Who Are the "Real" Pseudo-Fundamentalists?

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Ecclesiastical labels are invented by men to categorize people and groups. A survey of church advertisements reveals much about a church's attitude toward labels. In New Testament times the early believers were simply called Christians. However, the term Christian has been diluted over the centuries. In the quest for absolute identity, a lot of additives have been created to supposedly better define the term Christian. Churches are known by their denominational labels: Baptist, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, and so forth. Some Baptists, for example, are further defined as "Independent Fundamental Baptists." Others are known as "Premillennial Independent Baptists." And still others are defined as "Bible-believing, soulwinning, Freewill Baptists," and so on. One advertisement recently identified a church as part of the "King James Only Cult!" One wonders how many other additives will be developed: separatist, pro-life, anti-pornography, pro-simple lifestyle, anti-simple lifestyle...ad infinitum.

Defining Fundamentalism

Originally the term Fundamentalist referred to someone who believed the "fundamentals" of the Christian faith. The label came from the publication of a series of volumes known as The Fundamentals. These were a collection of articles written by a wide range of scholars defending traditional Christian orthodoxy against the critical attacks of theological Liberalism and Modernism. In the early twentieth century the sides were clearly drawn among Protestants. One was either a Fundamentalist or a Modernist. However, by the 1940s, the conservative movement began to fragment into several splinters. Over the years a variety of additives were produced: Evangelical, neo-Evangelical, moderate, militant, modified, and now pseudo-Fundamentalist. While no one claims the term, certain Fundamentalists use it as a label of disdain for others who call themselves Fundamentalists but who disagree on some issues. Thus, this label is used only by those who consider themselves to be the only true Fundamentalists.

Pseudo: A Biblical Perspective

A Christian's final authority in all matters of faith and practice is the Bible. All human "additives" to Christianity must be judged by the clear teaching of Scripture. Pseudo is a Greek word that occurs a number of times through the New Testament. Before calling anyone a pseudo it must be ascertained that he warrants such a description. The verb from which pseudo comes is the verb pseudein. It means "to deceive, to cheat, to show oneself deceitful, to lie, or to speak deliberate falsehoods" (Thayer, p. 675-676).

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The noun pseudo, which means a "lie, or a conscious and intentional falsehood" (Thayer, p. 676), also occurs frequently in Scripture. A pseudo is then a person who makes a deliberate, conscious, and intentional effort to lie, cheat, or deceive others.

The New Testament identified those who are pseudos. The Antichrist is described as one "whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders" (2 Thess. 2:9). This word is also used to describe the activities of Ananias and Sapphira. Peter spoke to Ananias and said, "Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land?" (Acts 5:3). The term is used to describe those who have rejected God and in so doing have "changed the truth of God into a lie" (Rom. 1:25).

What is clear from the teaching of Scripture is that pseudos are false Christians. They represent the spirit of Antichrist. In fact, the apostle John clearly identifies their ultimate destination when he states that "all [pseudesin], shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death" (Rev. 21:8).

Those Fundamentalists who are calling other fellow Fundamentalists "pseudo-Fundamentalists" are certainly not implying that these pseudos are heretics whose ultimate destiny is the lake of fire. Consequently, they are not utilizing the term within a biblical framework. From a biblical perspective a pseudo-Fundamentalist is someone who denies the essential
I. The verb to deceive and lying is after the Holy Ghost's teaching that. Their insistence that everyone else accept their additives is to reality. The reality of history is that anyone who adds to the fundamentals is a pseudo-Fundamentalist. Anyone who demands more than this is denying the historical roots of the movement. They are the real pseudo-Fundamentalists.

Conclusion

Who are the "real" pseudo-Fundamentalists? From a biblical perspective they are those who deny the basic doctrines of Christianity and who have "changed the truth of God into a lie" (Rom. 1:25). From a historical perspective, they are those who have added their personal preferences to the fundamentals and have demanded allegiance to every jot and tittle of their law. They do not represent the historical position of Fundamentalism and in that sense are pseudo-Fundamentalists.

Most of the processed food we consume is saturated with preservatives and additives. Medical research indicates that some additives are hazardous to one's health and can even cause cancer. Within Fundamentalism are those who want to saturate the movement with their own brand of additives. Their insistence that everyone else accept their additives is dangerous to the health of the movement and, unrestrained, may produce a cancer that will destroy its life and vitality. Perhaps the time has come to perform major surgery in order to deal with the cancer.

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