

ΤΩ ΧΡΟΝΟΥ ΚΑΙΡΩ

IN THE NICK OF TIME

Occasional Essays and Other Stuff for Christian Students Presented by the President of
Central Baptist Theological Seminary of Minneapolis

American Christianity needs leaders. American Christianity needs *Christian* leaders. Christian leaders explain the Scriptures, bringing them to bear upon life's urgent questions. Christian leaders exemplify the life of faith, finding their ultimate satisfaction in God alone. They unite intellectual discipline with ordinate affection, turning their entire being toward the love of God. These essays are dedicated to the task of inviting Christian students to become tomorrow's Christian leaders.

—Kevin T. Bauder

"...Be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine."

May 29, 2009

From the In-Box

by

The Correspondents of Kevin T. Bauder

The past two weeks have brought an exponentially greater response than any previous *Nick of Time* essays. Whatever else it is, this response is certainly an indication that these essays have touched a nerve within fundamentalism. I've decided to share some of the emails that I have received.

Why?

First, in the interest of full disclosure. Those who read the essays have an interest in knowing how they were received. To be sure, some sense of this can be gathered from the weblogs. Bloggers, however, do not always represent the ranks and file. Their perspective can partly be balanced by paying attention to what people say in private. The responses below should provide a supplementary source of information that will illustrate how fundamentalists are viewing this controversy and, indeed, the condition of the fundamentalist movement itself.

Second, because I believe in giving one's opponents a hearing. Leadership that tries to control followers by restricting who gets a hearing is not ethical leadership. We cannot lead by trying to silence dissenters. Years ago I used to edit an occasional review known as *Ruminations*. My standing offer in that review was that I would give my opponents the final word in any

discussion. For this series, I am doing the same thing. I have made a point of including words of opposition from both sides—and I will offer no rejoinder.

Third, because I affirm that all believers are indwelt and being sanctified by the Spirit of God. That being the case, I really do believe that all of us together possess more wisdom than any one of us alone. Granted, there is a time to stand alone against the world—but that time does not come until after other judgments have been heard and weighed. Under normal circumstances, the very best thing that we can do is to talk to one another. So I encourage you to listen to these voices and to hear what they have to say.

All of the following responses are from Christian leaders who are identified as fundamentalists. I have removed, not only their names, but any references that could be used (in my judgment) to identify them. I list them only by the positions of responsibility that they hold. No editing has been done that would change the meaning of the response. I have also tried to remove the responses that were simply “ataboys,” except in cases in which the respondent held some significant position of leadership within fundamentalism.

Correspondence on “Time to Speak Up”

Now thanks for the essay. You scored again. I’m interested that of Sweatt’s models, at least three of the five could not have borne scrutiny of their private lives—at least two of the three not so private.

For shame. It will be interesting to see what if anything the FBF will do.

-Retired college professor

I’m sure that this is one of many emails you’re getting in response to your Nick article, but I want to thank you for speaking with boldness, conviction, and grace at what I think is a crucial time for our movement. I praise the Lord for you.

-Pastor

You are right on. I support you.

-College president

THIS WAS JUST AN EXCELLENT ARTICLE. Thank you for your thoughtful, honest, gracious, and direct response. You give me hope.

-Church planter

Concerning your present article, did you intend to lump Bob Jones Jr., JR Rice, and Lester Roloff with Jack Hyles and Bob Gray.

To me, I see a wide, wide difference between the first three and the last two, who were virtual cult leaders and clearly involved in immorality. It seems unfair to lump them together.

I am sure you have your reasons, just curious.

-FBF board member

We wanted to say thank you. . . . It is so obvious that the current problems of Fundamentalism on the home front have not stayed there but have spread to far off fields. We are currently facing our own giants here in _____ who have been influenced by the brand of fundamentalism that results in "empire building." In standing up to these giants recently, who happen to be some of the only believers we can fellowship with, we have risked being "savaged by them." We recall what your predecessor at CBTS often said, "When you stand up for truth, you place yourself in the middle of a ferocious storm." Please pray for us and our fundamentalist brethren here!

-Foreign missionary

I ditto this sentiment and am very thankful for your stand and timely words of wisdom and warning. In _____ as well, we have the trickle down effect from these issues.

-Foreign missionary

Thank you . . . for your biblical, logical and practical rebuke . . . in your latest issue of "In the Nick of Time." I have appreciated your several articles about fundamentalism in this publication, and believe you espouse and present a balanced approach to this concept that is well acceptable to those loving the Scriptures and desiring to be faithful to them. Thank you for your willingness to speak out when reason goes out the window and emotionalism, ignorance and fear take over as they did in Pastor Sweatt's address. May the grace of God strengthen fundamentalism at large by drawing the next generation in upon seeing the ability to be both fundamentalist and reasonable at the same time.

-Pastor

All I can say is Thank You. Thank you for the courage to challenge our movement in this regard. Thank you for providing an example of dealing with a controversial issue directly, yet with charity. We don't know each other well, but my regard for you just went up. May God be glorified.

-College president

I did not hear Pastor Sweatt speak but it sounds like the same stuff I heard for years in Bible College and after. Your comments express everything I have thought. I am finally, after almost twenty years not afraid to call myself a

I will not be surprised if you take much flak for writing this but in doing so, you have done a great service not only to your seminary but also for the cause of fundamentalism and Christ's Kingdom. May God bless you for it.

-Pastor

I took the time to listen to Pastor Sweats lecture and read your response to Pastor Sweat. I believe there is imbalance on both sides of the coin. You imply that this man should be censured or at least publically rebuked for his incompetence on the issue of Calvinism. You make some legitimate points like, one can and must judge the generations before us, but you overreact by

declaring he knows nothing about Calvinism, and then calling for some form of censorship of public separation from Pastor Sweat and those of his guild. Pastor Sweats of whom I have never meet, and know nothing of his ministry, is not guilty of ignorance on Calvinism but rather of failing to articulate what aspect/degree of Calvinism he speaks. Is it not true that you find hyper Calvinism a threat to the fundamental landscape and that it should be labeled for what it is, and separated from? There are aberrations, extremes of Calvinism that indeed result in theistic fatalism, no missional fervor, double predestination, and God being culpable of sin. Pastor Sweat failed to recognize the biblical pursuit of theological integrity in moderate Calvinism and for that He should be asked to put back on "His prophets robe" and give greater definition of what he speaks.

I heard a call for humility, integrity, all of which I know you resonate with but there was no recognition of this in your article. I heard a man admit to the extremes of historical fundamentalism and simply warn that young men were exchanging one set of graven images for another. He was calling them to make the Word of God the center piece not another man. I have heard this from your lips and articles you have written. This was not recognized in your article. . . . This seemed to be out of character for you. Maybe there is a lot more information you have on this man than I am aware of and this was reflected in your article rather than just a critique of the lecture. Is there really a need for this level of saber rattling?

-Pastor

I've often wrestled with some of the very issues you have brought up in your article, and am trying to think through them a little. My biggest difficulty is that you offered a possibly (in my mind) accurate picture of why we young fundamentalists struggle so much, but I did not read an answer to the problem of what you feel we ought to do about those in our camp who are heading towards what you called conservative evangelicals - MacArthur, Piper... I've felt that pull, and many if not most of my peers have gone that direction. However I think there are some very dangerous positions that these men hold to - especially in separation.

I'm really struggling with your article - having been brought up in strong fundamentalism. I have often felt that many fundamentalists fought too much for the cause of fundamentalism as a movement, while forgetting the spirit of the One for whom we fight - Christ. Am I accurate in my thinking?

-Pastor

Thank you! Thank you! Thank you!

As a young fundamentalist and a Calvinist, I cannot thank you enough for going to bat against the big talkers who are spoiling fundamentalism. It is refreshing to see a man in leadership such as yourself speaking out against what I perceive to be atrocities committed in the name of Christ.

-Pastor

Thank you for your recent post in response to Dr. Sweatt's address at the FBFI. I was beginning to think that I stood all alone. It's so good to find an ally along the road to the Celestial City.

-Pastor

Having been vexed at times as you were with Brother Sweatt's message I'm sure you felt pressed to write this message and relieved once delivered. It is a wonderful challenge, but will bear its critics. Yes, indeed we will see what the FBF does with this. I tend to see within them a bit of a pragmatic fundamentalism. . . .

-Foreign missionary

There has always been room in the FBFI for those of various views on God's sovereignty (and other issues such as sanctification, versions and matters of personal holiness). We also have not muzzled our speakers in that area. For either side of this issue to demand an exclusive voice is outside the purpose and spirit of the FBFI. We will disagree, sometimes sharply, even among speakers in our meetings. But we will treat one another as brothers and gentlemen. There will be unanimity on this issue in glory, but until then differences will always persist. This controversy is a clear indication of why the FBFI exists and is necessary. We must be willing to warn one another, and be warned in a spirit of Christian charity and with a deep concern for obedience in doctrinal purity in the fundamentals and fervency in fulfilling our Great Commission mandate. When we isolate ourselves from everyone who does not hold our particular doctrinal positions, we face the danger of imbalance, extremism, disobedience, and even heresy. Iron, must sharpen iron. . . .

We are not a denomination. Because of that we all have to avoid being thin-skinned and let God speak to us, even through those with whom we disagree.

-FBFI board member

Please know that I am in agreement with your essay of Friday. I will do all I can to facilitate a positive and thorough discussion of the issues. Whatever influence I have I am using to that end.

-BJU board member

Bravo to Kevin Bauder's article "Time To Speak Up." Thanks for saying so clearly, what everyone else is thinking! Sign me up for a fundamentalism worth saving.

-Pastor

You are on record in other posts as saying that the Fundamentalist Movement is dying, and that you hope the idea of Fundamentalism lives on. I share this hope with you. But Brother Sweatt's sermon shows us that the Movement Fundamentalists are not going to give up, and that they will be around long enough to continue destroying their own movement and making the movement a laughing-stock. The movement will be remembered as what they are, unless something intervenes.

-Pastor

I didn't hear [Pastor Sweatt's] message. In fact, I didn't hear about it until a couple of days ago—that fact in itself is troubling.

I am not particularly surprised by what Pastor Sweatt had to say, but am saddened by it. The content is troubling enough. His choice of venue is even more distressing. Your response was a

tremendous encouragement. I am [older], but still think of myself as a “younger” fundamentalist. I grew up in churches modeled after Jack Hyles, but I consider myself pretty well recovered from their “brutality,” I think you called it.

I doubt if you have any idea who I am, and who I am doesn't really matter. I am one of the guys Sweatt would apparently disdain for not being a “giant.” While I pastor a church of under 100, I am not entirely invisible, and I'm doing what I can to make a difference for Christ.

Given the controversy Pastor Sweatt has provoked, I wish more than ever that I would be available to attend the FBFI meeting in June. I will be eager to hear what, if anything, is done to address this problem. I'd like to remain a part of the FBFI, but events in the last year or so have made me question the wisdom of maintaining my identification with that body.

Regardless, you have earned my profound respect. May the Lord bless you and your ministry as you continue to exalt Christ and His Word.

-FBFI representative

. . . I was going to ask, have the FBF men canceled your membership after that Sweatt reply? I'm supposed to teach Hist. of Fund. at _____, and the response to your Nick will be valuable data on the present state of that segment of the movement.

I still marvel at Sweatt's choice of models. Exactly the men, and other arrogant men like them, who have turned young thinkers off.

-College professor

I was somewhat surprised to see the current storm come up about Pastor Sweatt and his comments. Not in a negative way, but in a positive. I am absolutely thrilled that yourself, and a number of other men I respect, were equally aghast at his comments and assertions.

-Pastor

Thank you for your excellent response to an embarrassing moment for Fundamentalism. I'm sure you've seen Piper's link from Desiringgod.org. . . . It is heartening to know that more than Fundamentalists are watching Fundamentalists and for that reason a response like yours was imperative. Thanks for representing CBTS, men like me who are tempted to shed the label at times, and the cause of Christ in general, with such grace and clarity.

-Pastor

After reading your essay and seeing that you attended Denver Baptist Theological Seminary, Trinity Evangelical Theological Seminary, and Dallas Theological Seminary, I understand that you are espousing the new evangelicalism you were taught. Hopefully, you will see the error of your way and repent. Of course, most men who graduate from new evangelical institutions look upon faithful fundamentalists (Bob Jones, Jr.) with an air of contempt and superiority. By the way, when I attended college in Tennessee 44 years ago, a professor wisely told us that if a person attends an institution of compromise he should denounce the institution.

-Unknown

I am a graduate of Central Seminary. . . . I still regard myself as a fundamentalist although I have abandoned dispensationalism.

My background is the very camp of fundamentalist bullying that you address. I knew most of the men you list (Hyles, Rice, Roloff, et al). I aspired to be like them until I began to see the cracks in their armor in the light of Scripture. . . .

I just read your article on Dan Sweatt's message at the FBF conference at the Wilds. Thank you. I appreciate your courage, kindness, but truthful evaluation.

-Pastor

When I first came to know Christ while I was in grad school in St. Louis, our pastor became enamored with the Jack Hyles style of ministry. He took all the young couples but us to start a "spiritual soul winning" church. . . . I had just recently been married. That new church plant folded in a year or so, and I learned a lot about ministry by staying with the original church. I would agree that we do not want to have that strident, pushy style of ministry. I found that the loud, aggressive "leaders" wanted you to park your brain at the door and let them do all your thinking and values setting for you. That may produce followers, but it does not produce mature disciples.

-Pastor

Correspondence on "Nuff Said"

You are certainly more magnanimous than I am, and I certainly need to learn from you. I think your analysis is charitable and, as . . . somebody pointed out, the FBF is not distancing itself from Sweatt's kind of preaching when they have done this. I personally am not as optimistic as you are that this will give a whole bunch of younger guys hope that things are different in the FBF and am more inclined to think that Greg Linscott's analysis as he posted it on SI is more on the money.

I just got off the phone with my dad who is a Bob Jones Institute guy and he, 65 years old, is fed up. Another pastor who is 62 years old just wrote me and said thanks to me for highlighting Sweatt's egregious message. He's been quiet for 40 years, like my dad, and I personally believe that they too are going to see this statement as a failure on the part of the FBF leadership (and in their minds, the leadership of fundamentalism because that is the microcosm they are a part of.) In other words, it's not just a "young" guy thing anymore. Nor is it just a guys in the GARBC background. It's guys like my dad who told me that Sweatt's message was no different than what he heard thousands of times and never dared to critique who started secretly reading Piper because their sons turned them on to it. I know my dad is writing Dan Sweatt a personal letter, but Dad knows that he'll be rebuffed by the arrogance that has so long typified big-shots in fundamentalism.

[The FBF statement is] either arrogance or timidity. And I think they're bed partners, frankly.

-Pastor

Thank you for your insightful, measured response to Pastor Sweatt's recent message. From my perspective your comments were exactly what we need. I believe that the Lord has orchestrated

Pastor's Sweatt's message and your response to provide an opportunity to move the FBF forward in its understanding of true biblical fundamentalism. May you have continued courage to speak the truth that needs to be spoken.

We are in desperate need of this slight upheaval to our comfort zone; I would not be surprised if you are feeling pressure to soften your words. Please do not soften your biblical stance. You have stated truth that needs to be heard, and we must deal with it sooner or later. I believe sooner is better!

-College president

I have suggested to Drs. Vaughn and Smith that they need to cancel you as a speaker. at the National Meeting. I do so because of your statement concerning Dr. Bob Jones, Jr. that he was one of the very heavy burdens that fundamentalism has had to bear. I do not believe that Dr. Sweatt should have included Dr. Bob Jones along with the others that he called "giants". Therefore it would follow that I do believe that, in your reply to Sweatt's message, you should have differentiated between Dr. Jones, and Drs. Hyles, Gray, and Roloff. I doubt that those three, Hyles, Gray, and Roloff, were ever members of FBF or the fellowships out of which it grew, CBF and The Fundamental Fellowship of the ABC. (Not sure of the name when it was associated with ABC).

Dr. Jones was vitally connected with the FBF and was a strong fundamentalist. Dr. Rice was not particularly involved with the FBF, but should be differentiated from the other three—the only reason for not differentiating them is that Dr. Rice did promote the ministry of the other men in The Sword of the Lord—though I do believe Dr. Rice was different. But you grouped them all together as men you did not count as authentic fundamentalists. Therefore I am not sure you should be in a speaker's position at the National Meeting, particularly in the light of your blog. I recognize that I know you only by name. I am not sure that I have ever heard you speak. I recognize you as a leader by virtue of your position with Central Seminary. Further I recognize that Dr. Bob Jones, Jr., being a man, probably made some mistakes. But to say that he was a liability to fundamentalism that caused you to consider not being identified with fundamentalism cause me to wonder just what type of fundamentalism it is that you espouse. Therefore I have suggested to Drs. Vaughn and Smith that they not use you to speak at this National Meeting at this time will be the best for the FBFI. I am not saying you are not a fundamentalist, but I do have questions as to whether you are the militant type fundamentalist as those were with whom I had fellowship in the founding days of the FBF. You may be the very fundamentalist of whom I speak as a militant fundamentalist. But I would think that before you be allowed to speak there should be an apology given to the leadership at BJU. You see, you, as an Administrator at Central Seminary, speaking of a former President and Chancellor of a companion institution, are making a statement about that institution and those of us who stand with it.

It may be that our paths may cross some day and that we can sit down and talk about these things

-Retired pastor and FBFI emeritus board member

Well done.

-Seminary president

Thank you! This is very, very good. More than a decade ago, I took our congregation through the Life of Christ in a chronological fashion working through all of the Gospels. I have expressed one of the principles that we learned through that study this way: **“Be what you want them to become or you will become what they are.”**

This came to mind repeatedly as I read your gracious reply. It is my sincere hope that all of us within the movement will take our cues from the way you have addressed this.

-Pastor and FBFI board member

I know from my own interaction and correspondence that some think the FBFI statement was as much a response toward your last *Nick* as it was to Sweatt. . . . In other words, some have taken it that they were distancing themselves from *you*, too.

Now, I don't take it that way. But I do think that the ambiguity of their statement allows that perception to be arrived at that a more specific statement would prevent.

We still end up, however, at a position that leaves the motive for joining the FBFI unclear at best. If enough has indeed been said about this specific flare-up, I am not so sure that enough has been said to answer the question of why young men who don't share the principles (or *psuche*, to borrow one of your terms, if you will) of Sweatt (or Garlock or what have you) would feel a compulsion to join.

-Pastor

I am certain you are receiving many responses to your most recent “Nick of Time” article. I do not wish to clog the lines unduly and so will respond with a brevity fueled by respect for your time, not by a lack of more to say. I do believe a few words of response are in order.

First, historically speaking, Fundamentalists [insert here all obligatory qualifiers of the term] seem embarrassingly adept at picking the wrong fights. I rejoice that you have picked the right fight.

Second, when Fundamentalists have chosen a fight, they have too often employed repulsive tactics. I rejoice that your article struck a skillful balance between backbone and decorum. Your article is full of grace and truth.

Third, I have nearly despaired of Fundamentalists developing the capacity to appreciate the virtue God sees in his servants outside one's own circles without simultaneously imbibing their failures. The “all or nothing” mindset—whether in the form of pathetic wagon-circling or total capitulation—is a bleeder that must be cauterized. When and where men are fighting the right fight in defense of the faith, it is utterly quixotic [words could be piled up here] to demonize them. If we cannot articulate our positions as more exegetically faithful—if we cannot “win” with superior ideas, we have no cause and should stop our tongues. I think we have a cause. I think we have a reason to speak. I suspect that cause is a bit smaller than some think at times, but there are legitimate concerns we should continue to express with winsome skill and zealous courage. There are “converts” to be made if we will stand our ground and deliver the goods.

There is nothing but disaster—and so it should be—if we lash out emotionally and thoughtlessly against anyone who is not just like us.

I thank God for strengthening you to say the right thing. Please know that I am praying that God will further supply the strength to stand your ground for the long haul.

-Pastor

I suppose we just disagree on this one. To be very frank, it gives the appearance like you might be reading too much or too little into the statement in an effort to repair relations—a move that *seems* like a political spin in the guise of charity. (Qualification: I don't have nearly the background you do with these men and this movement, and I'm not judging your motives; I'm giving you the benefit of the doubt.) When I read the FBFI statement, I thought that it was a non-statement that was laughably vague, yet here you describe it as courageous! (And FWIW, I received several emails expressing the same reaction.) Cf. what Greg Linscott wrote immediately after the FBFI statement was posted:

If this is the extent to which the matter is ever addressed officially (either in print or on the platform), then it should be successful in reassuring current members that things remain as they always have been.

If, however, there was any hope of attracting “new blood,” this statement is at best neutral, and at worst presents the distinct possibility that statements such as the one prompting this recent series of conversations will continue to be tolerated, if not admittedly wholeheartedly endorsed by everyone in the group. In short if the goal was to reassure the ranks, then I think the statement was successful. If the goal was “to model the kind of fundamentalism that is really worth saving,” however, the goal has not been met. The window of opportunity will not be open on this one very long.

-Theological journal administrator

My general impression is that Kevin is very charitable. I do see reasons for this, but those would be political rather than substantive. . . . I do think we are a bit close to gushing about how wonderful the FBFI statement is. It is a politically expedient statement and I find it satisfactory, under the circumstances. The FBFI is a strange organizational animal and it is difficult to expect much more in the time constraints given them. I do, however, expect MORE at the annual meeting. I am pessimistic that such will happen

-BJU board member

I cannot tell you how much I appreciate your words in your last post! Thank you for your courage and grace.

-College president

I have listened to the message by Sweatt. While I may agree with him in some areas, I feel he has taken on too much of a mantle in assessing some of these issues. Simply put, he has outrun his headlights. I'm not sure he is in a position to be an elder statesman.

One of the examples of leaders disagreeing with charity go back to about 1960. Noel Smith was speaking at BJU Bible conference. Dr Bob, Jr., in introducing him stated that he and Dr Smith

disagreed on the “church”. Smith believed in ONLY the local, visible church, adamant about it. Dr Bob did not and made a brief statement to that issue. Dr Smith got up, stated he did not come to divide but to be a blessing, and preached a powerful message. These two giants respected each other even in disagreement. I believe Dr Bob had a part in Smith’s funeral. In my opinion we need to be careful lest ones response to a issue becomes greater than the issue itself—as it relates to Sweatt’s message. I have come to the place as to this message and some of the leaders of the past—enjoy the meat and spit out the bones. These are my simple and unscholarly thoughts. Thanks,
-Pastor

As a 28 yr. old conservative, fundamental Baptist pastor I want to thank you for voicing what I have felt over the last several years since I entered seminary (FBTS) until today. You regularly hit the nail on the head regarding the feelings of younger men like myself towards today’s fundamentalism. So many my age have already abandoned our movement and I have no doubt that the problems you point out are a large part of their reasoning. I am happy to be a fundamentalist and a Baptist but only for the reasons which, it seems, we both hold dear. Keep contending for the faith with the affectionate demeanor you have been demonstrating!
-Pastor

A good article. I know many who have left fundamentalism over the past leadership that equated their particular view of issues with the inspiration of Scripture.
-Retired professor

Thank you brother Kevin for your criticism of Pastor Sweat’s message and your nuff said column. Lord bless you.
-Church planter

Just a brief note to say that I highly commend you not only for your work’s sake, but also for your words’ sake! Your last two essays regarding the FBFI have been [excellent]. Thank you so much for addressing issues within Fundamentalism which have been close to my heart ever since 1982 when I first went to _____. I sought to address some of these issues in my generation, and in my own way I am still doing so, but never with the gravitas of your presentations. I believe your efforts will be rewarded with the rescue of significant segments of Fundamentalism, and in particular of its up and coming generation!
-Retired pastor

I commend you for your desire to grant benefit of the doubt. I sincerely hope that your gracious example will provoke yet more grace among brothers in Christ. At the same time, however, I have great difficulty sustaining the kind of optimism you obviously have regarding the situation, and I suspect many others do as well. Because of your position in Fundamentalism, it is far more difficult for leaders to assault you than it is for the average person. *Your* criticism may well have provoked a gracious response from Fundamentalist leaders, but can anyone seriously hope that such a careful path would have

been chosen if the critic (however gracious) was a lesser-known pastor, teacher, or layman? Like you said, there is a veneer of civility which tends to flow up. I'm not sure that its flow in your direction says anything about whether it would flow down to others in the fellowship.

I am not interested in bashing Fundamentalists for sport, but the younger fundamentalists you mention must chart a course somewhere between that sin and wishful thinking. I think your optimism will seem quite close to the latter for the many people who know they can be quite easily dismissed or discredited—with no consideration whatever for truth or fairness—by the leaders of Fundamentalism.

-Seminary graduate

You see, Dr. Bauder, the problem that we “young-ones” see is that the message from Pastor Sweatt was not a “new phenomenon” for the FBFI or for fundamentalism in general. I highly doubt that the message truly “*caught the leadership of the FBFI by surprise.*” (I know it did not catch me by surprise - it has been preached from the pulpit of my alma mater for the last two years.) And if you believe that “*those who did hear it walked away shaking their heads*” then my question is - how was it allowed the year before and not stopped before this year. . . ?

The Calvinism issue is definitely one of our questions, and I thank you for addressing it. But, I believe that the greater issue at stake is how long will this “*duplicitous and abusive leadership...pulpit tirades, doctrinal tomfoolery, and political gamesmanship*” be allowed and tolerated in mainstream fundamentalism?

If I can speak for the “young fundamentalist,” we are ready and willing to give an ear and grace to those who call out this hypocrisy and seek to reconcile it biblically within fundamentalism. However, I also understand that legalists do not understand grace. And when they are given grace, they abuse it, and seek to use it only for their advantage. I pray that this will not be the case within fundamentalism!

-Pastor

This essay is by Kevin T. Bauder, president of Central Baptist Theological Seminary. Not every one of the professors, students, or alumni of Central Seminary necessarily agrees with every opinion that it expresses. New subscriptions to this electronic newsletter can be requested at inthenickoftime@centralseminary.edu.

Ungratefulness

George Herbert (1593-1633)

Lord, with what bounty and rare clemency
 Hast thou redeem'd us from the grave!
 If thou hadst let us run,
 Gladly had man ador'd the sun,
 And thought his god most brave;
Where now we shall be better gods than he.

Thou hast but two rare cabinets full of treasure,
 The *Trinity*, and *Incarnation*:
 Thou hast unlockt them both,
 And made them jewels to betroth
 The work of thy creation
Unto thy self in everlasting pleasure.

The statelier cabinet is the *Trinity*,
 Whose sparkling light access denies:
 Therefore thou dost not show
 This fully to us, till death blow
 The dust into our eyes:
For by that powder thou wilt make us see.

But all thy sweets are packt up in the other;
 Thy mercies thither flock and flow:
 That as the first affrights,
 This may allure us with delights;
 Because this box we know;
For we have all of us just such another.

But man is close, reserv'd, and dark to thee:
 When thou demandest but a heart,
 He cavils instantly.
 In his poor cabinet of bone
 Sins have their box apart,
Defrauding thee, who gavest two for one. ✕

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