

THE BIG SPLIT

NAVIGATING THE SCHISM OF THE UNITED
METHODIST CHURCH



SESSION 1: HOW DID WE
GET HERE?

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

This series will consist of four sessions. Each of these sessions will be held after church with an open invitation to all members. Our goal across the four sessions will be to fully understand the choice ahead of us. At the end of the series, the congregation will have the opportunity to advise the leadership council about future courses of action. Please mark these dates on your calendar!

1/29/2023

SESSION 1: HOW DID WE GET HERE?

We'll set out ground rules for our conversations and look back at some of the history that got us where we are today.

2/5/2023

SESSION 2: WHERE ARE WE NOW?

We'll look at some of the disputed theological issues between the GMC and the UMC and read selections from key voices in their tradition.

2/12/2023

SESSION 3: NUTS AND BOLTS

We'll compare and contrast the GMC and the UMC on a number of specific issues ranging from institutional structure to social witness.

2/19/2023

SESSION 4: WHAT'S NEXT?

We'll take questions from you and discern what's next for our worshipping community.

RULES TO LIVE BY

1

KEEP IT CONFIDENTIAL

This is a hard time for everyone. There are multiple pastors and people that would love nothing more than to weigh in on your choice. Some of them would be happy to be disruptive if they thought it would hurt the other side. Beyond that, some conferences in the UMC (such as North Georgia) have deemed it "a disruption of ministry" to share information from conversations like this and grounds for punitive action. For the sake of one another, our church, and our denomination, keep our conversations OUR conversations.

2

STAY CURIOUS

You probably don't know all of the details of the GMC and the UMC. Keep an open mind and listen deeply. Even if you end up feeling the same way you did when we started, you'll know a lot more about both positions by the time we're done.

3

SPEAK FOR YOURSELF

It's easy to assume everyone thinks just like us, ESPECIALLY when we worship together regularly. The scary truth is people don't always agree. Don't assume that you speak for anyone other than yourself. It'll make it easier on both you and them.

4

DON'T WIELD YOUR INFLUENCE AS A WEAPON

You might think that things are going in the wrong direction at times. Don't take that opportunity to declare that if things don't go your way, you'll leave. Don't talk about how much you give and how the church won't be able to stand without you. Don't say that your friends will all follow you in leaving. We get it. Nothing will be the same after this. If you start posturing, someone else will do the same and things will spiral. Help create a peaceful environment and de-escalate things when they get hard.

5

BE COMPASSIONATE

You probably won't live through a second church split. This is your one chance to do it right. How do you want to have acted? Will you be proud of the way you act?

WHY IS ALL OF THIS NECESSARY?

WHY IS THIS NECESSARY?

The United Methodist Church is splitting into two entities through the use of disaffiliation paragraph 2553: the United Methodist Church and the Global Methodist Church. This chaotic split is a result of church legislation called "The Protocol for Grace and Reconciliation through Separation" being delayed for years and losing support.

WHY ARE WE CHOOSING BETWEEN THESE TWO ORGANIZATIONS?

No other entities have emerged from the split of the United Methodist Church. There was briefly an organization that tried to entice theological progressives to join (the Liberation Methodist Connexion), but their launch failed in 2021 due to lack of resources and interest (press release available at thelmx.org).

Of the 80 churches in West Ohio that disaffiliated (not counting those with no web presence), 46.1% announced their entry into the Global Methodist Church within a month of disaffiliation. The remaining 56.6 percent are currently independent and have not announced ties to any other organization. No disaffiliating churches in West Ohio have aligned with any group other than the GMC. Is it possible to join another denomination? Potentially. But there's no precedent at this point. People are largely choosing one side or the other with some projected to dip out entirely to remain independent.

IS THERE ANY CHANCE WE CAN STAY PUT AND THINGS WON'T CHANGE?

Of the 80 churches that have disaffiliated in the West Ohio Conference (list available at <https://www.westohioumc.org/disaffiliation/special-session-2022>), 100% of those congregations are theologically orthodox or conservative, as is displayed on their church websites. Other conferences statistics mirror West Ohio's, reflecting an exodus of evangelicals from the UMC. The United Methodist Church votes on new legislation at conference with most challenging legislation passing by less than 10% (such as the special conference in 2018, which passed legislation 53% to 47%). If the status quo we currently enjoy was driven by a spectrum that contained both theological conservatives and theological progressives, the lack of voices from one side of that spectrum will result in very different voting results. If TPUMC is theologically progressive, this will be a great boon. If TPUMC is more theologically orthodox, this will be a problem.

WHY DO WE HAVE TO ACT NOW?

Paragraph 2553 allows for disaffiliation from the United Methodist Church at a MUCH lower price than usual. If not for this paragraph, a church that wants to disaffiliate from the UMC has to buy all of their property from the denomination. Paragraph 2553 essentially allows churches to exit the denomination for pennies on the dollar. This legislation expires at the end of 2023.

Will some conferences make it easier to disaffiliate in the future? Out of the 9 conferences in Ohio and its surrounding states, five have added additional restrictions to make disaffiliation harder. None have proposed an extension for paragraph 2553. There will not be another opportunity to leave the UMC (should you so wish) at this price.

At the end of this process, we will vote on the following questions:

- 1) Do you wish to disaffiliate from the United Methodist Church?
- 2) Do you wish to seek affiliation with the Global Methodist Church?

These are not mutually exclusive. If YES to question 1 but NO to question two, TPUMC will become an independent congregation (TPMC). We could negotiate affiliation with a different denomination entirely at a point in the future, or we could remain independent. The choice will be yours.



HOW DID WE GET HERE?

Most of you have probably heard that the United Methodist Church is splitting. After all, a split has officially been on the table for years now (in 2019, official rules for splitting the church were created), and even before that it was long-rumored. But *why* are we splitting? Is one difference really big enough to divide Christians? Or has something gotten out of proportion?

What reasons have you heard that the United Methodist Church is splitting? Where did you hear them?

Depending on which pastors you follow, here are some of the likely reasons you might have listed: same-sex marriage, scriptural authority, a failure by Church authorities to uphold church discipline, the polarization of America, intolerance, etc. The list goes on and on.

Needless to say, the reason that many of you are probably most familiar with is same-sex marriage. This is, in many ways, the powder keg that lit the controversy. The 2018 General Conference that promised to resolve all the differences in the Church once and for all focused on same-sex marriage and that issue has tended to be at the forefront of Methodist politics since the 1970s when interest for that particular cause first sparked. So done deal, right? This is a simple binary. You either want same-sex marriage (in which case you choose to stay United Methodist) or you don't think the Bible allows for same-sex marriage (in which case you join the Global Methodist Church). Easy as that, right?

But it isn't that easy. If that was the only issue on the table, then why are there some pastors out there who have no interest in marrying same-sex couples that insist that they belong in the United Methodist Church? And why are some of the votes to disaffiliate coming from laypeople who support same-sex marriage within the church?

While it's tempting to simplify the Methodist split down to a singular issue, that's a misrepresentation of what's actually happening. The differences between the Global Methodist Church and the United Methodist Church range from theology to polity to Church discipline to philosophy. We can track the history of this division within American Protestantism back over a hundred years. The split is deeper than we pretend, and it's been coming way longer than you may have expected.

And yes, same-sex marriage is on the table. No point in pretending that it isn't involved. But same-sex marriage has become something of a *shibboleth* in this particular feud. And what, you may ask, is a shibboleth? For your answer, turn to Judges 19:

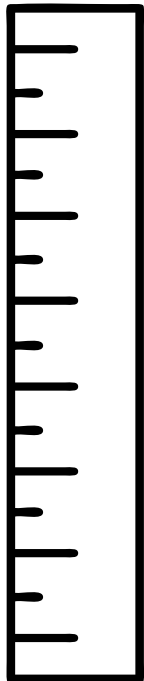


Jephthah then called together the men of Gilead and fought against Ephraim. The Gileadites struck them down because the Ephraimites had said, "You Gileadites are renegades from Ephraim and Manasseh." The Gileadites captured the fords of the Jordan leading to Ephraim, and whenever a survivor of Ephraim said, "Let me cross over," the men of Gilead asked him, "Are you an Ephraimite?" If he replied, "No," they said, "All right, say 'Shibboleth.'" If he said, "Sibboleth," because he could not pronounce the word correctly, they seized him and killed him at the fords of the Jordan. Forty-two thousand Ephraimites were killed at that time. (Judges 12:4-6)

In this story, was anyone really being killed because of the way they pronounced the word "shibboleth?" No. There was more to it than that. If someone was capable of saying "SHibboleth," they were probably from Ephraim or Manasseh. If someone could only say "SSSibboleth," then they belonged to a totally different tribe. The way you said that word told others a lot about your aspirations, your worldview, your assumptions, and your loyalties. People weren't fighting over the SH sound. I mean, they were! But they were fighting over much more than that. They were fighting over a million different things! The way one word was pronounced just happened to be the most visible expression of their differences.

Same-sex marriage is a shibboleth in the modern UMC. It's an easily identifiable, public difference that people can point at and debate, and a person's position on that particular issue often indicates their loyalties on a number of other issues. That's why it's so commonly debated; because there are a hundred other debates happening under the surface when people debate that issue. The goal of this study is to move beyond the shibboleth. We want to go deeper. We're going to trot out every major issue (and even some minor ones), look at what big names on both sides of the fence are saying, and try to understand where our worshipping community fits in with all of this.

THE MOST COMMON OBJECTION



"I'm a moderate. I just want to keep the status quo! Which option do I pick to just keep things just the way they are?."

There's not really an option available for "no change." You can go with the GMC or the UMC, but things will inevitably change either way both organizationally and theologically. Think of it this way: Imagine you have a yardstick. Where is the middle? Well, it's in the center of the stick where the color is gray. Simple enough! Now snap that stick in half. Where is the middle? On both new sticks, the middle has shifted. Without the other half of the stick to counterbalance things, the center is very different than it used to be. The same will be true with the United Methodist split. As the church splits, the middle won't be where it was anymore. Both sides will be their own entities, defining their own new middle.

You might feel moderate. You might feel like you want no change. Unfortunately, that option is no longer on the table. For you, the best option is to listen to the different perspectives in the coming weeks and identify which side you have more in common with. It may not be a perfect match, but very likely you'll find one organization that fits you better than the other.

HOW DID IT ALL START?



The root cause of the conflict lies in the presence in the Protestant churches of two groups, calling and professing themselves as Christians, who hold views as to Christ and the scriptures so divergent and so irreconcilable as to constitute two different religions. With two such groups in the same church, collision and conflict are inevitable."

-CLARENCE E. MACARTNEY

I mentioned that this theological schism has roots that go all the way back to the 19th century, so let's go back and take a look at how all of this started. And while it might not seem particularly relevant to go back over a hundred years to start talking about events today, the history we're looking at here explains so much of what's going on in today's American Protestant landscape. Have you ever wondered why so many churches that share the same historical name (Lutheran, Presbyterian, Anglican, etc.) are split into such different denominations? For example if you go into a PCUSA (Presbyterian Church in the United States of America) church one Sunday and a PCA (Presbyterian Church in America) church the next Sunday, you would be in for very different experiences. The PCA church would likely to say, "Jesus died for us on that cross," but the PCUSA church would be more likely to say something like, "Christ embodied true love on the cross." The PCA church would refer to God as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, whereas the PCUSA church might refer to the Trinity as creator, sustainer, and redeemer. The PCA church would almost certainly read one of the historic Christian creeds, whereas the PCUSA church would be more likely to read a creed that the congregation wrote themselves. They might both be Presbyterian, but the worship services would be totally different experiences! Why is that? What happened that made denominations like "Lutheran" and "Presbyterian" almost secondary factors in a church's identity? The fundamentalist/modernist controversy.

Think back to the 19th century. Darwin is coming out with his theory of evolution, the world is being increasingly industrialized, and the scientific method is increasingly becoming the intellectual framework that people see the world through. American Protestantism has a new challenge to answer to. It had always encouraged Bible-readers to take things pretty literally. The core of the Reformation was that Catholics read all kinds of wacky stuff into the Bible and that a simple reading could solve most problems. But the basic assumptions of society were changing. Divine action seemed like a quaint idea. The world, after all, was bound by certain natural laws. The stories in the Bible were looking more and more ridiculous. Increasingly, clergy and laypeople started to ask questions:

- Was Jesus actually born from a virgin? Or was that a premodern way of indicating that Jesus was special?
- Is the Bible primarily a mythological document or a historical document?
- Did Jesus actually work miracles? Or are miracle stories intended to be metaphors?
- Is Jesus literally God? Or was he a human who had a relationship with God that was so close that it was like he was a god.

Broadly speaking, two camps emerged: the modernists and the fundamentalists.

The modernists believed that the Christian religion was an attempt to communicate the moral center of life through the use of ancient mythology. Did Jesus actually exist? Probably, but the historical Jesus was probably very different from the Jesus of faith communicated in the Bible. Did he turn water into wine? Almost certainly not. Was he truly God? Maybe, but maybe not. All of that was just an ancient mythological way of expressing the most important truth of all: love is the core of life. All religions are trying to get at that. Christianity is no different. Whenever the popular sense morality or science conflicted with historic doctrine or Scripture, they tended to side with the modern mindset (as their name suggests). Who could take ancient mythology as authoritative for all time? They argued that Jesus cared infinitely more about the way we acted than the specifics of what we believed. Modernist churches tended to emphasize social ills and local law instead of doctrine. What laws were necessary to address poverty? What laws were necessary to stop corporations from taking advantage of workers? Sermons would regularly address those points with the understanding that achieving those social

conditions was more important than any particular doctrine. Not every modernist disbelieved every old doctrine, but they did see the Christian faith as a moral venture, not a doctrinal one. Let each person think what they will! That's a modern Christianity for a modern age.

Before we talk about what the fundamentalists believed, it's worth addressing their name. "Fundamentalist" today means "person who is the scary kind of religious." Fundamentalist Islamists are the violent ones. Fundamentalist Mormons are the ones who mistreat their wives. Fundamentalist Christians are scary ones in one way or another. When this controversy started, the name had no such implications. "Fundamentalist" meant that you had to believe in certain fundamental truths to be Christian. Those truths usually boiled down to something like this:

- The inspiration of the Bible by the Holy Spirit and the inerrancy of Scripture as a result of this.
- The virgin birth of Christ.
- The belief that Christ's death was an atonement for sin.
- The bodily resurrection of Christ.
- The historical reality of Christ's miracles.

This isn't the only list of fundamentals ever created, but it was the ones that the fundamentalist Presbyterians voted into effect in 1910 and it tends to be seen as a good overarching statement of fundamentalist concerns. For fundamentalists, Christianity was primarily a matter of truth. God was real, Christ died for us, and we need to accept him and live as new people. When the Bible disagreed with modern morality or science, they were more likely to side with the Bible and insist that the miraculous was possible through him. While they still certainly addressed social ills, their emphasis tended to be more on helping individual people know God. By their logic, societies and laws only lasted for a limited amount of time, while people were made to last forever. Teach people to love God and care for each other and you'll accomplish more of worth in eternity than if you focus on politics.

So if the fundamentalists of yesterday weren't what we know as fundamentalists today, why is their name so stigmatized today? Because they lost. In 1924, the modernists in the Presbyterian church had the 5 fundamentals

repealed as requirements for ordination. They had a high-profile trial involving two sterling candidates for ordination that did not believe that Jesus was born of a virgin and the presiding body of ministry voted to remove the five fundamentals are required beliefs for preachers. There was also the infamous "Scopes Monkey Trial" incident in which they prosecuted a teacher that taught evolution (which was indeed against the law at the time). Not every fundamentalist disagreed with Darwinian evolution, but that became the thing they were known for in the public square after this trial was one of the first in American history to be broadcast nationwide via the radio. Their representative in the trial won the case but performed embarrassingly poorly when cross-examined and spoke with a heavy Southern drawl that invoked old Civil War prejudices. That combined with their inability to manage denominational politics left them with a reputation that was pathetically bad and made the name "fundamentalist" something to be used as an insult for stupid people, rather than a legitimate theological movement.

Modernists reaped their rewards for winning the battle. Prestigious seminaries hired modernist professors. Major denominations ended up with boards controlled by modernists. Bishops of mainline churches tended to be chosen from modernist Christians. Many churches split, allowing the more doctrinally-oriented fundamentalists to leave. At this point, the average congregation tended not to know what was happening behind the scenes. These battles happened in seminaries and conference rooms, not your average person's church. You only got to know what was happening if your pastor preached about it or shared information about church politics (which tends to be considered poor form during worship).

So why should we care? After all, there aren't really any people running around calling themselves "modernists" or "fundamentalists" today, and these arguments happened over a hundred years ago. That may be true, but these great thinkers of the past helped establish the theological streams that we still swim in. Today's traditionalists were partially shaped by the fundamentalist thinkers of yesteryear and modern progressive Christianity owes a tremendous intellectual debt to the modernists. This debate didn't end in the 1900s. It's still happening. The arguments are filtering through each denomination, splitting them each in due time. It happened to the Presbyterians. It happened to the Lutherans. It happened to the Anglicans. It's happening to us now.

RECOGNIZING THE PAST

Before we look at how this controversy shaped our denomination, let's look at some of the quotes from some of the key figures from this controversy. See if you can recognize which of these quotes are from fundamentalists and which are from modernists.

"We cannot use electric lights and radios and, in the event of illness, avail ourselves of modern medical and clinical means and at the same time believe in the spirit and wonder world of the New Testament." -Rudolf Bultmann

Fundamentalist

Modernist

"What I need first of all is not exhortation, but a gospel, not directions for saving myself but knowledge of how God has saved me. Have you any good news? That is the question that I ask of you. I know your exhortations will not help me. But if anything has been done to save me, will you not tell me the facts?" -John Machen

Fundamentalist

Modernist

"The world has tried in two ways to get rid of Jesus: first, by crucifying him, and second, by worshiping him. The first did not succeed."-Harry Fosdick

Fundamentalist

Modernist

"The Christian religion is something simple and sublime; it means one thing and one thing only: eternal life in the midst of time, by the strength and under the eyes of God... It is not a question of angels and devils, thrones and principalities, but of God and the soul, the soul and its God." -Adolf von Harnack

Fundamentalist

Modernist

“The Bible differs from all other books in that it never wears out. Other books are read and laid aside, but the Bible is a constant companion. No matter how often we read it or how familiar we become with it, some new truth is likely to spring out at us from its pages whenever we open it, or some old truth will impress us as it never did before. Every Christian can give illustrations of this.” -William Jennings Bryan

Fundamentalist

Modernist

[My opponent's theology is] a theology which denies the historicity of nearly everything in the Gospels to which Christian life and affections and thought have been fastened for nearly two millennia—it either denies the miraculous altogether or, more strangely, after swallowing the camel of the Resurrection strains at such gnats as the feeding of the multitudes. -C.S. Lewis,

Fundamentalist

Modernist

“Many of [the catechism’s] formulations are obsolete, and I am not passing it on to another generation, but its purpose, to supply Christians with definite convictions and to make them think for themselves, is part of the inheritance worth striving to maintain.” -Henry Sloane Coffin

Fundamentalist

Modernist

WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH METHODISM?

Take a look at some of the historic events that reflect these two sides at war within our church:

- In 1932, the Methodist Episcopal Church (us before the merger) dropped the requirement to believe the Apostle's Creed to be a Methodist, instead categorizing the creed as a "foundational document." This prompted an evangelical response from a professor of Drew University Edwin Lewis, who wrote "But what does the modern church believe? The church is becoming creedless as rapidly as the innovators can have their way." (Progressive Win)
- In 1952, the bishops addressed the General Conference saying, "Our theology has never been a closely organized doctrinal system. We have never insisted on uniformity of thought or statement." (Progressive Win)
- In 1972, modernists within the United Methodist Church approved a statement endorsing theological pluralism (no Christian doctrine is objectively true). (Progressive Win)
- In 1972, the UMC officially codified traditional Christian teachings on human sexuality in the Book of Discipline (homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching), much to the frustration of progressives. (Evangelical Win)
- In 1988, the UMC's statement on theological pluralism was struck down by an evangelical voting bloc. (Evangelical win)
- In 2003, Bishop Joseph Sprague was brought up on heresy charges by traditionalists for writing a book in which he denied the deity of Jesus, denied that he was born by a virgin, and admitted that Jesus was certainly not the only way to Heaven. No disciplinary action was deemed necessary. (Progressive Win)
- In 2016, despite the UMC's Book of Discipline, Karen Olivito was elected as the first openly gay bishop in the UMC in the Rocky Mountain Conference. (Progressive Win)
- In 2019, the UMC Council of Bishops recommended the One Church plan, striking the language about homosexuality from the Book of Discipline. This plan was voted down in favor of the Traditional Plan, which preserved the language of the Book of Discipline and added disciplinary measures for

breaking those rules. (Evangelical Win)

- In 2019, the UMC's Judiciary Council deemed the traditional plan unconstitutional after the vote. (Progressive Win)
- A new plan is drawn up to split the evangelical and progressive wings of the church. The vote to approve said plan is delayed every year with the most recent date for the vote to occur being 2024 (Nobody Wins).

There's just a taste of those two historic titans duking it out in our denomination. The battle still rages on! And so we get to be a part of church history. Which side of the shibboleth will you fall on? Which group speaks for your tribe?

PROCESSING TOGETHER

WHERE HAVE YOU SEEN THIS TENSION WITHIN THE UMC?

HAVE YOU EVER HAD A PASTOR THAT YOU FELT EMBODIED ONE PARTICULAR SIDE OR THE OTHER? WAS THIS HELPFUL OR CONFUSING?

DO ANY OF THESE HISTORIC METHODIST ACTIONS SURPRISE YOU? WHY?

RECOGNIZING THE PRESENT

Now let's turn to theologians and pastors today. We'll get more of them in the weeks to come, but it's good to compare and contrast the past with the present. Take a look at some quotes from prominent progressive Christians and evangelical Christians. See if you can recognize which are which.

"[The Bible] has survived attack of every kind. Neither barbaric vandalism nor civilized scholarship has touched it. Neither the burning of the fire nor the laughter of skepticism has accomplished its annihilation. Through the many dark ages of man, its glorious promises have survived unchanged." -Billy Graham

Evangelical

Progressive

"Seminary also introduced me to the historical study of Jesus and Christian origins. I learned from my professors and the readings they assigned that Jesus almost certainly was not born of a virgin, did not think of himself as the Son of God, and did not see his purpose as dying for the sins of the world... I also found the claim that Jesus and Christianity were the only way of salvation to be troublesome." -Marcus Borg

Evangelical

Progressive

"So my argument... is this: we should not be more loyal to an idea, a doctrine, or an interpretation of a Bible verse than we are to people. If the teachings of the church are harming the bodies and spirits of people, we should rethink those teachings." -Nadia Bolz-Weber

Evangelical

Progressive

"My feelings are not God. God is God. My feelings do not define truth. God's word defines truth. My feelings are echoes and responses to what my mind perceives. And sometimes - many times - my feelings are out of sync with the truth. When that happens - and it happens every day in some measure - I try not to bend the truth to justify my imperfect feelings, but rather, I plead with God: purify my perceptions of your truth," -John Piper

Evangelical

Progressive

“The human authors and editors of the Old Testament brought their own experiences and presuppositions to the task of writing. We don’t often think about this when we read the Bible.” -Adam Hamilton

Evangelical

Progressive

“The point of the New Testament is that Jesus is Christ, the Messiah, the Son of God, a supernatural being with supernatural powers. Without that, the New Testament is a flat tire.” -Jeffrey Burton Russell

Evangelical

Progressive

“To stay away from Christianity because part of the Bible’s teaching is offensive to you assumes that if there is a God he wouldn’t have any views that upset you. Does that belief really make sense?” -Tim Keller

Evangelical

Progressive

“Jesus is bigger than any one religion. He didn't come to start a new religion, and he continually disrupted whatever conventions or systems or establishments that existed in his day. He will always transcend whatever cages and labels are created to contain and name him, especially the one called 'Christianity.'” -Rob Bell

Evangelical

Progressive

FINAL PROCESSING

AS WE START TO IDENTIFY THE ROOT OF OUR CONTROVERSY, WHAT SURPRISED YOU?

WHAT CONCERNED YOU?

WHAT WAS SOMETHING YOU REALLY DISAGREED WITH?

WHAT WAS SOMETHING YOU REALLY AGREED WITH?

DO YOU SEE THE RELEVANCE OF THIS HISTORY TO OUR MODERN CHURCH
SPLIT? WHY? WHY NOT?

TO READ BEFORE NEXT TIME:

Two sermons! One from the modernists and one from the fundamentalists. These should give you a sense of what each side sounds like and help you identify how their trajectories lead to what you're hearing today.

Modernists

"Shall the Fundamentalists Win?" Sermon by Harry Fosdick, first preached May 21, 1922.

Available online at: <http://baptiststudiesonline.com/wp-content/uploads/2007/01/shall-the-fundamentalists-win.pdf>

This sermon went viral when it was first preached. It perfectly encapsulates the modernist cry for a Christianity without any required beliefs that appeals to a sense of moralism and human unity.

Fundamentalists

"History and Faith" an article written by John Machen in the 1915 issue of the Princeton Theological Review.

Available online at <https://www.readmachen.com/article/1915/history-and-faith/>

Machen tends to be one of the stalwart fundamentalists quoted to respond against Fosdick. Here, he defends against modernists, insisting that Christianity is composed of certain historical beliefs and cannot be rightly called Christianity without those fundamental beliefs.

RESOURCES FOR THOSE WHO WANT TO GO DEEPER

The Presbyterian Controversy, Bradley J. Longfield

An excellent starting place for those interested in the modernist/fundamentalist controversy. Longfield is a member of a theologically-liberal denomination (PCUSA), but tends to write with sympathy for all sides. Very approachable.

The Fundamentalist: Modernist Conflict- Conflicting Views on Three Issues, Joel A. Carpenter

Available for free online at archive.org. An excellent collection of sermons displaying the fundamentalists and modernists on a variety of topics. Good resource to see the two sides on a breadth of topics.

Historic Progressive Christians:

The Kernel and the Husk- Adolf von Harnack

Perhaps the cornerstone for all progressive Christianity that follows. Von Harnack argues that the Bible contains both kernels (genuine truth) and husks (myths that must be discarded). The Christian must strip away mythological husks to get at the kernels of truth.

Historic Evangelical Christians:

"Modern Theology and Biblical Criticism"- C.S. Lewis

Lewis argues that modernists have created a complicated system by which they can verbally affirm Christian basics to keep non-seminarians satisfied, all the while believing that the Bible is mere myth. He argues that the Bible was not intended as myth, but as truth.

Modern Progressive Christians:

The God we Never Knew, Marcus Borg

Together at the Table, Karen Oliveto (UMC specific)

Living the Questions, David M. Felten and Jeff Procter-Murphy (UMC specific)

Progressive Methodist Websites: <https://rmnetwork.org> and <https://um-insight.net>

Modern Evangelical Christians:

Making Sense of God, Timothy Keller

Multiplying Methodism, Jeff Greenway and Mike Lowry (GMC specific)

19 Questions to Kindle a Wesleyan Spirit, Carolyn Moore (GMC specific)

Evangelical Methodist Websites: peopleneedjesus.net and globalmethodist.org