

I love the historic meaning of our name as well. Most of us will continue to use the term independent Baptist in one context or another. In fact, I have several good friends whose churches are actually named “Independent Baptist Church.”

But for those who will continue to use the word in a public venue it will be more and more important to define the term scripturally and lovingly within our communities. Perhaps you could include on your church website a clear explanation of your definitions. You must do a better job of positioning yourself in your community than the “haters” do of positioning you. And we must be ready always with an answer for those who will try to lump us in with people we would never have in our own pulpits.

Some men might want to refer to themselves with different vernacular. If this is you, I encourage you to proceed with prayer. There is much to take into consideration as you choose words to identify yourself. Be wise and cautious, and seek counsel from others who love the historic principles of our movement and are solid in their commitment to truth.

While I continue to identify myself among pastors and fellow independent Baptists as an independent fundamental Baptist, when speaking in my community or to the press who are not familiar with the historic meaning of these words, I refer to myself as a biblical Baptist who is unaffiliated from a nationally organized group. I explain that we are a church that derives our doctrine and practice not from a camp or religious culture, but from scriptural guidelines.