

Statement of the Ohio Bible Fellowship on Its Fiftieth Anniversary

In September 24–27, 1934 the Ohio Regional of the Independent Fundamental Churches in America (IFCA) was organized. It was composed of fundamental believers and churches in Christ (Acts 4:12) who had separated from apostate denominations, for “what concord hath Christ with Belial?” (2 Cor 6:15). They were devoted to serving Christ in and through their churches (1 Tim 3:15), looking for Christ’s imminent return as promised and commanded (Acts 1:11; Rev 16:15), and enjoyed and encouraged one another by fellowshiping in Christ (3 John 3, 5–8).

During the decades that followed the Lord brought much fruit through their efforts: souls were saved; churches were established; believers gained encouragement; warnings regarding doctrinal and ecclesiastical dangers were issued; the Ohio Bible Mission was established; Peniel Bible Camp was founded; conferences were conducted; and a periodical, the *Visitor*, was started to communicate with its constituency and those of like precious faith.

Beginning in the 1940s and escalating through the 1950s, a movement arose among professed fundamentalists which they called new evangelicalism. The new movement had several intentional differences from fundamentalism, from doctrinal issues (welcoming charismatics; questioning inerrancy and biblical creationism; shunning dispensationalism) to ministry efforts (social justice; collaboration with apostates; intellectual respectability). New evangelicalism espoused a naïve positivism on the one hand yet stridently eschewed militant separatism on the other.

While the IFCA initially exposed and resisted new evangelicalism, sadly, in the early 1960s efforts by new leadership intentionally silenced opposition to the movement. The Ohio Regional of the IFCA—as well as other state regionals—unsuccessfully attempted to correct the IFCA’s course. Consequently, in January 1968 the Ohio Regional of the IFCA severed all organizational ties with the IFCA and renamed itself the Ohio Bible Fellowship.

In the 50 years that have since passed, the Lord has graciously continued to bring forth much fruit through our efforts. Our faith continues to rest in the Lord Jesus Christ. Our position remains one of separation from apostasy, worldliness, and the compromising position espoused by new evangelicalism. We continue to give Scriptural instruction and warnings about threatening contemporary issues. We endeavor to serve Christ in and through our churches. We long for Christ’s return to “catch up” his church in the air before the Tribulation. We love the fellowship of like-minded brethren that Christ has so richly provided.

Our present world is increasingly hostile to the true Christian faith, but such must neither discourage us from zealous effort nor tempt us to sinful conciliation. Our forefathers believed that our movement came into being “for such a time as this.” Thus, our prayer and aim must be that we will continue to believe on Christ, stand for Christ, serve Christ, look for Christ, and fellowship in Christ, “that in all things he might have the preeminence” (Col 1:18).