



## ***Contending for Southern Baptist Biblical Missiology: Does Doublespeak Live?***

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The year 1976 is one this writer wants never to forget, because it was then the term *doublespeak* first entered my thoughts. I was enrolled in a Church History Master of Arts program at Baylor University. We had research seminars along with PhD students. While pursuing their degrees, students often pastored rural churches in surrounding towns and hamlets of central Texas. In a historical theology class, one PhD student raised an issue to the professor regarding the relevance or applicative uses of our studies for preaching in churches, especially country ones. The student said, “Dr., I think Bart, Brunner, Bultmann, or Tillich just won’t preach in Robinson, Texas!” Well, the next hour and a half the professor elaborated the fine art of doublespeak. Essentially he was telling students how to beat the system, to say one thing and believe the opposite in order to avoid being fired. To these then young ears this sounded like a lack of integrity, but it was spoken of as if it was the normal procedure for academic life in the Southern Baptist Convention [SBC].

Baylor University is no longer formally administered through or by any entities within the SBC. Part of the reason is because the practice of double-speak eventually broke down once church members noticed many professors throughout the Convention’s network of Baptist colleges and seminaries spoke very differently in their writings directed to an academic audience than they did when preaching in local churches. The lack of integrity fueled fires of renewal within the SBC. Since 1979 the Convention has transformed itself, generally, from the prevailing liberal atmosphere that existed in 1976, or even before, when the Baylor incident transpired. The conservative resurgence linked the present trajectory of the SBC to the history of its founding in 1845, and even before if one considers the Baptist Union out of which they emerged. The founding Southern Baptists affirmed the Bible and expected policies, practices, and procedures to flow from God’s divine revelation. Along the way doublespeak and theological drift began.

In the post-WWII era, the drift proliferated and tremors began as pre-ludes of the quake that has changed the landscape profoundly since 1979. The question is, does doublespeak persist and is it found in historically core

institutions, the agencies, and boards of the SBC? What, if any, trace evidence exists of this as a continuing practice? This review takes a narrow core sample of selected influences and practices of the International Mission Board [IMB] to ascertain the degree to which doublespeak may live on. Motives of individuals involved are not in question. Only God knows that sort of information. Selected publications do exist, however, with implications and trace evidence that are telling. So from the outset, the reader should know that this author wishes to focus on the issues involved primarily and not the motives of those individuals' published or public materials. The significance of this is that if trace evidence exists, then it means the landscape of 1979 still has a fault line running through it. That would mean that the battle for the Bible, and consequently biblical missiology, has not run its course (and one could argue that such guarded vigilance may never be over this side of eternity). If it is not over, then what should vigilance today look like?

### Doublespeak

#### Illustrated From Their Own Lips

Defining doublespeak is itself a delicate task. Perhaps the best representation of it is from the authors of the more moderate to liberal persuasion within the SBC prior to the 1979 resurgence with a counter challenge from one of the major conservative proponents of the resurgence regarding needed changes.

A prelude to the current SBC conservative renewal was the controversial publication of a commentary on Genesis by the Convention's press in the early 1960s. Ralph Elliott, the author of that commentary, reflected nearly thirty years later on the controversy that led to his dismissal from a Southern Baptist seminary. To establish the context for understanding the later fight that has since ensued, he said that during the Genesis controversy he did not affirm the then standardized practice of "doublespeak"—specifically, to speak one way in class and another elsewhere-- . . . 'Doublespeak' has become an insidious disease within Southern Baptist life... Professors and students learn to couch their beliefs in acceptable terminology and in holy jargon so that although thinking one thing, the speaker calculated so as to cause the hearer to affirm something else."<sup>1</sup> Conservative voices countered by arguing that consistent integrity of belief, speech, and action should be evident in the sacred trust that Southern Baptists expect from institutional leadership. In a 1991 publication, Paige Patterson specified this as a particularly necessary course change needed as the Convention looked to posture itself for the twenty-first century.

[T]he restoration of integrity in the institutions and agencies of the SBC is essential. . . . It is time, however, for the admission

<sup>1</sup>Ralph H. Elliott, *The "Genesis Controversy" and Continuity in Southern Baptist Chaos: A Eulogy for a Great Tradition* (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1992), 33.

that there have in fact been major breaches in integrity. Too many have sounded one note in the pulpit on Sunday and a very different note at the lectern on Monday.<sup>2</sup>

Institutional doublespeak, as a strategic technique, often extends into the agencies and boards. Even subtle, and perhaps unintentional shifts in methodology, lead to embarrassing circumstances and leaders then tend to manage challenging questions rather than being transparent and forthright in their responses. The methodological shift comes by flipping the primacy of Scripture and either making it subservient to academic or pragmatic demands or postured in an egalitarian way with culture. Either of these usually ends up retrofitting a strategy into Scripture rather than building it from the pools of biblical truth. Given a culturally dominant approach, pragmatic missiological practices end up functionally critiquing Scripture rather than the reverse.

### **Biblical Missions Moorings**

It behooves the reader to step back in time to see these integrity issues and the practice of doublespeak in the context of the SBC's formative history. Anxieties accompany pivotal moments in history, some hopeful, others fearful. The moments surrounding the vote to birth the SBC in May 1845 was such a time. Baptists met in Augusta, Georgia about then recent decisions made by the older Triennial Convention of Baptists restricting some southerners from missionary appointment.

The Triennial Convention formed in 1814, uniting streams of Baptists, both North and South, around an obedient response to world missions through collective, not independent church efforts. While still in Burma, Adoniram and Ann Judson prompted Baptists through Luther Rice, just returned fellow missionary, to work together to appoint them as Baptist missionaries.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Conservative Resurgence and Missions**

Over a century later (1979-present), controversy has ensued among Southern Baptists regarding the authority, value, and function of the Bible. Biblical value determines ways to regulate Convention actions and how to preserve the cause of evangelism in general, and international missions specifically. R. Keith Parks was president of the SBC's Foreign Mission Board [FMB]<sup>4</sup> from 1979-1992, the height of the current controversy. Seasoned reflections usually yield greater insight than do one's opinions in the heat of momentous events. Years later Parks reflected on the earlier years of the

<sup>2</sup>Paige Patterson, "My Vision of the Twenty-First Century SBC," *Review and Expositor*, 88 (1991): 40.

<sup>3</sup>See Jason G. Duesing, ed., *Adoniram Judson: A Bicentennial Appreciation of the Pioneer American Missionary* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2012).

<sup>4</sup>Since June 1997 the FMB has been known as the International Mission Board [IMB] of the SBC.

controversy.

Early on I would argue with Adrian Rogers about that [basis for unity in the SBC] and he'd say no, "the theme that has held us together is not missions, but doctrine." Well, historically I don't think that's accurate because historically the SBC is composed of people with varying theological perspectives . . . My assessment is that they're [conservatives in the SBC] from an independent Baptist viewpoint where conventions are built around doctrine [sic] than from the heritage that we as Southern Baptists have had that the convention is built around missions. And so after arguing with Adrian several times, I finally came to realize that for him and I think for Paige [Patterson] and for others the unifying element ought to be a unifying perspective of theology . . . according to the Scripture, the Living Word is more important than the written word . . . it's a mistake in my estimation to elevate Scripture above Christ...<sup>5</sup>

Essential to Park's impressions is determination of what sort of Baptists that conservatives in the SBC represented concerning biblical authority, and whether it should impact the development of both one's theology and consequent missiology. When the SBC met in 1845, they indicated that

. . . we have constructed for our basis no *new* creed; acting in this matter upon a Baptist aversion for all creeds but the Bible. We use the very terms, as we uphold the true spirit and great object

<sup>5</sup>R. Keith Parks, *Oral History Interview* by Phil Hopkins April 4, 2000 in Murpheysville, NC, Wake Forest, NC: Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2000. Park's opinion here ignores a third option, namely that Christ and the Bible are supplemental and parallel. Thus, understood, the written *Word* explains the claims, significance, and meaning of the living *Word*. The revised Baptist Faith and Message 2000 indicates this third option as the conviction of conservatives in the SBC. See Article I on Scripture <http://www.sbc.net/bfm2000/bfm2000.asp> (accessed June 23, 2014).

Just prior to the time when Parks resigned the FMB presidency, church historian Bill Leonard described factions within the SBC and how the moderates held things together for over a generation and a half when they were pressured from both the left and the right within the Convention. Leonard recounts the synthesis achieved in forming the confessional statement to guide Southern Seminary in the mid-nineteenth century that illustrates Park's sentiments and became the *modus operandi* that glued the SBC organizationally for decades. "There was less a synthesis than a Grand Compromise based in an unspoken agreement that the convention would resist all attempts to define basic doctrine in ways that excluded one tradition or another [i.e. the left-wing liberals or the right-wing conservatives], thereby destroying unity and undermining the missionary imperative." See Bill Leonard, *God's Last and Only Hope: The Fragmentation of the Southern Baptist Convention* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990), 38. Leonard implies that only through this "Grand Compromise" can missionary momentum sustain. However, the reverse can be true if compromise is taken to mean such an inclusive convergence of all theologies and religions that Jesus' claim to be the exclusive way to the Father is lost then from where does the motive for missions come? Universalistic tendency undermines the rationale Jesus prescribed in the Great Commission.

of the late “General Convention of the Baptist denomination of the United States.” By order of the Convention Augusta, GA., 12th May, 1845.<sup>6</sup>

Park’s ideas differentiating conceptual value of the “Living Word” from the “written word” and the need then to tolerate wide and varied ranges of theological positions led to leaders of the SBC’s conservative resurgence to act believing that biblical convictions can or should take priority and form theological opinions as well as missiological practice. In other words, no truthful Bible means no basis for missions because there is no reliable hope of redemption.<sup>7</sup>

## IMB Paradigm Shifts

### A Dissertation’s Prescription

During the last thirty years or so, David Garrison<sup>8</sup> contributed immensely to the think-tank processes at the IMB. He worked on the IMB sponsored team with David B. Barrett in the design and development of what is now known as the World Christian Database.<sup>9</sup> Garrison’s formal

<sup>6</sup>Southern Baptist Convention, *Proceedings of the Southern Baptist Convention, Held in the First Baptist Church, Augusta, GA., May 8-12, 1845* (Richmond: Southern Baptist Convention, 1845): 19. It is important to note the spirit of the times in the southern churches in the mid-nineteenth century to understand why there were no elaborate statements defining further the concept of the Bible as it was a point of generally common agreement until later that century. It is helpful to understand, however, that it was held in such high regard that it was the functioning creedal statement in and of itself. The founders of the SBC relied heavily on a stated purpose and guiding principles already expressed in the founding of the earlier Baptist union in 1814. The founding documents of that gathering of Baptists reflects the highest view of the Bible as well, “. . . your committee esteem it absolutely necessary, that the friends of the Constitution of the Triennial Convention, and the lovers of the Bible, shall at once take their stand, and assert the great catholic principles of that Constitution, and of the Word of God.” *Proceedings of the Baptist Convention for Missionary Purposes; Held in Philadelphia, May 1814*, 13. This writer italicized the term above.

<sup>7</sup>Paige Patterson, “My Vision”, 37-52. Patterson is perhaps the primary theologian involved in the conservative renewal within the SBC from 1979-present. In this piece he states that for theological renewal there must be commitment to a series of cardinal principles, “First, the Bible rather than speculative reflection must stand at the heart of all theological development . . . the Bible is the point of departure and the ultimate critic of all theologizing” (38). Scripture should critique missiology rather than missiological pragmatism critiquing Scripture.

<sup>8</sup>See Garrison’s brief missionary and academic biography here: <http://www.churchplantingmovements.com/index.php/about> accessed August 4, 2014. Alongside his dissertation, which has not been widely published, Garrison has written, and is writing, extensively in the areas of mission, church planting, and contextualization processes. These are but a few major milestones mentioned here. V. David Garrison, “A New Epoch in Christian Missions Global Changes since World War II,” (PhD Diss., The University of Chicago, 1988), *The Nonresidential Missionary: A New Strategy and the People it Serves* (Birmingham, AL: MARC; New Hope, 1990); *Church Planting Movements: How God Is Redeeming a Lost World*, 2004 ed. (Midlothian, VA.: WIGTake Resources, 1999).

<sup>9</sup>Barrett’s most influential pieces are listed here. David B. Barrett, *World Christian*

academic studies culminated with a 1988 PhD from the University of Chicago's divinity school. Martin Marty, renowned American Christian historian, supervised his dissertation.

Garrison has long influenced the IMB's missiological practices, especially since 1993. Assessing the import of Garrison's dissertation begins at the ending. After historically tracing developments and pathways for the three most influential missionary movements during the twentieth century (ecumenical Protestants, Roman Catholics, and evangelicals) he lands on prescribing a vision for missions in the future.

Garrison notes common aims of each tradition to unify where possible yet remain divergent where not. Common global realities prompted common concerns. Post-World War II dissolution of colonial empires worldwide, the rise of third-world churches, and charismatic renewal movements each converged to reshape the outlook for Christian missionary activity on into the twenty-first century. Decisions or actions taken in the 1960s by each tradition created a move toward organizational unity among ecumenical Protestants and Roman Catholics, yet laid the groundwork for further divergence from and among evangelicals. Garrison quotes Roman Catholic scholar, Thomas Stransky, who lamented the conflictive future symbolized in the fact that two celebrations were set for the seventieth anniversary of the Edinburgh 1910 conference during 1980. One event the World Council of Churches sponsored, while the other was an evangelical Lausanne follow-up session.<sup>10</sup> Shades of disunity from the past, according to Garrison and Stransky, were inhibiting further unified convergence of theology and missiological actions.

The upshot of this review compares and contrasts the parallel thought between Garrison's dissertation and the subsequent initiatives of the IMB alongside what his dissertation suggested as ways forward for the future of Christian missions. Granted, parallel thought does not a cause and effect relationship make; yet implications are evident. This also is one level of critique for the dissertation because Garrison draws parallels between actions and reactions noted above (exogenous and endogenous forces) in the secular and religious worlds but does not cross connect them to demonstrate direct causal effects. Foundational to his dissertation is the affirmation of Edward Shils' theory of the clash between traditionalism and modernism, or the nature of change especially among Christians. Regarding this clash of titanic social forces, Garrison notes,

*Encyclopedia: A Comparative Study of Churches and Religions in the Modern World, AD 1900-2000* (Nairobi and New York: Oxford University Press 1982); David B. Barrett, George Thomas Kurian and Todd M. Johnson, *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World. 2 vols.* 2nd ed. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press 2001); David B. Barrett, Todd M. Johnson, Christopher R. Guidry and Peter F. Crossing, *World Christian Trends, AD 30-AD 2200: Interpreting the Annual Christian Megacensus* (Pasadena, CA.: William Carey Library 2001).

<sup>10</sup>Thomas F. Stransky, "Missions in the 1980s," *Occasional Bulletin of Missionary Research* 7 (April 1979): 47, as cited by Garrison, "A New Epoch," 308.

In the long run, however, the success or failure of the response may be measured in its ability to retain the tradition's adherents within a cohesive identity while enabling them to successfully adapt to the changed environment around them.<sup>11</sup>

Garrison addresses a subset of evangelicalism, termed fundamentalism, throughout his dissertation's line of argument. He stated that the new mixture of evangelical streams of thought and missiological practice, most clearly evidenced in the 1960s, was a movement that stood in conflict with both liberal and Pentecostal or charismatic renewal. This form of fundamental evangelicalism "interpreted foreign missions as an essential expression of right Christian doctrine" and led to an "ardent anti-ecumenical behavior . . ."<sup>12</sup> Here a disconnection between biblical foundations and convergent theological trends seems evident. Instead Garrison affirmed a new agenda evident in that proposed by Dietrich Bonhoeffer in this same regard.

First, Bonhoeffer had urged the church to leave behind its ecclesiastical confines, to commit its agenda to the world's agenda. The church, if it was to be the true church, he argued, must be the church for others, committed to the service of the world. Second, Bonhoeffer gave theology and ethics a highly anthropocentric bent . . .<sup>13</sup>

### **Garrison's Concluding Assessment**

The idea of an overarching *missio Dei* is evident in each of the three major traditions detailed in Garrison's dissertation. He noted that ecumenical Protestants, Catholics, and evangelicals each came to differing conclusions regarding tactical steps for fulfilling the Great Commission. The decade of the 1960s proved pivotal for each tradition in that strategic decisions were made affecting each even to the present. Garrison noted,

[T]he manners in which these traditions shaped their theologies of mission and the resulting adaptations they made were quite different. During the 1960s, these differences became apparent as each of the three traditions made crucial choices and changes in their mission structure, methods, and aims.<sup>14</sup>

While some ideological convergence happened regarding the need to

<sup>11</sup>Garrison, "A New Epoch," 5-6. Note the parallel to the "Grand Compromise" Leonard suggests above.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., 66.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 89. See also Garrison's criticism of these three major missions trends in the twentieth century when he concludes that the ideal of unity, ". . . remained a frustrated goal, however, as each of the three traditions elected to retain valued distinctives rather than allow a convergence built on compromise" (306).

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 304.

engage the world and to be unified Christian witnesses, divergent goals frustrated Garrison's ideal of convergence. Garrison concludes that evangelicals, particularly those of the non-Western world, seemed to be obstinate hold-outs for too conservative of a view of the Bible and theological definition.

While evangelical Christians resisted extra biblical sources for theological formation, Catholic and ecumenical Christians welcomed them as important agents in making theology relevant and indigenous . . . Evangelical Christians outside of Europe and North America were often more rigid in their biblical literalism, more urgent in their apocalyptic expectation, more meticulous in their moralistic prescriptions, and more exclusive in their church polity than corresponding churches in the West . . . For evangelicals world mission continued to mean primarily individual conversion and, what Hoekendijk had denounced three decades earlier as *plantatio ecclesiae*, church planting. For ecumenicals, as for Catholics, liberation and dialogical evangelism remained at the forefront.<sup>15</sup>

### Subsequent IMB Initiatives

Since 1988, Garrison has likely influenced more strategic decisions than any other single person within the IMB. The IMB's design, implementation, and promotion to others for such concepts as church planting movements [CPM], Training for Trainers [T4T], the CAMEL method for Muslim evangelism, and recently addressing Islamic Insider Movements [IM] is extensive. Some were done in collaboration with others within the IMB, but it is in and through the primary publishing house, "WIGTake Resources" and the Church Planting Movements central website and discussion board that promotion continues both inside and outside of the IMB's structures. This is in addition to Garrison's numerous workshops within the IMB, outside speaking, and participation in the broader evangelical world.<sup>16</sup>

### Momentum for Church Planting Movements

In the first half of 1997, the SBC's then FMB reinvented itself. As noted earlier, that entailed a name change but more was involved.<sup>17</sup> A major

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 307 and 309.

<sup>16</sup>The central website is found here: <http://www.churchplantingmovements.com/index.php/about>; accessed August 4, 2014. Note the brief biographies of the main contributors. Additionally, his influence is enhanced through his chapter on Church Planting Movements in the more recent editions of the *Perspectives* course taught annually in numerous locations, especially on or near university campuses, as part of the educational outreach program of the U.S. Center for World Missions in Pasadena, CA. Ralph D. Winter, Steven C. Hawthorne, Darrell R. Dorr, D. Bruce Graham, and Bruce A. Koch, eds., *Perspectives on the World Christian Movement: Reader*, 4th ed. (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 2009), [1981, 1992, 1999].

<sup>17</sup>Elsewhere this author explains further the reconfiguration campaign, then entitled *New Directions*. See Keith E. Eitel, *Paradigm Wars: The Southern Baptist International Mission Board Faces the Third Millennium*, Regnum Studies in Mission (Oxford, UK: Regnum

alteration to the Board's policies and procedures was the introduction of new guidelines for broader evangelical cooperation. This writer attended the 1995 Global Conference on World Evangelism [GCOWE] in Seoul when the policy change went public. The senior vice president for overseas operations, then Avery Willis, publicly announced the nexus of the shift to a GCOWE plenary session.

“The full job of world evangelization is beyond any one group or denomination,” said Avery Willis, FMB senior vice president for overseas operations. “This conference helps make it possible to discover what we can do together.”<sup>18</sup>

### **Additional Developments**

Shortly thereafter, the term Great Commission Christian [GCC] came into common parlance within the IMB and other agencies. Broadening the boundaries for cooperation was a welcomed step along most fronts in the Convention. It was the neglect of any boundaries that posed a problem and is the first indication that Garrison's understanding of the issues within evangelicalism noted in his dissertation were perhaps becoming apparent in Board policy shifts. The first time this writer heard the term GCC was when seated across the table from David B. Barrett. He was attempting to justify counting missionaries and members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints as GCC's in his database for global evangelization, thus skewing data in zones where they were prolific and concluding that they were not needing further evangelization.

The IMB later published a booklet explaining what was changing in its new direction and operational processes. The IMB published the booklet without an author indicated. However, in a later article that Garrison authored, the biographical information lists the booklet as one of his writings. It details further the idea that Willis introduced at GCOWE. The first in a frequently-asked-questions section was “FAQ # 1: Surely you don't expect us to work with all so called Christians? Many of these Christians are Christian in name only and have no personal relationship with Jesus Christ.”<sup>19</sup> The ongoing response serves to argue for widening the definition of the term “Christian.” Then the questions delve into new ideas concerning the definition of the term “church.” Redefining terms in subtle shifts over time provides trace evidence of doublespeak, saying one thing while meaning something else.

Orbiting in the solar system of GCC's is a broadened set of definitions

Paternoster, 2000), 95-111.

<sup>18</sup>Don Martin, “Evangelical Groups Seek an End Run to End Times,” *Baptist Press*, May 31, 1995.

<sup>19</sup>Office of Overseas Operations, “Something New under the Sun: New Directions at the International Mission Board” (Richmond: International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1999), 27.

as well as ways and means for planting churches. Interestingly, the very thing Garrison's dissertation affirms, and what Hoekendijk denounced decades earlier, namely *plantation ecclesiae*, has now become Garrison's central focus. At first this may seem contrary to the point of this review, but with closer examination Garrison seems to refit the concept and uses it within the historically conservative SBC to introduce broad-based evangelical terms that carry overtones of a more inclusive convergence theology. He does this by either stating things in paradoxical ways without explanation or by ignoring theological definitions. Perhaps it is worth noting here that the influences Garrison has had both inside and outside the IMB regarding CPM, T4T, CAMEL, and IM each stem from the corrective trajectory Garrison suggested for the future of missions, especially among evangelicals, in the concluding section of his dissertation. Namely he chides evangelicals, especially the non-Western ones, because they resist moving away from too narrow of a biblicism. He indicted these non-Western believers for accepting too conservative of a view of the Bible from their Western counterparts. To reiterate his words:

Evangelical Christians outside of Europe and North America were often more rigid in their biblical literalism, more urgent in their apocalyptic expectation, more meticulous in their moralistic prescriptions, and more exclusive in their church polity than corresponding churches in the West.<sup>20</sup>

Broadening shifts of meaning foster more ecumenical and convergent thinking with time, more in keeping with Protestant ecumenical and Roman Catholic agendas for twenty-first century mission activities. Especially is this true when the definitions of exogamous evangelical trends are simultaneously shifting. It prompts both healthy reassessment and may encourage careless compromise as historical examples compel us to note here.<sup>21</sup>

In his now seminal work on CPMs, Garrison poses a question to the reader, again in a FAQ section, "1. What are you calling a church?" Yet, he goes on to say it is not simply a gathering for a Bible study and would not be a "church," which is rightly stated. Yet he introduces the emotive sense belonging to a "new covenant community" without defining the term "new covenant." Finally, in this same section, he illustrates what is a church by saying that Jesus chose twelve disciples. This, Garrison says, is a community and that "Jesus placed himself in the center of that community with the words, 'Wherever two or more are gathered in my name there am I in the midst of them.'"<sup>22</sup> Further, Garrison asserts this without exegeting the Matthew

<sup>20</sup>Garrison, "A New Epoch," 307.

<sup>21</sup>David J. Hesselgrave, "Will We Correct the Edinburgh Error? Future Mission in Historical Perspective," *Southwestern Journal of Theology* 49, no. 2 (2007). More will be said regarding this article later.

<sup>22</sup>David Garrison, *Church Planting Movements: How God Is Redeeming a Lost World*

18:20 passage. In context, this passage has nothing to do with defining what constitutes a New Testament church, only the function of spiritual discipline among believers. The doublespeak tactic is undefined evangelical terminology alongside convergence elements that nudge the practitioner toward inclusive, ecumenical, and social practices.

Subsequently, Garrison has written, or helped others to produce, various publications, each introducing various inducements for broad evangelical involvement. Again, this is done without defining or ignoring theological concepts and boundaries. The CAMEL is generally an overreach for a contextualized form of Muslim evangelization. It concedes too much to the commonalities and too little to the stark contrasts between Islamic and Christian theologies. The similarities are superficial while the contrasts are essential.<sup>23</sup>

Finally, Garrison recently published, with funding from a charitable foundation, his new study surveying myriads of underground CPMs among Muslims.<sup>24</sup> Garrison uses a mixture of well-reasoned biblical concepts with convergence ideas seasoned into the flow of thought. However, to contrast ideas left undefined in direct relation to one another is confusing. He defines conversion as “a transformed life through a new relationship with God through the person of Jesus Christ as revealed in the New Testament.”<sup>25</sup> While this statement is true as far as it goes, there is no mention of the finished work of Christ accomplished on the cross on behalf of unbelievers. In other words, the effects of salvation are stated without the means through which it is made available—the missing Gospel speaks volumes. Life transformation or redirection is not necessarily equal to the Gospel message Paul so ardently defended in Galatians 1:6-9. It is not what Garrison says that is problematic, it is what he *does not say* that results in a sort of reader response to the statements. The meaning a reader has for those undefined ideas are subtly read into the flow of thought. Stating one idea to more ecumenical audiences can be recouped for more conservative ones because ideas without theological definitions can serve the purposes of doublespeak.

Nearer the end of Garrison’s argument in this recent piece, he lists the barriers to further development of Muslim CPMs. The first is “Contentious

(Midlothian, VA: WIGTake Resources, 2004), 259.

<sup>23</sup>See Kevin Greeson, *Camel Training Manual: How Muslims Are Coming to Faith in Christ* (Bangalore, India: WIGTake Resources, 2004). Greeson and Garrison are colleagues and worked closely developing these resources. See further David Garrison, “Church Planting Movements vs. Insider Movements: Missiological Realities vs. Mythological Speculations,” *International Journal of Frontier Missions* 21, no. 4 (2004): 151-54. For critique of the CAMEL and corresponding IM assessment see Doug Coleman, *A Theological Analysis of the Insider Movement Paradigm from Four Perspectives: Theology of Religions, Revelation, Soteriology and Ecclesiology*, Evangelical Missiological Society Dissertation Series (Pasadena, CA: William Carey International University Press, 2012).

<sup>24</sup>David Garrison, *A Wind in the House of Islam: How God Is Drawing Muslims around the World to Faith in Jesus Christ* (Monument, CO: WIGTake Resources, 2014).

<sup>25</sup>*Ibid.*, 38.

Christians.” Fragmented Christian bodies are subdivided into “thousands of denominations.” Garrison means “Christianity is irreparably fragmented.” The solution is to recognize that “Christ’s paradox of inclusion and exclusion, should, at the very least, leave us with a healthy mixture of humility and grace before we seek to attack others in the body of Christ.” Garrison finally urges readers to avoid theological controversies that “distract us from the high calling that is before us,”<sup>26</sup> namely, encouraging Muslims to come to Christ and to recognize these CPMs *uncritically* as the vehicle through which God is working.

### Conclusions: Coming Full Circle

R. Keith Parks’ statements regarding the conservative resurgence within the SBC is coming to mind again. Since theology divides us, are we then to unite around the pragmatic effects of missions without agreeing on an essential biblical core for then doing missions? Left unchecked, missiological pragmatism trumps biblical truth. Hesselgrave states, “*Although changes there must and will be, the future of Christian missions will depend more on changes that are not made than it will on changes that are made.*”<sup>27</sup> Biblical truth should prevail and correct our errors of belief and practice. Hesselgrave, though not a Southern Baptist himself, elaborated this caution for evangelicalism as a whole on the eve of the Lausanne 2010 Cape Town gathering that was designed to be a conservative alternative centennial recognition of the Edinburgh 1910 ecumenical gathering.

At Edinburgh 1910, planners decided to bypass theological discussion and neither to construct nor sign theological statements. Instead the gathered representatives were to keep presentations on the prescribed agenda, “strategy and policy issues—missionary training, missions and governments, the message in mission contexts, the church on the mission field, and so on.”<sup>28</sup> Hesselgrave describes the effects of that erroneous decision throughout the remainder of the twentieth century. Namely, the things Garrison hails as the successes of the last century’s main missionary efforts are the things Hesselgrave laments—ecumenical and compromising theological convergence, social definitions of evangelism, and a loss of grievance over the eternal fate of the lost. Are we sacrificing biblical truth and Christ-centered motivation for missionary action on the altar of larger exogamous forces of what is trending globally? Should Christ’s church be prophetically pro-active or continue to be reactive and repeatedly stumble over the *Edinburgh Error*? A place to begin again within SBC circles is to follow through with the conservative

<sup>26</sup>Ibid., 250. Garrison goes on to illustrate how this adversely affects Christian witness to Islam with a seventh-century illustration. The Islamic armies that rolled across Egypt, “discovered a Christian nation that was hopelessly divided over matters of doctrine that had been elevated to irresolvable levels.”

<sup>27</sup>David J. Hesselgrave, *Paradigms in Conflict: 10 Key Questions in Christian Missions Today* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2005), 20. Italics are Hesselgrave’s.

<sup>28</sup>Hesselgrave, “Will We Correct,” 121.

resurgence. That means always being diligent to guard the Bible, the Gospel, and the urgency of the Great Commission. At the very least it means recognizing when, for whatever motive, leadership speaks with double meaning. If doublespeak held the SBC together under more liberal times, could it persist even when we think the battle for an authoritative Bible and biblical missiology is over? Time will tell, but we cannot wait on the future to decide.