

# STRAIGHTWAY

*"And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed him" Mark 1:18.*

**CHRISTIAN PURITIES FELLOWSHIP**

The Witness Outreach of  
Foundations Bible College  
P.O. Box 1166 · Dunn, North Carolina 28335

*30 years*  
1973-2003

VOLUME 31

MAY 2003

NUMBER 5

## The Contemporary

Dr. H. T. Spence

The word *contemporary* has become a term readily identifiable with this generation. It is part of the "now" vocabulary expressing itself in a variety of areas of life. Its fluid mood and meaning not only controls our society but also has become a permanent part of the mutating institutional church of our times. Although the contemporary practice is clearly found in the liberal and modernistic churches across the world, the Bible Christian must carefully discern with candor the successful, manipulative, subtle, and persuasive power of the contemporary principle that is no respecter of ministries. Its inroads are becoming a major part of the fabric of many conservative churches. Ecclesiastical leaders are demanding its acceptance by any young man rising in the

ranks of their ministeriums. Such a young man must yield to the contemporary scepter or be banished and isolated from their fellowships or denominational churches. Ministers of music are being taught that the contemporary is the only way to build a church in this generation. Thus, in return such ministers are progressively molding the musical talent of their local churches into the contemporary principle.

But what is the contemporary? Why has it become such a viable authority in the churches today? Why must the Christian discern its true character and destructive tentacles appearing among what used to be the bastions of Truth? These are questions that must be addressed at this crucial time in history when so many are departing from the "Faith once

delivered unto the saints” and entering the broad, populated camp of the “contemporary.”

### **Defining the Contemporary**

Here, on the East Coast of America, the “Contemporary Worship Service” has become a standard whereby a “Neo” church is identified. Such churches have inculcated this type of “worship” service in one of two ways. First, some have added an early Sunday morning “contemporary” worship service that is followed by a more traditional worship service. Secondly, others have changed the regularly scheduled worship service into a “contemporary” worship service. If a church takes the former approach, the first service has the minister without a tie and coat, advertising the “casual” look; here, the people are encouraged to come “dressed as you are.” In such services, the music is upbeat with “rock” as the dominating form; the approach to God is informal without any concern for respect in manner,

vocabulary, and order. In this church’s second service (perhaps an hour later), a traditional, formal atmosphere is manufactured by the minister’s wearing of a tie and coat and by the singing of more reserved, historical hymns. While pacifying the elder generation, the church adopts the contemporary principle as a Holy Ghost “insight” in order to reach this generation.

What makes a worship service contemporary? What makes its music contemporary? What makes its philosophy contemporary? What makes its manner of life contemporary? Is there a true defining of the contemporary?

Although the contemporary has been part of the Neo-Evangelical and Charismatic scene since the late 1960s and early 1970s (through the compromises of Billy Graham, Oral Roberts, and others), recent years have revealed an increasingly aggressive move in the Fundamentalist camp toward the contemporary principle. Several music ministers have stepped forward with old-line Neo-Evangelical reasoning (as if they were the first ones to think of such reasoning) that has brought confusion among the laity concerning this term *contemporary*. In their careless manipulation of the term, their constant debate has been that “there is nothing wrong with songs being written by people living today.” By pressing for the alternative definition that *contemporary* may refer to any music written by people today, they have endeavored to downplay the word *contemporary* as it regards a powerful principle and

## **STRAIGHTWAY**

**O. Talmadge Spence, Founder**

H. T. Spence, Editor  
President

**Foundations Bible College**

**P. O. Box 1166**

**Dunn, NC 28335-1166**

**800-849-8761**

[www.foundations.edu](http://www.foundations.edu)

---

**Annual Subscription**

USA - \$5.00 · Foreign - \$8.00

*\*CPF Members Excluded*

philosophy. Therefore, the laity embraces the word *contemporary* as a mere harmless and impotent word.

Music being written by people living today is not where the problem lies; every generation must express the Faith again, with fresh sermons and hymnody. However, this is not the issue! When our generation speaks of the “contemporary,” they have another meaning that we as Christians must discern. The necessity of such discernment is heightened by the fact that global apostasy is a part of the warp and woof of our times. When the term *contemporary* is used in the context of “Contemporary Worship Service,” “Contemporary Christian Music,” or “contemporary style,” it has another powerful meaning. In these contexts, it is informing the populace that the content and fabric of the service or music are a product of the dominating philosophy of the present age. It announces that we worship with the vernacular, the belief, and the sound of the present, secular, away-from-God age. It means “modern” and “that which is popular” or “pop” with the secular world. It is of the world; yea, *it is the world!*

### “Worldly” or “Contemporary”?

The worldly and carnal crowd that dominates most churches today naturally loves the world and the things of the world. These people could not just simply call their music and worship services “worldly.” Such a term would not sit well with the Bible-believing remnant often found within these churches. It

reminds one of the subtle approaches of the “Pro-Choicers” when it comes to abortion. They believe in abortion (or aborticide: killing a child within the womb of its mother); however, they do not like to be called “Pro-Abortionists” because the term carries a bad connotation and denotation. Therefore, “Pro-Choice” is a more acceptable, humane, and civilized title that does not carry the stigma of what it truly is.

It is the same with contemporary Christian music. If a CCM composer or “performer” would go ahead and call their music what it really is, it would have to be called “worldly” music. Yet, who would call themselves a singer of WCM or “Worldly Christian Music”? So, to protect the guilty of what they are really doing, the term *contemporary* is substituted for the term *worldly*, to soften or lessen what it really is. It merely minimizes the stigma of being worldly.

### Understanding My Contemporary

To understand my contemporary I must understand the concept of its existence. There are two words in the Greek New Testament that help to enlighten us about the contemporary. They are the words *kosmos* and *aion*. *Kosmos* has two meanings, depending on the context used. Its first meaning is “mankind.” John 3:16 states, “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son...” The word *kosmos* here is referring to mankind, certainly a proper object of God’s love. *Kosmos* literally means,

“adorning.” In Genesis 1:2-3, God brought a *kosmos* out of chaos. However, in other contexts in the New Testament the second meaning of *kosmos* refers to a “world system” or the “world of men who are living alienated and apart from God.” God may love the world of mankind, but I John 2:15 tells us to “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” Here the word *kosmos* refers to the world system.

This “world system” is one continuous flow of man’s evil heart unfolding in powerful influence down through history. This single world-system is then divided into historical increments designated as *aion* or ages. R.C. Trench, the great Greek scholar of the nineteenth century, gives the following classic definition of *aion*:

All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world, which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define, but which constitute a most real and effective power, being the moral, or immoral, atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale.

Richard C. Trench, *Synonyms of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1975), pp. 217-218.

An “age” is the product of mankind’s collective heart manifested through his outworkings. The apex of that age becomes the base upon which the next age builds, adding its

own heart and manifestation. This single world system (*kosmos*) is ever flowing through its ages (*aion*), being linked with the past and producing the future. We must understand that sin is ever mutating; therefore, every generation is a new breed, something deeper in the world system.

According to Scripture, each age has its unique characteristics. First, II Corinthians 4:4 speaks of the “god of this world” or the “god of this age.” Every age will have its god. The gods of our age are certainly materialism and sensuality; these have become the masters of our society. The Charismatic movement is based on these gods, and it preaches their gospel.

Secondly, Matthew 13:22 tells of the “cares of this world.” Each generation or age has its unique cares that draw it away from God and His Word or distract the heart from truth. The cares of one hundred years ago are different from the cares we face today.

Thirdly, there is the “wisdom of this world” or *age* mentioned in I Corinthians 2:6. Each generation or age has its unique wisdom, its dominating philosophy. Fourthly, there are “rulers of this world” or age in Ephesians 6:12, and the “princes [leaders] of this world” or age in First Corinthians 2:6,8.

Lastly, there are the “children of this world” or *age* mentioned in Luke 16:8. Children today are different somewhat from the children of forty or fifty years ago. The hippies were

the product children of their age; we have our product children of the present generation with their ways of reasoning, their fashions of clothing, their music, and their “in” thing. Its tangible mood and spirit bleeds through everything they want: it is their contemporary.

All of the characteristics we have mentioned have become the mold through which the present generation has been formed. Keep in mind, the contemporary is an invisible mood and spirit. The contemporary is “All that floating mass of thoughts, opinions, maxims, speculations, hopes, impulses, aims, aspirations, at any time current in the world, *which it may be impossible to seize and accurately define*, but which constitute a most real and effective power, being the moral, or immoral, atmosphere which at every moment of our lives we inhale, again inevitably to exhale.”

The age or the contemporary is a powerful entity all around our existence. Before Christ found us we were part of this floating mass. We are told in Ephesians 2:2, “Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience.” The literal Greek rendering of the first part of that verse is that “we walked according to the age of this world system.” However, now we have become new creatures in Christ. This new creation is manifested in a variety of ways. We no longer love this world, and James 1:27 states we are to keep ourselves unspotted

from this world, or age. We live in an age, our age, our contemporary. Paul speaks in Galatians 1:4, that God through His Son is to deliver us from *this present evil world*, this present evil age. Moreover, this exhortation includes the way of thinking we used to have.

### **The Mutating Contemporary**

Although the world system is mutating, God’s Word is not—it is consummated truth! On a wholesale scale across the world, ministers and theological professors are trying to convince us that God’s Word must mutate with the age and that we as Christians must make it relative. Their argument is that as the age changes, so must the Bible. This, they say, is accomplished through up-to-date paraphrases, amplifications, professing clarifications, and revisions. The institutional church of the Laodicean church age no longer believes the Bible because its church leaders have taught them so by marketing its many versions and translations of the Bible.

The universal philosophy of our contemporary is Existentialism, the final outcome of Dialecticism. Georg Hegel tried to convince the world that linear logic was no longer suitable for society and that the dialectic principle of logic was to be the contemporary choice. In dialecticism two literal opposites are brought together into one principle; a thesis and an antithesis are combined to form a synthesis of thought. In Christianity this is applied by taking Truth and the error of an age and mixing them together into one

principle. The synthesis of these opposites is the mark of contemporary pulpit preaching. What is the Master Sin and practical lifestyle of the institutional church today? It is carnality. Carnality is the dialecticism of “spirituality” and the “flesh”; it is the bringing together of these opposing principles into one principle of living.

One will see this world-system principle working in the preaching when the standards of Christian living are lowered to satisfy more of the flesh. One will see this principle in the music when it is subtly infiltrated with the sensual contemporary sound in order to satisfy the people. Sometimes conservative ministries appear to be strong for Truth and righteousness; at other times, they allow the opposite to express itself.

Because most of the theological systems have no remedy for it, carnality must co-exist with spirituality, like Cain and Abel, like Abraham and Lot, like Esau and Jacob. However, just as there was a separation between these opposites, Biblical separation must be the cry today! This must be known not only in ecclesiastical separation but also in personal separation.

### **Conclusion**

The public identification of Christian Fundamentalism today finds itself within the half-way house between its former day identification and Neo-Evangelicalism, which left its camp back in the late 1940s. To get to the Neo camp there must be a transitional period

that at times is difficult to define. For one to get from white to black there must be the gray season. This is a season where the movement is not like it used to be and has some of the appearance of that which it fought against at one time. Yet, because it continues to hold to some semblance of its founding principles, its new direction is hard to identify clearly. Sometimes you can, sometimes you can't; nevertheless, you know something is wrong. There are sounds infiltrating the Fundamentalist music that are definitely Neo-Evangelical and Charismatic; the music has the characteristics of the world's “contemporary.” Yet, is it full-blown CCM?

How often we have heard, even from ministers of music, the clear analogy of Lot and his seven steps to the gate of Sodom. A split seems to be coming in Fundamentalism today, one that is going to grieve the heart of God; it has been the movement that God has used to confront the apostate giant in Christianity. But this split is going to take a greater portion of Fundamentalism into the camp of its so-called “separated brethren,” the Neo-Evangelicals. Although it will not happen overnight, it will be the pitching of the tent toward the Neo direction that will finally lead to its apostasy. A few compromises here and there, remaining neutral at important times when a stand should be taken, a relaxing of the dress and music standards over a period of time, and after a while the contemporary has established itself among the people. It first begins with the teachers and

the preachers, and then it is forced upon the laity. Once the laity have laid hold of the contemporary, the church or school is now contemporary.

Some may think God's men in a given generation are "picky" and "making a mountain out of a mole hill." Nevertheless, the seers on the walls of their generation know that once the contemporary begins to creep within the house and begins to be tolerated, it is only a matter of time before the contemporary becomes the despot of the house. The music of Fundamentalism may not have a rock beat now (at least most of it does not). However, it has entered the gray area of flirting with the sound of the surrealistic, the new age, the easy-listening, the passivist spirit, and the modern chordality of contemporary accompaniments. We are witnessing an infatuation with contemporary composers who tickle the ear with borderline Charismatic, "Day of Discovery" sounds. This "New" will be defined as being fresh and innovative, as being a new high water mark for the people of God. Although Ralph Carmichael and Bill Gaither have been the godfathers of innovative contemporary music, now a new breed has stepped forward as products of their contemporary. Lloyd Larson, Cindy Berry, and others have become the conservative champions of the contemporary. Music is now being acclaimed as the "PR" spokesman for evangelism. Such pragmatic thinking tolerates a greater acceptance of the contemporary in order to "get sinners saved."

We must arise and play the man and woman for God by taking a stand against that from which God delivered us. We must not be conformed to this world, this age (Romans 12:2). Our conformity is to be found in the Holy Son of God Who overcame the world, His age, His contemporary (Romans 8:29; John 16:33). Unless a revival of heart purity and biblical separation comes to Fundamentalism, our days as useful servants of God are numbered. He may not immediately destroy our compromising churches or root-changing Bible colleges and universities; He may simply give us over to a delusion and let us go our own way, the way of all flesh, the way of the *contemporary*.

Visit our website  
for other articles.

*[www.foundations.edu](http://www.foundations.edu)*

### **Recent Articles:**

"Our Soul is Dried Away"

"Thirtieth Anniversary  
Christian Purities Fellowship  
*Straightway Newsletter*"

"The War with Iraq"

"Hope in Christ's Resurrection"

## **MAY "TAPES OF THE MONTH"**

### **THE TWENTY-NINTH ANNUAL BIBLE CONFERENCE**

**APRIL 13-20, 2003**

*Theme:*

*"The Golden Passional" — Isaiah 53*

**Dr. H. T. Spence**

*"The Golden Passional"*

*"Who Hath Believed Our Report" (Isaiah 53:1)*

*"He Shall See of the Travail of His Soul" (Isaiah 53:11)*

*"Dividing the Spoil" (Isaiah 53:12a)*

*"He Poured Out His Soul unto Death" (Isaiah 53:12b)*

**Dr. Dennis Lowry**

*"He Hath No Form Nor Comeliness" (Isaiah 53:2b)*

*"He Is Despised and Rejected of Men" (Isaiah 53:3)*

**Dr. Douglas Wilson**

*"Surely He Hath Borne Our Griefs" (Isaiah 53:4)*

**Bro. Adam Watt**

*"He Shall Grow Up Before Him" (Isaiah 53:2a)*

**Bro. Samuel Sanderlin**

*"The Power of His Resurrection"*

### **SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKERS**

**Rev. Gary Dean**

*"All We Like Sheep Have Gone Astray" (Isaiah 53:6)*

*"Who Shall Declare His Generation?" (Isaiah 53:8)*

*"It Pleased the Lord to Bruise Him" (Isaiah 53:10)*

**Pastor Mark Cowles**

*"He Was Wounded for Our Transgressions" (Isaiah 53:5)*

*"He Was Oppressed, and He Was Afflicted" (Isaiah 53:7)*

*"He Made His Grave with the Wicked" (Isaiah 53:9)*

16-tape Set: \$40.50 postpaid

Single CD-ROM (MP3 Audio Format): \$23.45 postpaid

Foundations Ministries • P.O. Box 1166 • Dunn, NC 28335

fre recordings@foundations.edu • 800-849-8761 • [www.foundations.edu](http://www.foundations.edu)



# **Twenty-first Men's Prayer Conference**

June 12-14, 2003

5 PM Thursday through 8 AM Saturday

**Theme:**

**“How Is the Gold Become Dim”**

Meals and Lodging  
Are Provided Free of Charge  
To All Who Attend.

*Let Us Come, Brethren, With an Earnest Heart  
For the Word of God and With a Burden of Prayer.*

## **Special Summer School**

June 30th — July 11th

Ten Days of Concentrated Biblical Study  
—Potential of ten credits—

Please write or call  
for financial information concerning  
room, board, and tuition.

**Foundations Bible College**

P.O. Box 1166

Dunn, North Carolina 28335-1166

800-849-8761 • 910-892-8761

[info@foundations.edu](mailto:info@foundations.edu)

[www.foundations.edu](http://www.foundations.edu)

# SECOND ANNUAL FOUNDATIONS MARRIAGE CONFERENCE

**July 26th**

9:00 AM to 8:00 PM

Four messages to be given on marriage by  
Dr. H. T. Spence with special seasons of  
prayer for the married couples and  
an evening formal concert.



*"A Special Day Dedicated to  
the Preservation of the Sanctity of Marriage"*

All of these meetings and provisions are free of charge.  
Registration can be made  
through the mail or at [wwwFOUNDATIONS.edu](http://wwwFOUNDATIONS.edu)

## FOURTH ANNUAL LADIES PRAYER FELLOWSHIP



**August 8-9**

12:00 noon Friday to 12:00 noon Saturday

Dr. and Mrs. Spence will each be speaking  
twice along with seasons of prayer, testimonies,  
and fellowship. Lodging provided on campus  
for out-of-town guests.

Introducing  
FOUNDATIONS CONCERT SERIES  
VOLUME ONE

*Horn,  
Violoncello,  
& Piano*

Dante Hernández, *Horn* · Sara Hernández, *Cello* · Robert Wilson, *Piano*  
Classical works by Mozart, Bach, Handel, Beethoven, and others  
Recorded live on January 10, 2003 · Total playing time: 75:17

**Price: \$16.50 ppd**

Foundations Ministries · P.O. Box 1166 · Dunn, NC 28335  
frecordings@foundations.edu · 800-849-8761 · [www.foundations.edu](http://www.foundations.edu)

RECENT REPRINT

**Scriptural Separation**  
O. Talmadge Spence

"Here is a book for which thoughtful Christians have waited too long. It points out the intrinsic dangers of lip service to biblical inerrancy, inspiration, and infallibility without sound biblical convictions and practice in daily life. Christians who desire to honor God and obey His Word know instinctively that there is something wrong with the pseudo-Fundamentalist position.

In this book Dr. Spence shows that Scriptural separation is the basis of doctrinal purity and is essential to it. Therefore, pseudo-Fundamentalism, which refuses to be governed by the Scriptural commands concerning separation from compromise, unbelief, and apostasy, also results in the corruption and ultimate destruction of the purity of Scriptural doctrine."

Scripture Commentary Society  
P.O. Box 1166 · Dunn, NC 28335 · [www.foundations.edu](http://www.foundations.edu)

**\$4.00 ppd**