

“What is Sociological Fundamentalism?”

Can you briefly discuss the phenomenon known as “sociological fundamentalism”? What effect has this had on the community and on the non-Christian?

I have run across a couple of possible definitions of “sociological fundamentalism” in my reading. One refers to the belief that Christians should be culturally or sociologically separate from the rest of society. The argument for this belief often comes from 2 Corinthians 6:17 which reads, “Therefore come out from them and be separate, says the Lord. Touch no unclean thing, and I will receive you.”

The other use of the phrase is as a description of those who conform to the social norms of the group often labeled “Christian fundamentalists” but do not believe in what is considered orthodox Christian theology.

Both situations can be problematic for the church. Those seeking to be sociologically separate from a culture often have difficulty being ambassadors for Christ. Being an ambassador implies that you know something about the people to whom you are sent as well as the message given you by your sovereign. It can become difficult communicating with people who you have little in common with or know little about. Christ was sent by the Father, but he also identified with the culture of his day and with its people.

On the other hand, being “Christian” only in outward appearance is a great tragedy. Possessing a form of religion without actually being a member of God's family would be a horrible mistake.

When the church focuses too much on the behavior (abortion, homosexuality, etc.) of unbelievers rather than on the message

of reconciliation offered by the gospel of Christ we can convey the message that the outward appearance of righteousness is all that matters.

You might be interested in [an essay that I wrote](#) a number of years ago about the current culture war in America. Perhaps it might add context to my response.

I hope that this brief response is helpful.

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