Fundamentalist superstructure would be the tendency to *condemn sins* of the flesh while *overlooking sins* of the spirit. But Scripture will not allow for this unwarranted dichotomy: "Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the *flesh and spirit*, perfecting holiness in the fear of God" (II Cor. 7:1). Sins of the "flesh" are *overt*, like David's sin with Bathsheba out of motivations of lust; sins of the "spirit" are *covert* like David's sin of numbering the people (I Chron. 21) out of motivations of pride. As someone has suggested, there are both prodigal sons (flesh) and elder brothers (spirit). The prodigal son wasted his life groveling in the world; the elder brother wasted his life grumbling at home.

Our failure has been in refusing to see that sins of the spirit are just as destructive to God's work as sins of the flesh. While we have taken strong stands against gross immorality, we have actually engaged in the "finer sins" of Jesuit ethics, power-politics, prideful boasting, malicious gossip and diabolical slander. Sometimes we have actually employed those tactics in the "defense of the faith." But such carnal weaponry will no longer do (II Cor. 10:3-5). It will do neither us nor the cause of Christ any good to feign the defense of Biblicism while we are at the same moment denying the Bible (by violating its ethical principles). We must renew our

commitment to the utilization of God's divine weaponry and our loyalty to transparent Biblical ethics in all that we do.

Failure to apply truth to cultural issues. Ninth, among the disintegrative elements of the Fundamentalist superstructure would be the tendency to *limit* the application of Christian truth to *personal life-styles* while failing to see its application to the *great cultural issues* of the day. In this point I find myself agreeing with one of Charles Colson's statements.

History is but "the visible effects of invisible changes in human thought." Ideas affect history a great deal more than armies. That is why we need to bring the Christian message into the marketplace of ideas. How well we permeate our national consciousness with Christian truth will determine the values our culture lives by.⁸

There are occasions when we will have to turn our attention away from such things as hem lines and hair lengths (and there is a place for dealing with such matters) and focus on such issues as encroaching secularism, avaricious materialism, pervasive evolutionism and defiant feminism. God's Word speaks profoundly to all of these issues, and there is no doubt that each one of them has made a radical impact on the values of our culture, and in some cases on the values embraced by our own people. They are wanting to know: "Is there any word from God?" on such matters.

The Christian mind is firmly anchored to four unchangeable truths, four great realities, which are found in God's Word and which enable it to think straightly in the midst of incredible complexity. This is an advantage which no other religionist or philosopher possesses, and Christians would be foolish not to capitalize upon it. One author has given a powerful word regarding these four unchangeable truths which help us to think straight about our culture.

Here, then, are four events which correspond to four realities—first the Creation ("the good"), secondly the Fall ("the evil"), thirdly the Redemption ("the new"), and fourthly the Consummation ("the perfect"). This fourfold Biblical reality enables Christians to survey the historical landscape within its proper horizons. It supplies the true perspective from which to view the unfolding process between two eternities, the vision of God working out His purpose. It gives us a framework in which to fit everything, a way of integrating our

understanding, the possibility of thinking straight, even about the most complex issues.⁹

So then, only Christians, who look at life through the lens of these four realities, can understand realistically what is happening in their culture and prescribe meaningfully the solutions to the complexities which we face. If it is true that, "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people" (Prov. 14:34), then God's righteous people must confront the sin which is all around them with His unchangeable and powerful truth.

For my part, I believe this should be done not through socio-political activism, but through a dynamic network of independent, Fundamental local churches. I believe we have vastly underestimated the power of a Spirit-controlled, God-honoring expositor of Scripture. We need prophetic voices thundering out from Fundamentalist pulpits the eternal principles of the divine Word which will both touch and transform not only our individual lives but our cultural ills. When this kind of *pungent salt* is rubbed into the cultural decadence and this kind of *brilliant light* penetrates into the cultural darkness, we can be sure that lasting individual and cultural impacts will be made.

Gauging spiritual growth with mechanical measuring devices. Tenth, among the disintegrative elements of the Fundamentalist superstructure would be our failure to recognize that *invisible spiritual growth* cannot be gauged by *mechanical measuring devices*. For more than a quarter of a century we have labored under the false assumption that bigness equals greatness and that success can be measured numerically. In many cases the result has been the development of philosophy of ministry which revolves around a celebrity focus (a star of the show who attracts the crowd) who functions as a corporation executive manipulating and then discarding his people in his relentless advance toward statistical superiority. All too often evangelism in this context has been reduced to humanism as the Spirit and the Word are set aside while the Gospel is "packaged" and "marketed" almost as though it were a plastic toy.

The passing of time, however, has revealed that *artificial methodology* can never produce *authentic ministry*. Churches, and in some cases whole movements, have begun to cave-in and collapse. Such abuse of God's offices and God's people has produced a "waste land," a "desert of the spirit," as a result of which many souls, who were once aflame with joyful enthusiasm, have now been reduced to dead ashes. Both pastors and people have become eviscerated, emptied, and "burned out."

Quite frankly, I believe that we have gotten the "cart before the horse."

Emaciated women cannot give birth to nor nurture healthy children. Neither can emaciated Christians. Perhaps we would be wiser to affirm that the marks of a mature church are faith, hope, and love (I Cor. 13:13; Eph. 1:15, 16, 18; Col. 1:3-6; I Thess. 1:2, 3; II Thess. 1:3, 4), and that whatever else we judge to be a sign of maturity or success, all else is meaningless apart from these more fundamental and Scriptural indicators. Perhaps it would be more Biblically accurate when computing statistics to list how many *husbands* are lovingly leading their families, how many *wives* are humbly following their husbands and how many *children* are cheerfully obeying their parents. Faith, hope, love-authentic husbands, wives and children-these are the measuring devices by which we should be gauging the "success" of our ministries. And when such qualities become a reality in our churches, genuine growth will follow quite naturally. It may take a good long while before many of us will be able to root out of our own thinking these false systems of computing "success," but it is an effort we must all make, if we ever hope to return to authentic New Testament Christianity.

A Sure Foundation

There is no doubt that Fundamentalism has been built on solid and significant pillars. For our purposes here I will only list them as I see them:

1. **Bibliology** -- The Inspiration and Inerrancy of Scripture.
2. **Theology Proper** -- The Eternality, Personality, Purity, Potency, and Proximity of God.
3. **Christology** -- The Deity, Incarnation, Resurrection, and Return of the Son.
4. **Pneumatology** -- The Deity, Personality, Presence, and Power of the Holy Spirit.
5. **Soteriology** -- God's grace its Fount, Christ's Death its Ground, Man's faith its Demand, and a Life of Holy-love its Fruit.
6. **Ecclesiology** -- The Uniqueness of Christ's Body; the Primacy of the Local Church.
7. **Anthropology** -- Man a Creature of God; Man an Image-bearer of God; Man, Fallen, but Redeemable.
8. **Cosmology** -- God by direct fiat created the material and spiritual universe-The world of physics and the realm of angels.

Conclusion

So what are we going to do in view of what we now know? It is true that *Neo-evangelicalism* possess a significant superstructure, but it is equally true that she possesses a troubled (in some ways even crumbling) foundation. It is true that *Fundamentalism* possesses a troubled superstructure (we have sought to be transparently honest about this), but it is equally true that she possesses a sure foundation. Which, then, of these two options shall we choose? In my mind there is a sense in which we have no choice at all, because the choice has already been made for us by our Lord Jesus Christ. He has already told us that whoever builds upon sand will fall, and great will be his fall; and whoever builds upon the rock will not fall for he is "*founded upon a rock*" (Matt. 7:24-27). It remains only for us to obey.

And this is not a counsel of despair because we are not "saddled" with the disintegrative elements of our superstructure. It is possible for those in the emerging generation of Fundamentalists to take the necessary Biblical steps to turn to authentic Fundamentalism. Those who are prepared to make the sacrificial commitment which is necessary to see this happen can expect glory to God, good to others, and fulfillment to themselves.

¹ David O'Beale, *In Pursuit of Purity* (Greenville, SC: Unusual Publications, 1986) 4 quoting Kirsopp Lake, *The Religion of Yesterday and Tomorrow* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1925) 61-62.

² John Stott, *Between Two Worlds* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1982) 125, 126.

³ Carl F.H. Henry, *Evangelicals in Search of Identity* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1976) 67.

⁴ Carl F.H. Henry, *The Bible in the Balance* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1979) 32.

⁵ William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press) 44.

⁶ W.E. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company) 146.

⁷ John R.W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1986) 132.

⁸ Charles Colson, *Who Speaks for God? Confronting the World with Real Christianity* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1985) 87-88.

⁹ John R. W. Stott, *Involvement: Being a Responsible Christian in a Non-Christian Society* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1985) 1:61.