Fundamentalists

It is not uncommon these days to hear people use the word "fundamentalist" in a negative way. Some people accuse certain Christians of being this, as if it were some kind of bad thing. Even some professed believers will mock the idea of being a "fundamentalist."

This raises an important question: just what does it mean to be a fundamentalist? The term was actually defined in 1910 by the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. At that time a great many Biblical doctrines were being attacked, and the Assembly wanted to define the "fundamentals" of the Christian faith. They laid out these five points:

1. Belief in the inspiration of the Bible

2. Belief in the Virgin Birth

3. Belief in the substitutionary atonement (meaning we are saved because Jesus died in our place)

4. Belief in the resurrection of Jesus

5. Belief in the miracles of Jesus

People who believed in these five points were called "fundamentalists." That is where the term comes from.

I have to ask: is belief in these five points really that radical? Is it a shocking thing for a Christian to believe that the Bible is inspired, that Jesus was born of a virgin, and that His death on the cross paid for our sins? Is it "extreme" to believe that Jesus performed the miracles that are recorded in the Bible?

Personally I think that these "fundamentals" are some of Christianity's most basic tenants! These are things that *all* Christians should believe. To mock someone for believing these things is really no different than mocking him for being a Christian – and that is something that no believer should ever do.