

Measuring the Music (Part 9)

CCM's Role in Destroying Fundamental Baptist Churches

Text: Galatians 5:9; 1 Cor. 5:6

Introduction:

1. CCM is a change agent and the last couple of decades have witnessed seismic changes amongst fundamental Baptists.
2. Historically, fundamental Baptists had a strong emphasis on:
 - The Scriptures.
 - Soul-winning.
 - The Second Coming.
 - Separation.
 - Sacred Music.
3. Names such as Dr. Lee Robertson, Dr. J. Frank Norris and Dr. John R. Rice readily come to mind when considering the history of fundamental Baptists along with others.
4. I love the Old Baptist Ways because they are biblical (Jer. 6:16).
5. Consider some pertinent words of wisdom by spiritual men of God on the transformative power of CCM (refer slides).
6. We will now consider 4 case studies of fundamental Baptist Churches that used to stand for the old paths but which over time became rock and roll contemporary churches with practically no resemblance to how they were built originally.

I. THE SAD CASE OF TEMPLE BAPTIST CHURCH (Detroit Michigan)

A. J. Frank Norris was a prominent fundamentalist preacher in the 1920s. Fundamental preachers of his era did not mince their words when confronting error. Norris railed against the theory of evolution as “that hell-born, Bible-destroying, deity-of-Christ-denying, German rationalism known as evolution”.

B. J. Frank Norris had a strong emphasis on confrontational soul winning.

1. In the 1930s, 40s, 50s and 60s, there were multitudes of aggressive fundamental Baptist churches that saw millions of souls saved by the grace of God. J. Frank Norris, for example, pastored two large churches at the same time from 1934 to 1947 – First Baptist Church of Fort Worth, Texas, and Temple Baptist Church of Detroit Michigan. Through the efforts of Norris and his co-worker, Dr. Louis Entzminger, the Sunday Schools of these two congregations became the largest in the world at that time (15,000 and 10,000 respectively). They discarded denominational quarterlies and used the Bible alone as the text book. Norris developed an aggressive house-to-house visitation program. In his memoirs, Entzminger would write,

“From a human standpoint the secret of the growth of these churches may be summed up in one word ‘Visitation’” (*The J. Frank Norris I Have Known for 34 Years*, p. 255)

Contemporary Issues Series

2. The men went out on Monday evenings, coming directly to the church from work at 6 p.m., where they were served a warm supper prepared by the church ladies. At 6:30 they were given cards and went out to visit homes two by two. At 9 p.m. they would meet back at the church to give reports. The women went out on Thursday mornings, gathering at the church at 9:30, visiting in homes until 12:30, then meeting back at the church for lunch and fellowship, followed by reports on the visitation and a short message by Norris. Those two churches, in turn, produced dozens of other churches. By the year of Norris's death in 1952, First Baptist of Forth Worth had established more than 20 thriving churches in and around that one city alone. The same was true of Temple Baptist Church of Detroit. (*Repentance and Soul winning, D Cloud, pp. 26-27*)

C. The church began to slide in its music in the 1990s with soft CCM which is where the slide always begins.

D. The church dropped the name 'Baptist' in 2000 and renamed itself "Northridge Church" and it is now a contemporary church.

II. THE SAD CASE OF HIGH STREET BAPTIST CHURCH (Springfield, Missouri)

A. It was the Flagship church of BBFI (Baptist Bible Fellowship International) and played a big role in Baptist Bible College.

B. This was the Bible College my parents attended before they came back to start NBC 44 years ago. Many Independent Baptist preachers of my dad's era were trained at Baptist Bible College and other strong fundamental schools.

C. But today, it is a rock and roll church (refer slides).

D. In 2017 it joined the Southern Baptist Convention.

III. THE SAD CASE OF HIGHLAND PARK BAPTIST CHURCH (Chattanooga, Tennessee)

A. **Lee Roberson** pastored Highland Park from 1942 until 1983.

B. It left the Southern Baptist Convention in 1955.

C. It was a church built on the old paths of truth. The Word of God was preached in a bold, uncompromising way.

D. The music was sacred, beautiful and glorious.

E. By the late 1980s a shift in the music began to take place when Tennessee Temple began using soft rock.

F. In 2008 the church re-joined the Southern Baptist Convention. It came full circle!

G. In 2013 Highland Park ceased to exist. It relocated and changed its name to "Church of the Highlands". Going contemporary does not always end in success as far as even the world is concerned.

IV. THE SAD CASE OF LIGHTHOUSE BAPTIST CHURCH (Rockhampton, QLD Australia)

- A. Lighthouse Baptist Church was founded as a Fundamental Baptist Church.
- B. Robert Bakss took over the church in the early to mid-1990s (details on the internet are scant at present).
- C. By the early 2000s, there was a subtle but definite drift in their music and discerning pastors were concerned.
- D. The 2005 National Baptist Fellowship meeting was hosted by Lighthouse Baptist Church and while the music was not out and out rock and roll, there were sensual vocal styles and questionable music played.
- E. Things came to a head in 2011 when Pastor Graham West blew a whistle of warning concerning Lighthouse's drift in the area of music. While some Independent Baptist Pastors were supportive, many slammed him for it and denied there was a problem.
- F. The music got progressively worse until eventually the drums were introduced, the darkened stage etc... In 2015 Robert Bakss released a book entitled "Worship Wars" which was a full-blown defence of contemporary Christian music.
- G. Robert Bakss has had very big influence amongst Australian Independent Baptists in promoting a contemporary style ministry that forsakes the old paths. It was marketed as the "successful" way to do things.
- H. Sadly, the fruit of such a ministry has been exposed just this week with Pastor Bakss being dismissed from the church and board of the church school for "inappropriate conduct".
- I. God's Word is true. If you sow to the flesh, you will of the flesh reap corruption. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For **he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption**; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting." (Galatians 6:7-8)

CONCLUSION:

1. What is the answer to all of this apostasy? Stick to the old paths of truth and don't change! God's Word never changes and the message and methods of the Word of God are still just as relevant today as they were in the days of the Apostles.
2. Testimony: J. Quigley