

Redefining

Let me begin with a true story, but allow me to insert a make-believe response to the situation; first for the true part. I have had some heart trouble, nothing life-threatening but frustrating to say the least (robbing me of many days that I could have been productive). Many of us have health trouble, so that is not the issue. I have heard some of the most ridiculous comments from the doctor, encountered incompetent office staff, faced countless canceled appointments, and basically been frustrated by the situation. When I fussed, threw a fit, and wrote an ugly personal note to the doctor, suddenly my situation improved.

Now, for the false overreaction:

Having been hurt, frustrated, and disappointed by the doctor, let us pretend that I totally change my approach. I go online and find someone who reinvented the medical world. I decide that I am done with the old ways; old ways disappointed me. Without researching the new ideas and finding the result of those new philosophies, I give my health to these new people and am happy with the change. With no proven outcome, there is no telling where my situation will end, but I am going there! I do not know if these methods will prove successful, but I "feel good about them," and I continue with unproven medical advice. This scenario is probably not very prudent!

In reality, I changed to a very capable doctor who is well-trained, still wears a white coat, and has a good office staff. Someone who is a mess does not give me a reason to throw out something good.) Just because someone hurts us or fails is no reason to throw out everything we are or believe. To chase after unproven ideas and alter what has worked in the past is complete vanity. Back to the message...

I love who I am; I need no redefining. I married a woman and never thought of any new definition of marriage. Yes, bad marriages exist; my own parents split up, but I am not going to redefine marriage. I like being an American, and I do not like the redefining that is taking place today. I love being a preacher, and I love preaching! Jesus preached and John the Baptist came preaching; the Word of God is manifested through PREACHING (Titus 1:3). I do not need a new title, and my assistant pastors are just fine being called "brother." We do not need a "teaching staff, a "lead pastor," a "teaching pastor," a "leadership team..." From where did those titles come? Did anyone look? I dare you to find out for yourself before you start using those titles. I believe they came from a secular business model. Of course, I can teach; the Bible requires a pastor to be "apt to teach." I have been teaching God's Word for forty years, but I am a preacher. The preacher here at Faith Baptist Church has been teaching the Bible since the opening day.

I recently saw a comment about "the redefining movement" among Independent Baptist churches. I was thinking back over all the inventions that have come into the world since I started our church. I noticed people trying to redefine immigration, gun rights, male and female, and, of course, marriage. People are trying to redefine subjects ranging from politics to patriotism, and gun rights to freedom of speech. I am not against new things, but I study them first. I believe you will find the term *Youth Pastor* was new in the 1950s. I am against tossing out what has worked, what has been proven, and what has defined us for generations. The other day, a young couple asked me if we would ever have a "coffee shop." They did not mean a place to serve coffee; I think they meant a place to hang out, drink coffee, and call it a ministry. Dr. Hyles made fun of "coffee shop" ministries in the '80s; it is nothing new, just a sorry replacement for the hard work of soul winning, bus ministry, and Sunday school. While I am on

the subject, where is the Sunday school program? Why are our Fundamental young men redefining Sunday school? I am not talking about other groups; I am talking about guys who grew up in Sunday school. By the way, Sunday school was essential in training them. Keep calling your Sunday morning Sunday school.

There is always a crowd trying to redefine and improve everything and everybody. I am sure all their motives are not wrong, but I think there is a smell of sulfur behind most of these new ideas. Hitler and Stalin also wanted to redefine society and “help” people -- that did not work out very well. Our last President was elected on “Hope and Change,” and it should have been called “Hopeless Change.” For his term has made a great number of people hopeless.

If you research the more recent history of Christianity, you will find orthodoxy and neo-orthodoxy, as well as the Evangelical movement and the Neo-Evangelical movement. Next came the Charismatic Movement and several other religious movements; the seeker-sensitive movement and emergent church followed and on and on and on it goes.

I do not know where all these folks originated. Maybe events from their past were so bad, that they had to invent a new version of religion. Regardless of their reasons, my spiritual roots are awesome! Sure, there happened to be some sinners among us, but what we believed was fine. Some want to abandon their roots and start a new movement (not to mention redefine everything we used to hold sacred). One might think folks would be OKAY just leaving my "Independent Baptist" title alone. In America, we are free. The critics can redefine everything else and invent their own new ideas, but they should not try to redefine what I am or what Independent Baptists believe. They need to leave the term Independent Baptist completely out of their definition of who and what they are.

Let me just say that I do not need to be redefined and neither does my faith and practice. On a recent big day at our church, over 100 visitors attended and dozens of them trusted Christ; one might think the new movement folks could just leave that alone. I know we are out of date and archaic, but please pardon us, we quite enjoy being old-fashioned and behind the times. We enjoy starting new churches, winning souls, running buses, and believing our Bible to be the Word of God -- word for word. We really like our choir and orchestra. We do not want to be redefined! We like the fact that our young men want to preach, want to start new churches, and want to go to the mission field. We do not need your redefinition. Most of our men wear a tie, and most of our ladies wear dresses. No, it is not mandatory, just normal Sunday-go-to-meetin' dress. We also have an invitation at the end of the preaching. Sunday morning is directed more towards younger and needy believers; the PREACHING on Sunday night is geared a little more towards workers. On Wednesday night, we study the Bible -- it is our mid-week Bible study, a time when the old guy in the pulpit teaches the Bible.

I find it interesting that every time a new movement arises, the old-fashioned, Baptist preacher remains a soul-winning, Bible-believing, separated Christian. The new movements come and go. It may be the Charismatic Movement, promise keepers, purpose-driven models, etc., but it seems that every time a movement disappears, there just happens to be an old-fashioned Baptist still doing the same old stuff. The praise band and the praise team will lose popularity; the praise dance team will not last. But you will always find a young man or an old one still standing to preach; you will find a “song leader” not a “praise and worship time.” The leaders of these movements do not want to redefine their failed movements, they want to redefine what has been solid and trusted for years.

Modernists, liberals, and Neo-evangelicals are all failed attempts to change the solid Bible-believing, separated, soul-winning churches. Just so everyone knows, we do not want your new definition. We like being what we are. We, who have been preaching since you were born, have seen changes like these in the past. Your ideas are not innovative; your ideas are reruns of Gilligan's Island. You are not redefining, you are performing reruns.

My dear pastor Brother Hyles said something about needing a "mean, old man in the pulpit," and I for one think that is a good idea. You can keep your slick, cool dudes who chat and share the Word. I will stick with a mean, old man preaching the old-time message.

For whatever reason, there are some bad doctors, some bad grocery store workers, and some bad bankers. Bad politicians can also be found; to those politicians, I say, "Do not mess with my Constitution or Bill of Rights!" What has worked, won souls, trained preachers, started churches, and sent the Gospel to the world still works; it needs no redefining. As David said, "I cannot go, for I have not proved them." My old-fashioned ways have worked just fine. (Some people are even paranoid to use the term, *old-fashioned*.) Get God's power; get to work and keep using the tools that were used to produce you. Those same tools work! If you must redefine something, leave off the name Independent Baptist; we do not want your new definition. We live in a free country; go start a new movement. When it dies, I can assure you that there will be old-fashioned Independent Baptist preachers hollering about sin and the Word of God.