

Debating the Fundamentals of the Faith Among South African Baptists

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Abstract

During the 1920s two words recently coined in the United States of America (where they had immediate currency among Baptists), “fundamentalist” and “fundamentalism”, entered the lexicon of English in both the United Kingdom and the Union of South Africa. In the present article, it is argued that although neither term became popular among South African Baptists at that time, the attitude behind them which arose from theological discord was clearly evident in the Union. Probably owing to the international popularity of *The Fundamentals* which had been published several years earlier, theological conservatives stressed the possibility of expressing non-negotiable core beliefs through creedal statements. Other Baptists, however, resisted this defensive strategy during a time when traditional doctrines were being challenged.