saving religion from the fundamentalists
Shall the Fundamentalists Win? (June 10, 1922)

…. We should not identify the Fundamentalists with the conservatives. All Fundamentalists are conservatives, but not all conservatives are Fundamentalists. The best conservatives can often give lessons to the liberals in true liberality of spirit, but the Fundamentalist program is essentially illiberal and intolerant.
The Fundamentalists see, and they see truly, that in this last generation … a great mass of new knowledge has come into man’s possession—new knowledge about the physical universe, its origin, its forces, its laws; new knowledge about human history … and new knowledge, also, about other religions and the strangely similar ways in which men’s faiths and religious practices have developed everywhere. . . .
Now, there are multitudes of reverent Christians who have been unable to keep this new knowledge in one compartment of their minds and the Christian faith in another. They have been sure that all truth comes from the one God and is His revelation. Not, therefore, from irreverence or caprice or destructive zeal but for the sake of intellectual and spiritual integrity, that they might really love the Lord their God, not only with all their heart and soul and strength but with all their mind, they have been trying to see this new knowledge in terms of the Christian faith and to see the Christian faith in terms of this new knowledge.
The new knowledge and the old faith cannot be left antagonistic or even disparate, as though a man on Saturday could use one set of regulative ideas for his life and on Sunday could change gear to another altogether. We must be able to think our modern life clear through in Christian terms, and to do that we also must be able to think our Christian faith clear through in modern terms.
There is nothing new about the situation. It has happened again and again in history…. Whenever such a situation has arisen, there has been only one way out—the new knowledge and the old faith had to be blended in a new combination. Now, the people in this generation who are trying to do this are the liberals, and the Fundamentalists are out on a campaign to shut against them the doors of the Christian fellowship. Shall they be allowed to succeed?
When will the world learn that intolerance solves no problems? This is not a lesson which the Fundamentalists alone need to learn; the liberals also need to learn it. Speaking, as I do, from the viewpoint of liberal opinions, let me say that if some young, fresh mind here this morning is holding new ideas, has fought his way through ... to novel positions, and is tempted to be intolerant about old opinions, offensively to condescend to those who hold them and to be harsh in judgment on them, he may well remember that people who held those old opinions have given the world some of the noblest character and the most rememberable service that it ever has been blessed with ... we of the younger generation will prove our case best, not by controversial intolerance, but by producing, with our new opinions, something of the depth and strength, nobility and beauty of character that in other times were associated with other thoughts.
It was a wise liberal, the most adventurous man of his day—Paul the Apostle—who said, “Knowledge puffeth up, but love buildeth up.”
to save religion

from the fundamentalists

we need to better understand fundamentalism, the brain, and human development
THOSE WHO USE LEFT BRAIN MORE EFFICIENTLY

- It is logical
- Interested in mathematical expressions, uses language well
- It is pragmatic, cares the results
- Interested in clear results

The left brain successful in academic and scientific subjects.

THOSE WHO USE RIGHT BRAIN MORE EFFICIENTLY

- It is emotional
- It deals with visual, artistic subjects
- Case the purpose and looks for goodwill
- It is intuitive, trusts its intuition

The right brain possesses humanistic features like emotionality, sympathy, empathy, feelings, and compassion.
your brain is a committee of 3.
left brain: logic, critical/independent thinking

right brain: relationships, emotions, beauty

brain stem: fear! danger! survival!
All of us are primally attuned to fear and danger.

All of us are deeply attuned to independence, analysis, fairness, & argument.

All of us are deeply attuned to relationships, feelings, belonging.
In fundamentalism, the left brain is energized to defend a set of holy doctrines or truths.

In fundamentalism, the right brain is highly focused on the in-group of fellow fundamentalists.

In fundamentalism, the brain stem is on high alert: God’s wrath ... the devil’s wiles ... a cosmic battle ... heaven and hell
Some of us are primarily attuned to fear and danger.

Some of us are primarily attuned to relationships, feelings, belonging.

Some of us are primarily attuned to independence, analysis, & argument.

How many of us are aware of these inner dynamics at work in ourselves?
The world looks a certain way when your brain has been wired to see it that way.
we need to better understand fundamentalism, the brain, and human development to save religion from the fundamentalists
four stages of faith development
Every stage is good and beautiful in its own way.
key words: include & transcend
William Blake - innocence, experience, higher experience

Soren Kierkegaard - aesthetic, ethical, religious

William Perry - dualism (a,b), multiplicity (a,b), relativism (a,b), commitment (a,b,c)

James Fowler - primal, mythical-literal, synthetic-conventional, individual-reflective, conjunctive, universalizing

James Kohlberg - blind egoism, instrumental egoism, social relations, social systems, contractual, mutual respect

Ken Blanchard - enthusiastic beginner, disillusioned learner, capable but cautious performer, self-reliant achiever

Paul Ricouer - precritical/first naivete, critical, postcritical/second naivete

Graves/Beck/Wilber - archaic-instinctive, animist/tribal, ego-centric-exploitive, absolutist -obedience authoritarian, scientific strategic, relativistic-personalistic - communitarian; systemic-integral, holistic,

Richard Rohr - first half of life, second half of life
Four Stages of Faith Development
Stage 1

Simplicity

An early stage in human development
wiring the brain for stage 1
Stage 1

Simplicity/Dualism

Fear: punishment, danger, outsiders

Love: in-group, familiar

Thought: Rules of right and wrong
Stage 1

Beliefs

-everything is known or knowable; there are easy answers to every question

-good authorities/us are the ones who know the right answers

-the bad guys/them are wrong
Stage 1

Authorities

Godlike, God's representatives, they know and give answers
Stage 1

Simplicity

Life is a war.
Stage 1

Identity: In my leader or group.
Relationships: Dependent or co-dependent
Stage 1

Simplicity

God is ... 

The Ultimate Authority Figure
Stage 1

Key Moral Question:
What do our authority figures say?
Stage 1

Simplicity

STRENGTHS: highly committed, willing to sacrifice and suffer.

WEAKNESSES: Also willing to kill or inflict suffering. Arrogant, simplistic, combative, judgmental, intolerant
your brain is a committee of 3.
Stage 1
Simplicity
(dualism)
Stage 2

Complexity
wiring the brain for stage 2
Stage 2

Complexity/Pragmatism

Fear: losing, failing, missing out
Love: me/our team outcompeting
Thought: steps & keys to success, mastering game(s)
Complexity
There’s more than one way to do things.
Stage 2

Complexity

Focus: Effective or ineffective?
Technique, winning, success

Motive: Reach goals, being effective

Perception: Pragmatic
Stage 2

Beliefs:

- anything is doable
- there are many ways to reach the goal
- authorities/us are the ones who know how to do it
- the bad guys don’t do the right stuff
Stage 2

Authorities

Coaches. They help you grow and succeed with know-how.
Stage 2

Complexity

Life is a game. Learn the rules. Play to win.
Stage 2

Complexity

Identity: My cause or achievement.

Relationships: Increasingly independent.
Stage 2

Complexity

God is ...

The Ultimate Guide or Coach
Stage 2

Key Moral Question: Does it help me succeed?
Stage 2

Complexity

STRENGTHS: Enthusiasm, idealism, action

WEAKNESSES: Superficial, naïve, overly pragmatic
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wiring the brain for stage 3
Stage 2

Complexity

(pragmatism)
Stage 3

Perplexity

Carnegie Stages of Human Development

Stage 1 Zygote
(1 day, not to scale)

1 (1 day)
2 (3 days)
3 (4 days)
4 (5-7 days)
5 (7-10 days)
6 (10-13 days)
7 (13-17 days)
8 (17-19 days)
9 (19-21 days)
10 (21-23 days)

Stage 2 Blastocyst
(8-10 days)

11 (23-26 days)
12 (26-30 days)
13 (28-32 days)
14 (31-35 days)
15 (35-38 days)
16 (38-42 days)
17 (42-44 days)
18 (44-46 days)
19 (48-51 days)
20 (51-53 days)
21 (53-54 days)
22 (54-58 days)
23 (58-60 days)

Acknowledgements
Special thanks to Dr B. J. D’Mello and Prof. Kansei Shiota for allowing reproduction of their research images and material from the Kyoto Collection and Ms B. Hill for image preparation.
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your brain is a committee of 3.
Stage 3

Perplexity/Relativism

Fear: being controlled, restricted by authorities

Love: honesty, justice, seeing through

Thought: critical thinking, deconstruction
Stage 3

Perplexity

Everyone has an opinion. Who knows who is right?
Stage 3

Perplexity

Focus: Honest or dishonest? Authentic or inauthentic?

Motive: Being honest or authentic

Perception: Relativistic, critical
Stage 3

Beliefs

- little/nothing is known or knowable; everybody has an opinion

- good people are honest about their questions
Stage 3

Authorities are ...

Controllers

The Enemy

Trying to impose easy answers on the naïve

Trying to use the naive
Stage 3

Perplexity

Life is ...

a joke
mystery
or search
Stage 3

Identity: In solitude, or among a small band of similarly alienated friends

Relationships: Counter-dependent
Stage 3

Perplexity

God is ...

mythic authority I’ve outgrown
mysterious reality I’m seeking
or opiate of the pathetic masses
Stage 3

Key Moral Question:
Is it honest, authentic, and suspicious?
Stage 3

Perplexity

STRENGTHS: depth, honesty, sensitivity to suffering, perhaps ironic humor

WEAKNESSES: cynical, uncommitted, withdrawn, critical, depressed, elitist
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Stage 3

Perplexity

(relativism/skepticism)
Stage 4

Harmony
wiring the brain for stage 4
Stage 4

Harmony/Holism

Fear: doing harm

Love: in-group AND out-group, common good

Thought: holistic, integral, paradoxical, creative
Stage 4

Harmony

Seek first God’s kingdom ... love God, love neighbors ... in essentials unity ... focus on a few grand essentials
Stage 4

Harmony

Focus: Wise or unwise?

Fulfilling potential

Motive: Serve, contribute, make a difference

Perception: Integrated, synthesizing, sympathetic
Stage 4

Beliefs

-some things are known, many are mysteries; life is a quest

-there is no “them”
Stage 4

Authorities

people like me imperfect

sometimes doing their best,

sometimes dishonest,

sometimes sincerely misguided
Stage 4

Life is ...

What you make it (with God’s help)
Stage 4

Identity: In mutual relationships

Relationships: Interdependent
Stage 4

God is ...

Knowable in part, yet mysterious, present yet transcendent, just yet merciful (able to hold truths in tension -- “paradoxoxy”)

Stage 4

Key Moral Question:
Is it appropriate to context, and conducive of the common good?
Stage 4

Harmony

STRENGTHS: May exhibit strengths of previous stages, plus stability, endurance, wisdom

WEAKNESSES: May display weaknesses of earlier stages
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Stage 4

Harmony

(integrative, holistic)
William Blake - innocence, experience, higher experience

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William Perry - dualism (a,b), multiplicity (a,b), relativism (a,b), commitment (a,b,c)

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Richard Rohr - first half of life, second half of life
An important reminder

The goal isn’t to rush through the stages to get to 4 as soon as possible.

Each stage has lessons to teach, and prepares for the next.

You don’t move on until you’re ready ... in the fullness of time.
What happens after Stage 4?

Harmony becomes the new simplicity ...
What happens after Stage 4?

Harmony becomes the new simplicity ...

which encounters new complexity ...

which enters new perplexity ...

which discovers new harmony ...
What happens after Stage 4?

Eventually ... one becomes less aware of stages and struggle and more aware of learning, life, love.
1. Simplicity - Two (us/them)
2. Complexity - Three or more
3. Perplexity - Fractions
4. Harmony - One (all)
0. Egocentricity - One (me!)
a never-ending journey

The spiritual journey could be seen as a constant purification of motive until I can finally say, “I have no other reason to do anything except love of God and love of neighbor. And I don’t even need people to know this.” When I can say this I have total and full freedom. I can no longer be bought off! Finally I realize that my life is not about me. It’s about Love.

Richard Rohr, Adapted from Francis: Subverting the Honor/Shame System (CD, MP3 download)
Fundamentalism

Fundamentalism - a form of religion that requires people to stay forever in Stage 1.
Cults require people in higher stages to revert to Stage 1 and stay there.

Cultic authorities in this way become authoritarian.
An observation:

Whole denominations or parachurch organizations seem to specialize in certain stages, and fail people in other stages.
An observation:

Leaders seldom (never?) lead people in a stage beyond their own.

1’s lead 1’s.

2’s lead 2’s and 1’s.

3’s lead 3’s and 2’s.

4’s lead 4’s and 3’s (plus?)
A question:

Why is Stage 1 religion (fundamentalism) so popular?
STAGE 0: EGOCENTRICITY
Stage 0

Egocentricity

It’s all about me.
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BRAINSTEM
Stage 0

Egocentricity

Focus: Like or dislike? Fun or not?

Motive: Pleasing & comforting myself

Perception: Narcissistic
Stage 0

Beliefs

-I would be constantly happy if everyone would cooperate

-authorities exist to make me feel good

-bad people make me feel bad
Stage 0

Authorities

Exist for my benefit, serve my entitlement, are genii-like.
Stage 0

Egocentricity
Life is play or party.
Stage 0

Identity: In my likes and dislikes.

Relationships: Presumptive
Stage 0

Egocentricity

God is ...

The Candyman, the Genii, the Magic Lamp
Stage 0

Key Moral Question:
does it make me feel good or bad?
do I “like” it?
Stage 0

Egocentricity

STRENGTHS: emotionally expressive, transparent, aware of own needs and desires.

WEAKNESSES: Largely oblivious to the needs and desires of others.
Stage 0
Egocentricity
(narcissistic)
The importance of Stage 1:

The work of challenging egocentricity and narcissism is never done!
saving religion from the fundamentalists
saving religion
from the fundamentalists
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NEEEDED:

Doubt as portal ...
How can we help people in Simplicity to keep moving forward?
A question:
How do we minister to people with such contrary expectations, needs, issues, and desires?

A direction:
Explore Jesus as teacher ... not just in content, but also in method.
An observation:

Jesus models working with people in each stage, and always brings them farther on the journey.

(Jesus also got killed.)
We need Stage 4 churches and ministries that help people at all levels ... but how?

7 proposals
1. In the absence of certainty, provide clarity, confidence, and communication.

- simplicity
- complexity
- perplexity
2. start where people are.

- parables
- biography/vulnerability
- know their “inner work”
- challenge them!
3. acknowledge multiple belonging.
multiple belonging
4. invite people to the next step.
5. let people walk away, but let them know they’ll be welcome back.
6. understand moral reasoning:

justice

compassion

purity

loyalty

authority

liberty
7. embody and emphasize love.

- nobody likes to be judged!

- empathize with human condition

- love (not argument) is the way of growth ...
because of our divided brain committee, we are all prone to bias - over a dozen forms of bias.
confirmation
complexity
community
complementarity
competency
consciousness
comfort
conservative/liberal
catastrophe
contact
confidence
cash
conspiracy

our brains are wired for over a dozen types of bias
1. In the absence of certainty, provide clarity, confidence, and communication.
2. Start where people are.
3. Acknowledge multiple belonging.
4. Invite people to the next step.
5. Let people walk away, but let them know they’ll be welcome back.
6. Understand moral reasoning.
7. Embody and emphasize love.
It was a wise liberal, the most adventurous man of his day—Paul the Apostle—who said, “Knowledge puffeth up, but love buildeth up.”
The way forward is the way of love.
to save religion from the fundamentalists

we need to better understand fundamentalism, the brain, and human development
we need to better understand fundamentalism, the brain, and human development to save religion from the fundamentalists
Naked Spirituality
A Life with God in 12 Simple Words

Brian D. McLaren
Author of A New Kind of Christianity