

FUNDAMENTAL BAPTISTS



HISTORY



COLLAPSE



REVIVAL

DAVID W. CLOUD

Fundamental Baptists: History, Collapse, Revival

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Introduction

Fundamental Baptists: History, Collapse, and Revival is what I would like to say to every fundamental Baptist church if I had the opportunity.

This book is the product of more than a half century of personal experience and discussions with a great many preachers in many parts of the world.

Let me say at the outset, please test me by the Bible! I exhort you to “prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Th. 5:21). I’m just a man. I know I’m not infallible. I am not a prophet or an apostle, I’m a simple Bible teacher. But please don’t test me by anything *other than* the Bible. In my experience, fundamental Baptists tend to be as tradition-bound as Episcopalians, even while claiming to be staunch, unflinching Bible believers!

I was saved by God’s amazing and most wonderful grace in Jesus Christ in the summer of 1973 at age 23. A few weeks after I was converted, I joined a good fundamental Baptist church and I’ve been a member of and a minister in fundamental Baptist churches ever since. I graduated from Tennessee Temple in its heyday in the mid-1970s. At Highland Park I heard many of the most prominent fundamentalist and fundamental Baptist preachers, such as John R. Rice, Lee Roberson, Harold B. Sightler, Oliver B. Greene, B.R. Lakin, Tom Malone, Curtis Hutson, Lester Roloff, R.G. Lee (“Payday Someday”), S.M. Lockeridge (“That’s My King”), Fred Brown, Bill Rice, Ian Paisley, Monroe Parker, J.B. Buffington, Raymond Hancock, and Tom Wallace. I preached my first sermon in 1973 at Pinecrest Baptist Church, Signal Mountain, Tennessee, and pastored one of Highland Park’s chapels in 1975-77. I founded *Way of Life Literature* in 1977 and *O Timothy* magazine in 1984. In 1993, we published the first edition of the *Way of Life Encyclopedia of the Bible and Christianity*. My wife, Linda, was saved as a teenager in Alaska and attended Tennessee Temple from 1968-1971, then took nurses training to prepare for missionary service. We were engaged when she was on the mission field and

were married in 1976 at Lakewood Baptist Church, Harrison, Tennessee, Dr. Bruce Lackey officiating. Since 1979 we've spent about 35 years as missionary church planters. I've had the privilege of traveling to every state in America, across Canada, and to many other parts of the world in a Bible conference ministry and communicating in person and by letter, email, and texts with thousands of God's servants.

Again, I don't give this information to puff myself up. All glory belongs to Jesus Christ. I consider myself a zero with the rim rubbed out without the Lord. On my best day, I am an unprofitable servant (Lu. 17:10). I only give this information so the reader can know something of my experience with fundamental Baptists and with the topics covered in this book.

In 52 years of Christian living and ministry, I've seen great changes. When I joined a fundamental Baptist church in 1973, *generally speaking*, I found fundamental Baptists to be more biblical, stronger spiritually, and more zealous than the Southern Baptist churches I grew up in. Fundamental Baptists tended to practice biblical separation from the world and a pilgrim lifestyle, which I had never seen in a denominational Baptist church. There was a great zeal for evangelism and church planting and world missions. There was ecclesiastical separation. There was a strong desire to build biblical homes and raise a godly seed for Christ. There was a strong emphasis on the imminent return of Christ. None of these are small things. To give any of them up is to give up biblical Christianity. That many of these things are widely despised in evangelicalism is clear evidence of its apostasy.

(At the same time, there were, in my estimation, weaknesses and errors promulgated by prominent preachers, as we will consider in the chapter on "The History.")

Fundamental Baptists are the last remnant of the old Fundamentalist movement of the turn of the 20th century. The vast part of Fundamentalism, including northern fundamental Baptists, capitulated to New Evangelicalism between the 1940s and 1970s and is dead, having merged into a bland

evangelicalism without clear boundaries or having turned completely liberal or ceased to exist.

Now we are witnessing a great collapse among fundamental Baptists. It goes hand-in-hand with the final apostasy of Christianity preceding the Rapture and the Day of the Lord that was prophesied by Christ and the apostles.

Consider the parables of the mystery of the kingdom in Matthew 13 in which Christ described the church age. The emphasis is on increasing apostasy in "Christianity." The Parable of the Sower describes the devil's active corruption of the seed sowing ministry. "When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth *it* not, then cometh the wicked *one*, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side" (Mt. 13:18-23). The Parable of the Weeds describes the devil sowing false Christians and false churches in the midst of the true. "The kingdom of heaven is likened unto a man which sowed good seed in his field: But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way" (Mt. 13:24-30). The Parable of the Leaven tells us that the false will increase until the end of the age. It describes a woman introducing leaven (signifying error) into the lump of Christianity and it spreads "till the whole was leavened" (Mt. 13:33).

Consider 2 Timothy 3:1 - 4:4, the chief passage on the doctrine of apostasy. By the express voice of the Spirit of God Paul prophesies the course of the church age as the spread of error and false Christianity.

"Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (2 Ti. 3:5).

"But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived" (2 Ti. 3:13).

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Ti. 4:3-4).

In the latter passage, apostate Christianity is characterized by the rejection of sound doctrine, living after their lusts, turning to fables, and teachers who scratch itching ears by teaching what the people want to hear, by giving people the type of Christianity they want.

See also Ac. 20:28-31; 2 Pe. 2:1-22; 3:3-12; 1 Jo. 2:18; 2 Jo. 1:7-11; Jude 1:3-16.

These prophecies have been fulfilled. There were many false teachers even in the days of the apostles. Many of the New Testament epistles were written to protect the churches from this onslaught. The early centuries after the apostles were characterized by a plague of heresies pertaining to the person of Christ and the rise of a multiplicity of other errors including territorial bishops, baptismal regeneration, infant baptism, sacerdotalism, sacramentalism, monasticism, and veneration of Mary. False churches increased by the thousands. The apostasy created the Roman Catholic Church and Eastern Orthodoxy. The 19th century witnessed an explosion of apostasy in the form of theological liberalism, unitarianism, Darwinian evolution, modern textual criticism, Tractarianism, Christian cults (e.g., Jehovah's Witness, Seventh-day Adventism, Mormonism, Christian Science, Rosecrucianism), and Freudian psychology. The explosion of apostasy has continued through the 20th century and into the 21st, with the addition of the World Council of Churches, the Jesus People, Christian rock, New Evangelicalism, Evangelicals and Catholics together, the new Reformed, the Emerging Church, contemplative prayer, etc.

What does this mean? From Bible prophecy, we can expect today to find few sound churches and few sound Bible teaching ministries, and that is exactly what we find. Twenty-first century Christianity is largely false Christianity.

The revival and victory in the midst of this apostasy is not to hold to the old paths of traditional fundamental Baptist polity and principles; the revival is to go back to the Bible itself and build thorough-going New Testament churches, rejecting anything that is contrary to Scripture, adding anything scriptural that is missing,

and strengthening every good thing with the biblical goal of perfection. This is God's express will. This is what we are aiming for in our personal ministry and we are seeing the blessing of God and good fruit, and this is what we are exhorting our fellow preachers to do.

History

Fundamental Baptists have deep roots in the Fundamentalist movement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Fundamentalists renounced theological liberalism and came out of compromised denominations. Though Fundamentalism was interdenominational (e.g., an emphasis on the “fundamental” doctrines held in unity by the Baptist and Protestant denominations, “in essentials unity, in non-essentials liberty”), there was a strong and unique Baptist side that eventually went its own way as the fundamental Baptist (independent Baptist) movement. In fact, by the 1980s, Fundamentalism had largely been subsumed into fundamental Baptists. There were a few fundamentalist Presbyterians, Methodists, Brethren, and Bible churches left, but the vast bulk of churches that still had fundamentalist character were fundamental Baptist. Even the remaining fundamentalist institutions that began as non-denominational, or interdenominational, such as Bob Jones University (founded by a Methodist evangelist), had gravitated largely to fundamental Baptists.

Overview

Fundamental independent Baptist is not a homogenous movement. It is not a denomination. It has no headquarters.

“Fundamental independent Baptist” is simply a general descriptive term. It refers to churches that are Baptist in doctrine (not Protestant), independent in polity (as opposed to denominational Baptists such as American Baptist and Southern Baptist), and fundamentalist in the stance of separatism and contending for the faith.

Prior to the collapse of recent decades, most fundamental Baptists were separatistic and conservative in issues such as dress and music, committed to the King James Bible and its underlying Greek and Hebrew texts, enemies of theological liberalism, and aggressively evangelistic and missionary oriented.

Fundamental Baptists are more than Fundamentalists. Indeed, we do not agree with such things as interdenominationalism, Protestantism, associationalism, and parachurchism, but we don't have a knee-jerk reaction against the term "fundamentalist." When we speak of "fundamental Baptists," we are not speaking of Fundamentalism as a movement. We are speaking of fundamentalism in the sense of an unequivocal stand for the truth of God's Word, a "militancy" for the truth, and obedience to biblical separation.

Fundamental Baptists came out of the Baptist denominations.

- There have always been some Baptist churches that were not a part of a denomination or association, but independent fundamental Baptists largely came out of the Baptist denominations as a protest against theological liberalism.

- In the North, fundamental Baptists came out of the American Baptist Convention. William Bell (W.B.) Riley (1861-1947), pastor of First Baptist Church of Minneapolis, Minnesota, was the most prominent leader of fundamental Baptists in the North. He was a co-founder of the World's Christian Fundamentals Association in 1919, the Fundamentalist Fellowship in 1920, and the Baptist Bible Union in 1923. The Fundamentalist Fellowship morphed into the Conservative Baptist Fellowship (CBF) in 1946 and the Conservative Baptist Association of America in 1947. In 1902, Riley founded the hugely influential Northwestern Bible and Missionary Training School.

- In the South, most of the first fundamental Baptists came out of the Southern Baptist Convention. The most influential leaders were J. Frank Norris, pastor of First Baptist Church, Dallas, Texas; John R. Rice, evangelist, pastor, and head of *The Sword of the Lord*; Bob Jones, founder of Bob Jones University; Lee Roberson, pastor of Highland Park Baptist Church, Chattanooga, Tennessee, and co-founder of Baptist International Missions Inc. (BIMI) and Southwide Baptist Fellowship; and Jack Hyles, pastor of First Baptist Church, Hammond, Indiana. Southern fundamental Baptists are not limited to the region of the South in the United States; they exist nationwide.

The fundamental Baptist movement is large. There are thousands of independent Baptist churches. There are more in North America than anywhere else, but they are located throughout the world. There is no way to know how many fundamental Baptist churches exist, because they have no headquarters and no centralized statistics are kept. In the 1970s, the number of fundamental Baptist churches was estimated to be about 10,000.

There have always been differences among fundamental Baptists in such matters as standards of membership, alien immersion, the practice of communion, the use of mission boards, music, dress standards, repentance, election, and evangelistic practices. There is variety among independent Baptists pertaining to the definition of “church” and “Baptist.”

There are major “circles” of fundamental Baptists, but there is a great amount of overlap. There are no real boundaries between fundamental Baptists except for the convictions and principles of individual pastors and whatever boundaries the individual churches maintain. I would list major fundamental Baptist circles as follows: the Sword of the Lord circle (the largest), the Hyles circle (those who follow the late Jack Hyles), the camp meeting/Southern Gospel circle, the Baptist Bible Fellowship circle (BBF), and the Landmarker circle (local church only, Baptist bride). There are also circles composed of graduates of the large schools, such as Tennessee Temple, Bob Jones University, Hyles Anderson, West Coast, and Crown. We would again emphasize that these are broad categories and there is a great amount of overlap.

The Good

In their heyday, generally speaking, there were many very good things among fundamental Baptists, especially the biblically stronger ones, such as the following:

- Fundamental Baptists had a zeal for Christ, truth, and holiness. They believed every jot and tittle of Scripture to be the infallible Word of God, and they preached against any deviation. That is what set fundamental Baptists apart from Southern Baptists. It is one thing to believe the truth and it is entirely another thing to

have a real passion for it and to be willing to fight for it and to separate from that which is contrary to it. That is the spirit we see in Psalm 119:128: “Therefore I esteem all *thy* precepts concerning all *things to be* right; and I hate every false way.” Not only did the psalmist esteem ALL of God’s Word to be right, he HATED EVERY false way. That is the Acts 20:27-28/Jude 1:3 edition of Christianity. For example, John R. Rice’s *The Sword of the Lord* was not passive and positive-only. The very name “*The Sword of the Lord*” stated this. The masthead announced that the *Sword* “Opposes Modernism, Worldliness and Formalism.” These are things that have tended to characterize the stronger fundamental Baptist churches, and they are truly “fundamental” things. Further, they are exceedingly *rare*. In a day when modernism and worldliness and formalism and ecumenicalism captured Christianity at large, fundamental Baptists stood against them.

- Fundamental Baptists were aggressive for evangelism and world missions. Consider Highland Park Baptist Church, Chattanooga, Tennessee. It was “the Church of the Green Light.” This was based on the GO of Mark 16:15. A large replica of a traffic signal with the green “go” lamp lit was installed near the church auditorium, and this sign was printed on the church stationary. Lee Roberson said, “In my first year at the Highland Park Baptist Church [1942], we had one missionary. ... As we kept on preaching the Gospel at home, we were driven to a deeper concern for the rest of the world. So we began putting on missionaries with support of them through the regular offerings of the church and by special offerings on Sunday evening and Wednesday evening. We saw scores of our young people volunteer for missionary work. During my fortieth year at Highland Park [1982], we were giving support to 565 missionaries in all parts of the world. Fifty percent of the church’s offerings went to home and foreign missions. Every need of the church was met, and every building was paid for.” The church’s paper, *The Evangelist*, had a circulation of 75,000. The daily radio broadcast, *Gospel Dynamite*, was heard in many states. The church’s radio station, WDDN, broadcast gospel and

courageous stand for truth in the midst of end-time apostasy. I have greatly benefited from these things.

Having grown up in Southern Baptist churches that were lackadaisical about the truth and spiritually lukewarm, I was excited in the 1970s to find churches that had some genuine biblical zeal and a pilgrim mindset and lifestyle.

In the 1970s, while a student at Tennessee Temple, I met with the pastor of my mother's Southern Baptist congregation. His spiritual blindness and compromise were on full display. When I tried to challenge him about the theological liberalism in his denomination, he told me that I was deceived by John R. Rice and there was "no liberalism" in the Convention. He also told me that he was a married man when God called him to preach and the Southern Baptist Convention had taken care of him with theological education, recommendations to churches, salary, medical insurance, and retirement benefits. He was a deceived man who gave glory to a denomination rather than to God. I was reminded why I never went back to the SBC after I was converted.

Problems and Weaknesses

At the same time, there were weaknesses and errors in fundamental Baptists in general.

We know there has never been perfection in churches, not even in the first ones, but that is no excuse to ignore error. There were plenty of errors in the church at Corinth, but Paul did not accept the errors as status quo. He sought to correct them in strongly-worded epistles and personal ministry.

"What will ye? shall I come unto you with a rod, or in love, and *in* the spirit of meekness?" (1 Co. 4:21).

"I told you before, and foretell you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare" (2 Co. 13:2).

“Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction” (2 Co. 13:10).

We need to have the same zeal for the purity of the churches today.

A major error that has characterized a large percentage of fundamental Baptists is **Quick Prayerism**. This is an evangelistic methodology that is quick to lead individuals in a sinner’s prayer and quick to declare them saved and give them assurance, even when there is no biblical evidence of regeneration. It is a gospel presentation that emphasizes salvation as a ticket to heaven through a prayer. Repentance is missing or redefined as turning from unbelief to belief. It is characterized by inflated salvation statistics, with only a small portion of the “salvations” showing biblical evidence. It is a damnable practice, giving people a false hope of salvation (the individual who prays is given “assurance” by the soul winner), confusing salvation in the minds of multitudes, and degrading the character of churches that practice it. The whole region around Chattanooga, Tennessee, in the 1970s was filled with people who had prayed a sinner’s prayer and had even been baptized at Highland Park as empty rituals. The same was true in the whole region of Hammond, Indiana, and in every other place where aggressive Quick Prayerism churches have existed. Witnessing the bitter fruit of Quick Prayerism motivated me to write *Does Salvation Make a Difference?* in 1981. (It is available as a free eBook from www.wayoflife.org.)

We deal with Quick Prayerism in the chapter “Revival - Major Elements to Emphasize.”

Closely associated with Quick Prayerism is **the church as a mixed multitude rather than the church as a regenerate membership**. A church that is not careful enough in receiving members is a mixed multitude of regenerate and unregenerate members. This is no small error, for it is not the “spiritual house made of living stones church” that we see in Scripture (1 Pe. 2:5). It is impossible to have a “first love church” if many of the members have no personal experience with first love (Re. 2:4-5). It is impossible to disciple

Collapse

We are witnessing a wholesale collapse of fundamentalist and fundamental Baptist churches. We have documented this extensively in *The History and Heritage of Fundamentalism and Fundamental Baptists*.

The softness and compromise is spreading everywhere and the only churches and missionary works that are standing firm are those that are properly educated and are not idolatrously committed to some empire builder. If a church is standing right, it is doing so on purpose under godly, brave leadership. The weight of opinion among fundamental Baptists has already swung decisively against the spirit of Psalm 119:128--“Therefore I esteem all thy precepts concerning all things to be right; and I hate every false way.” Godly “hating” of error is not welcome. It is maligned. It is mischaracterized as “shooting the wounded” and other such nonsense. This has long been the climate within the Southern Baptist Convention, and fundamental Baptists in general are rapidly moving in exactly the same direction. Most fundamental Baptist churches are no different in separatist character from the Southern Baptist churches I grew up in. Like Sardis, they might have a name that they live, but they are dead (Re. 3:1).

Following are some highlights of the collapse:

The Collapse of Fundamentalism and Northern Baptists

The most prominent leader was **William B. Riley**, pastor of First Baptist Church, Minneapolis, Minnesota, from 1897 to 1942. He was a warrior for Christ and truth. He fought against theological liberalism, evolution, unitarianism,

humanism, spiritualism, Catholicism, socialism, the liquor trade, and worldliness. Beginning in 1909, Riley conducted a national campaign against evolution. His books included *The Menace of Modernism*, the first book-length exposé on liberalism. A major goal was to “make First Baptist a center of evangelism” (William Trollinger, Jr., *God’s Empire: William Bell Riley and Midwestern Fundamentalism*). There was also an emphasis on strong Bible preaching. He preached through the whole Bible on Sunday mornings for ten years. On Sunday nights Riley established what he termed “permanent revivals.” “Throughout the year there were weeks of revival meetings and Bible conferences, conducted by visiting [speakers].

Riley’s greatest influence was through Bible education and church planting. He founded *The Northwestern Bible and Missionary Training School*. In its heyday there were 800 full-time students and 1,000 attending evening classes. It was pre-millennial and pre-tribulational. It renounced every form of liberalism. It was outspoken; there were warnings. There was separation. It had aggressive evangelism. Students ministered in jails, hospitals, nursing homes, orphanages, rescue missions, street meetings. They traveled in evangelistic/singing teams. There was a Daily Flying Squadron that was prepared to answer emergency calls from churches for ministry help, such as a fill-in preacher, teacher, or a singing group. Each summer, hundreds of students conducted Vacation Bible Schools in churches in Minnesota, the Dakotas, Montana, Nebraska, Iowa, and Wisconsin. In 1932, for example, 150 students held 204 VBS programs in nine states, with 8,200 children and youth enrolled. That summer, Northwestern students held 301 evangelistic meetings. One promotion was a Gospel Patrol Car, shaped like a small church, complete with steeple, that was driven to towns and set up in prominent places to draw a crowd to

which Northwestern students would sing and preach. Northwestern students and graduates preached to lumbermen, miners, and Native American Indians in northern Minnesota through the Northern Gospel Mission. Northwestern graduates tended to be hard workers, something that was emphasized in their training. They had multiple services on Sundays; they had midweek services. They had Bible conferences, hosted traveling missionaries, and started new churches in neighboring towns. It has been estimated that over 200 churches were founded during the first 50 years of the ministry of First Baptist, Minneapolis.

It's all gone. The school closed. Most of the churches closed, and the remainder are either New Evangelical or totally liberal. Today First Baptist Church of Minneapolis is River City Church and has no statement on the imminent return of Christ, no statement on baptism by immersion, no statement of eternal hell fire, nothing about repentance, nothing about biblical separation. The preamble to the church's statement of faith says, "You are welcome to worship with us, no matter where you may agree or disagree with our Statement of Faith." The church claims to have a "missional mandate" to transform society.

Consider Trinitarian Congregational Church of East Northfield, Massachusetts, which was made famous by the preaching of D.L. Moody and was pastored by C.I. Scofield from 1895 to 1902. In the 1940s and 1950s, the church rejected fundamentalism for the New Evangelicalism. In 1961, it joined the ultra-liberal United Church of Christ (UCC), which is a member of the World Council of Churches which opens its general assemblies with pagan spirit worship and features readings from pagan scriptures such as Hindu and Buddhist. (For documentation see the free eBook *The World Council of Churches*, www.wayoflife.org.) In 2018, Trinitarian voted unanimously to become an "Open and

Revival: The New Testament Church

Revival and victory in the midst of collapse is to build thorough-going New Testament churches. There is victory for those churches that go back to the Bible alone for the pattern of the church, that stop following independent Baptist tradition, and that stop capitulating to American culture, which Baptist churches generally have done since the turn of 20th century.

We have no fear of testing any fundamental Baptist church with Scripture, for that is surely how they will be tested in the presence of Jesus Christ, the church's one Head, Lord, and Great Shepherd. Pastors have real authority, but they are not lords and they are not to be followed blindly. We have a great respect for God-called, biblically-qualified men of God. We want to give men the honor and obedience due them by God's Word (e.g., Ro. 13:7; 1 Th. 5:12-13; 1 Ti. 5:17-20; Heb. 13:7, 17; 1 Pe. 5:1-4), but we don't want to fear man and follow man rather than Scripture. At the judgment seat of Christ we will not be sad if we rejected every human tradition that is contrary to Scripture and added every principal and practice demanded by Scripture. We will be glad if we did not follow some "good old boys" network rather than God's Word. We will be glad insofar as we have stood for God's Word and God's Word alone, regardless of the reproach that we might endure in this present brief life. We will be glad if we have to be in the extreme minority for truth's sake like Jeremiah.

Revival and victory in the New Testament church is a never-ending job and it is a difficult job, but it is the most glorious and rewarding job on earth.

Christ wonderfully promised to be with those churches that obey His Great Commission to the end of the age ("and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world," Mt. 28:20). "World" is *aion*, referring to an age in which God is working out His eternal plans. The Bible speaks of *aions* past (Col. 1:26), the present *aion* (2 Ti. 4:10; Tit. 2:12), and *aions* to come (Eph. 1:21; 2:7). The "end of the world" refers to the end of the church age. This means that even

in the darkest days prior to the Rapture, God's redeemed people who rise up to labor in preaching the gospel and building New Testament churches have Christ's presence and leadership. Christ is just as zealous for the work of the harvest as He has ever been. His redeemed people at the end of the age have everything the early saints had, except the apostles and apostolic sign gifts, which we don't need because we have the complete canon of Scripture. We have the Bible; we have the Holy Spirit; we have Christ as High Priest; we have the Father's blessing; we have the example of the first churches; we have spiritual gifts and callings.

The promise of Christ and the blessing of Christ is not for churches that follow man and man's tradition, but for churches that follow the Word of God.

Strong New Testament churches is what America needs above all. It is what every nation needs. It is what every community needs. The true New Testament church has everything people need. It is the house of God, the pillar and ground of the truth, the headquarters for Christ's Great Commission. It has the knowledge of the true God, the gospel of eternal salvation, instruction in properly interpreting the Bible, spiritual and doctrinal protection. instruction for right Christian living in God's will, instruction in building strong homes. The urgent need is not for parachurch ministries. All of them are broad-tent ministries, and regardless of what good they are doing, ultimately they are building the one-world "church" because of their lack of biblical boundaries.

We talk about revival, but what does revival look like?

True revival is not powered by contemporary Christian music which is conformed to the world; it's not ecumenical; it's not unity in diversity; it's not a heretical view of John 17; it's not mysticism and emotionalism; it's not immodest; it doesn't overlook error, such as theistic evolution and female preachers; it doesn't embrace heretics such as Augustine and C.S. Lewis; it rejects apostate Christianity such as Roman Catholicism unequivocally and forthrightly.

Biblical revival takes the form of true New Testament churches. It happens anytime God's redeemed people dedicate themselves to building thorough-going New Testament churches.

This section of *Fundamental Baptists: History, Collapse, Hope* consists of expository studies on key Bible passages that provide the pattern for the church for the entire age.

As noted earlier, the pattern is not found in the church fathers, the Waldenses, the Lollards, the Anabaptists, the Protestants, the Reformed Calvinists, the Brethren, Pentecostalism, Charismaticism, Fundamentalism, Evangelicalism, New Reformed Calvinism, denominational Baptists, or any of the circles of independent Baptists.

Every generation must go back to the very touchstone, the very true north, the perfect measure, which is the New Testament itself. If a jet plane heads across the Atlantic Ocean from London, England, flying west to Miami, a distance of 4,424 miles, and if it is off course by just one degree, it will miss Miami by 77 miles. If it continues flying west around the world, staying a mere one degree off course, it will miss London by 430 miles. If the Apollo 11 spacecraft had been off course by just one degree, Neil Armstrong and his fellow astronauts would have missed the moon by 4,169 miles.

In the following beautiful passages, the New Testament church is summarized in various ways:

Acts 2:36-42 - A Regenerate, Faithful, Growing Church

Ephesians 4:11-16 - A Ministering Body Church

1 Corinthians 5:6-8 - A Purging Church

Colossians 1:24-29 - A Church That Is Perfecting Every Member

1 Peter 2:1-5 - A Spiritual House Made of Living Stones

1 Thessalonians 1:1-10 - A Turning, Serving, Watching Church

1 Timothy 3:15 - The House of God, the Pillar and Ground of the Truth

Acts 13:1-4 - An Antioch Missionary Church

Revelation 2-3 - A Christ-Owned Church

Acts 2:36-42 - A Regenerate, Faithful, Growing Church

“Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard *this*, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men *and* brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, *even* as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added *unto them* about three thousand souls. And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:36-42).

This is the first church, and though there were transitional characteristics that are not patterns today (e.g., apostles, apostolic signs, communalism), the following characteristics should mark every New Testament church.

Acts 2:41-42 is the *image* of a New Testament church. And it is the *test* of a New Testament church.

An Acts 2:41-42 church is not a church without sin and without problems. Compare Acts 5 and 6 and the New Testament Epistles such as 1 and 2 Corinthians. But it is a congregation of true disciples of Christ who are zealous for the things of Christ and who are pursuing perfection before God.

Supernatural, life-changing salvation (Ac. 2:41)