

The Occult Invasion Into America

Opening Satan's doorway to the mind
through mind-emptying "meditation."



The Occult Invasion into America

BY VANCE FERRELL

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The Occult Invasion into America

by Vance Ferrell

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“As we near the close of time, there will be greater and still greater external parade of heathen power; heathen deities will manifest their signal power, and will exhibit themselves before the cities of the world; and this delineation has already begun to be fulfilled.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, 117-118.

“Conformity to worldly customs converts the church to the world; it never converts the world to Christ. Familiarity with sin will inevitably cause it to appear less repulsive. He who chooses to associate with the servants of Satan, will soon cease to fear their master. When in the way of duty we are brought into trial, as was Daniel in the king’s court, we may be sure that God will protect us; but **if we place ourselves under temptation, we shall fall sooner or later.**”—*Great Controversy*, 509.

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We Must Not Do This

Paul “declared that the day of Christ should not come, ‘except there come a falling away first.’ ”—*Great Controversy*, 49. *Is that prophecy being repeated?*

Here are several important statements as to why we are to avoid indulging in heathen practices:

“The failure of Abraham’s descendants to keep this pledge, as shown in **their disposition to form alliances with the heathen and adopt their practices**, was the cause of their sojourn and bondage in Egypt . . . The divine precepts became still further corrupted with the vile and cruel teachings of heathenism.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 363.

“**The people adopted many of the customs of their heathen neighbors** and thus sacrificed to a great degree their own peculiar, holy character. Gradually they lost their reverence for God and ceased to prize the honor of being His chosen people.”—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 603.

“Among the more serious of the evils that had developed among the Corinthian believers, was that of **a return to many of the debasing customs of heathenism**.”—*Acts of the Apostles*, 303.

“**It was by departure from the Lord, and alliance with the heathen**, that the Jewish church became a harlot.”—*Great Controversy*, 382.

“Through heathenism, Satan had for ages turned men away from God; but he won his great triumph in perverting the faith of Israel. **By contemplating and worshiping their own conceptions, the heathen had lost a knowledge of God**, and had become more and more corrupt. So it was with Israel.”—*Desire of Ages*, 35.

“While we must live in the world, we are not to be of the world. **We are forbidden to conform to its prac-**

tices and fashions. **The friendship of the ungodly is more dangerous than their enmity.** It misleads and destroys thousands who might, by proper and holy example, be led to become children of God.”—*2 Bible Commentary, 1001.*

“**Satan is continually seeking to overcome the people of God by breaking down the barriers** which separate them from the world. **Ancient Israel were enticed into sin when they ventured into forbidden association with the heathen.** In a similar manner are modern Israel led astray. ‘The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.’ 2 Corinthians 4:4. All who are not decided followers of Christ are servants of Satan. **In the unregenerate heart there is love of sin and a disposition to cherish and excuse it.** In the renewed heart there is hatred of sin and determined resistance against it. When Christians choose the society of the ungodly and unbelieving, they expose themselves to temptation. **Satan conceals himself from view and stealthily draws his deceptive covering over their eyes.** They cannot see that such company is calculated to do them harm; and while all the time assimilating to the world in character, words, and actions, they are becoming more and more blinded.

“Conformity to worldly customs converts the church to the world; it never converts the world to Christ. Familiarity with sin will inevitably cause it to appear less repulsive. **He who chooses to associate with the servants of Satan will soon cease to fear their master.** When in the way of duty we are brought into trial, as was Daniel in the king’s court, we may be sure that God will protect us; but if we place ourselves under temptation we shall fall sooner or later.”—*Great Controversy, 509.*

“**Nearly all forms of ancient sorcery and witchcraft were founded upon a belief in communion with the dead.**”—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 684.*

The Four Astounding Parts of this Book

— CHAPTER ONE —

THE BUDDHIST/HINDU INVASION

—THE SHOCKING INROADS
OF THIS ORIENTAL MYSTICISM

— CHAPTER TWO —

THE “PURPOSE DRIVEN” INVASION

—THE TERRIBLE DEVASTATION
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— CHAPTER THREE —

OTHER DANGEROUS PENETRATIONS

—“HOLY LAUGHTER”
AND OTHER SPIRIT ARRIVALS

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INTO OUR OWN DENOMINATION

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OR BE OVERCOME !

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Introduction

Last year (2011), I wrote and published a new book, ***Spiritual Formation***, which many have purchased by the boxful and handed out to fellow church members.

It is an excellent book; however, because these strange Oriental practices are flooding in even faster now, I have researched far more deeply into the subject. *You will find this present book to be the most complete on the subject that is available anywhere.* Yet it is also a low-cost book, whether purchased as a single copy or in small boxfuls for distribution.

Because of its remarkable coverage, this new book is far more complete and powerful. With few exceptions, none of the data given below is in my 2011 book on Spiritual Formation.

—*vf*

“Some years ago, Arnold Toynbee declared that when the historian of a thousand years from now comes to write the history of our time, he will be preoccupied not with the Vietnam war, not with racial strife, but with **what happened when for the first time Christianity and Buddhism began to penetrate one another deeply.** This remark is profoundly interesting and, I believe, profoundly true. **Christianity and Buddhism are penetrating one another, talking to one another, learning from one another.** Even the stubborn old Catholic Church, in a flush of post-conciliar humility, feels

that she has something to gain by sitting at the feet of the *Zen roshi* [Zen master] and imbibing the age-old wisdom of the East. Surely this is progress.”—*William Johnston, Christian Zen, p. 1.*

THE MYSTERIOUS VISITOR

A tall, stately man, accompanied by two attendants, entered the residence of the older woman. Although he had a look of desperation in his face, she noticed his appearance and fine clothing,—and suspected that he might be a king.

He was a king.

Saul, ruler of Israel, fearful of what was ahead, had sought out the hiding place of a witch; so he could speak to a dead man.

“Then said Saul unto his servants, **Seek me a woman that hath a familiar spirit, that I may go to her, and inquire of her.** And his servants said to him, Behold, there is a woman that hath a familiar spirit at Endor. And Saul disguised himself, and put on other raiment, and he went, and two men with him, **and they came to the woman by night: and he said, I pray thee, divine unto me by the familiar spirit, and bring me him up, whom I shall name unto thee.**”—2 *Samuel 28:7-8.*

Of course, a witch cannot raise the dead from their graves, and neither can the demons which she serves! But the devils can provide an accurate appearance—a demon in the form of a departed loved one—with the very looks and tones of voice the deceased had before his or her death.

But now to the point of this story:

Regardless of when in history a medium may live, in order to make contact with a spirit (a

demon) the witch must first go through a little ritual while seated. *It is necessary that she repeat a word or two (called an incantation) over and over for several minutes as she sits there.* This is the age-long method for bringing a demon.

Then, while still seated, she falls into a trance. What has happened is that her frontal lobes—the thinking part of her mind—have ceased their normal activity. **Now it is, at this time, that the demon can enter her mind.**

Amid a strange sense of being out of body, she may see flashes of light, or seemingly feel a flow of energy through her body or out of the palms of her hands. **(The demon wants her to enjoy the experience, so she will repeat it again later.) Then a voice will speak to her, or give her new thoughts she has never conceived of before.**

But however it was done on that particular day,—the witch of Endor heard the voice. **Depending on the occasion, it might be the familiar voice of her spirit guide. Or it might claim to be a voice telling her he is god. At times, an apparition will suddenly appear** in the room, in order to more convincingly provide information. That night, the voice immediately warned her that the visitor was King Saul. Then a demon appeared, taking the form of a man who was no longer alive.

The Wiccan *Rede* is the rule of conduct that all witches must follow while practicing witchcraft. It rules that the novitiate (newcomer) into witchcraft must look for “synergies within himself.” He must also keep a daily diary or “journal” of his experi-

ences, and—very important!—he must learn the basic principles of mantra-produced trances, so he can enter the dark world of evil spirits. The witch of Endor was an expert at all that.

Please understand that the same basic procedure is used today for— Well, you are about to read all about it; for **it is becoming quite common throughout Western society. It is in corporate offices, recreation centers, hospitals, clinics, churches, parsonages, the homes of church members, books, instructional CDs, business and church retreats, and training centers.**

Times have not changed. The same methods used by the witch of Endor are still used today. People today want a sensory experience, something exciting; and they are flocking to where they can receive it.

What in ancient times was called an “incantation,” is today called a “mantra.” The result is the same. The mind opens a door so something can enter. In ancient times, it was called a “familiar spirit;” today it is called a “spirit guide.”

Whether or not it is a witch which has repeated a single or double-word mantra until the mind became senseless,—when the spirit session is over, that person will arise, seemingly refreshed and with renewed energies.

Although the effect soon wears off, having once entered, *the demon remains within that person,* subtly suggesting new thoughts and attitudes toward the Bible, God, Christ, and religion. **Sin no longer seems as sinful as it previously did. Now**

it seems that all the religions of the world are good, and everyone is going to be saved.

Indeed, *something which appears to be a great new truth gradually dawns*: God is already here with us; indeed we, and everyone else, are already god!

The thinking of the person has indeed changed! He now talks and writes about this glorious new experience, called "*meditative prayer*," "*centering prayer*," or some other beautiful phrase. **He urges others to do as he is doing.**

He tells them: "Just repeat a word over and over until your brain stops functioning, and then you will have a wonderful new experience from God!"

Nothing can shake his confidence in his new-found experience, and something seems to tell him that he must convince as many others as he can to do as he is doing. **Gradually, the Bibles are put away, and genuine prayer (actual talking to God and Christ about real problems, pleading for help in overcoming and how to help others) ceases.** You see, he has been captured, and he does not even know it has happened.

For, within his mind, a different mysterious visitor—a far more horrible one—has arrived.

Chapter One

The Hindu Church Invasion

THE SHOCKING INROADS OF THIS ORIENTAL MYSTICISM

INTRODUCTION

Something dangerous—even hideous—is penetrating the various churches of Christendom. The general name given to it is “*spiritual formation*.” But it also goes by several other names as well. This report will tell you nearly all of them.

This brief study is prepared so you can identify this terrible danger when it arrives in your denomination—and comes knocking on the door of your local church. **Members and church leaders, already captured by it, will urge it upon you in glowing terms.** For, you see, the very ones recommending it to you—are the ones who themselves are

doing it—and regularly making contact with the spirit world. *It is dangerous to listen to them!*

As we will discover below, its origins extend far back into earlier ages, primarily in the East. Then, in the fourth century A.D., it entered that part of the Christian church which did not remain faithful to Bible teachings.

We will learn that, in the last century, it moved out of Catholic monasteries and convents, where it was secretly practiced, and openly penetrated the West. In the 1960s, it gradually strengthened,—and then exploded in the various Christian denominations about the year 2000.

It began in our own denomination in 1989, after nearly a decade of pastors changing their message from obedience to God's Word to the comforting assurance of the cheap grace of salvation obtained merely by thinking we have it.

But, by that time, a growing number of the faithful were leaving the denomination or being pushed out, when they objected to the New Theology.

So, in the hope of dramatically increasing the number entering the church, that which was called “celebration worship services” was started. Pastors were sent off for a week's training; and, upon their return, they organized band music and swaying vocalists on the rostrum. Other semi-Pentecostal methods were also tried.

But when it was found that, instead of increasing attendance, “celebrating a local church” only caused even more of the faithful to exit, **“church planting” began in 1994.** These were separate cel-

celebration churches started across town, so as not to disturb the faithful in their churches. The "new members" generally consisted of some of the most liberal who transferred in from other area churches.

But then, after a few years, many of the newly planted churches left the denomination entirely, taking with them their members.

Finally, about the year 2000, that which was thought to be a better method was entered upon. As usual, it was one which had been copied from the latest fad in the other denominations. The new plan was this: In order to retain church members,—**instead of changing local church worship patterns so quickly,—change the way the members were told to individually approach God!**

What should be done next? High excitement in church services had not succeeded by themselves. Now they were to be heavily supplemented by classes, retreats, study materials in relaxation, and what really amounts to—self-hypnosis.

"Many of the revivals of modern times have presented a marked contrast to those manifestations of divine grace which in earlier days followed the labors of God's servants. **It is true that a widespread interest is kindled, many profess conversion,** and there are large accessions to the churches; nevertheless the results are not such as to warrant the belief that there has been a corresponding increase of real spiritual life. **The light which flames up for a time soon dies out, leaving the darkness more dense than before.**

"Popular revivals are too often carried by appeals to the imagination, by exciting the emotions, by gratifying the love for what is new and

startling. Converts thus gained have little desire to listen to Bible truth, little interest in the testimony of prophets and apostles. **Unless a religious service has something of a sensational character, it has no attractions for them.** A message which appeals to unimpassioned reason awakens no response. **The plain warnings of God's Word, relating directly to their eternal interests, are unheeded.**"—*Great Controversy*, 463.

We will learn below the full background of this strange, new combination of Christian names and Hindu/Buddhist practices.

THE SHOCKING INROADS

A POWERFUL NEW MISSIONARY ORGANIZATION

The initial penetration of the Eastern religions, with their powerful effects on the human mind, into the West was given a strong impetus when the U.S. Government began experimenting with certain drugs which radically affect the mind.

"Ironically, the introduction of major psychedelics like LSD in the 1960s was largely attributable to the Central Intelligence Agency's investigation into these drugs for possible military use. Experiments on more than eighty college campuses, under various CIA code names, unintentionally popularized LSD. Thousands of graduate students served as guinea pigs. Soon they were synthesizing their own 'acid.'"—*Marilyn Ferguson, The Aquarian Conspiracy: Personal and Social Transformations*, p. 126.

Under the influence of psychedelics, millions discovered another dimension of seemingly glorious reality that surely was not physical. But, as long as the “trip” lasted, the adventure seemed to be most real and wonderful. But the most terrible crashes came later.

It only remained to be discovered that yoga would produce the same “trip” without drugs—and yoga became the new sensation. Tragically, *while drugs were the kindergarten of occultism—yoga is the graduate school!* This is because it opens the door of the mind far more widely for demons to enter and take control.

In these “altered states,” achieved through certain **drugs**, under **hypnosis**, or induced by **yoga**,—the normal connections in the brain are unhinged, and a universe of illusion is realized. **But it is through yoga that the spirit guide gains the closest access to a person’s mind—and convinces him that he has become god** and is now in complete unity with the universe. He may sense this or the entering spirit may tell it to him.

Tragically, the person has deliberately permitted a spirit to enter and tinker with his brain here and push buttons there. *The person has set his feet on a path of ever-increasing demon possession.* But it may at first be done in such a way as to thrill, rather than frighten, him with what is happening.

Yet this is the very same experience that a shaman (an African witch doctor) encounters when he calls for the spirits to come and enter his body. An anthropologist describes it in these

words:

“A shaman enters an altered state of consciousness to acquire special, personal power, which is usually supplied by his guardian and helping spirits.”—*Michael J. Harner, The Way of the Shaman: A Guide to Healing and Power, p. 20.*

But, back to the story:

And so it was that, **back in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Hindu gurus from the East learned that, through popular psychedelic drugs, millions of Westerners were entering into mental hallucinations which Hindus and Buddhists regularly achieve through yoga.**

Immediately, the largest missionary organization in the world, Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP), set to work to invade the West. While Christian missionaries were (and continue to be) forbidden to make converts in India, VHP missionaries are gaining vast numbers of converts in Europe and America.

In January 1979, at the VHP-sponsored second *World Congress on Hinduism*, in Allahabad, India, attended by about 60,000 delegates from around the world, a speaker declared, “Our mission in the West has been crowned with fantastic success. Hinduism is becoming the dominant world religion, and the end of Christianity has come near” (*VHP Bulletin, January 1979*).

The Dali Lama chaired that immense gathering. Among the primary goals listed in VHP’s constitution are the following:

“To establish an order of missionaries, both lay and initiate, for the purpose of propagating dynamic Hinduism representing . . . various faiths

and denominations, including Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs, Lingayats, etc., and to open, manage or assist seminaries or centers for spiritual principles and practices of Hindism . . . in all parts of the world.”—*From the VHP Constitution, quoted in D. Hunt and T.A. McMahon, Sorcerer’s New Apprentice, p. 281.*

“There is a growing missionary spirit in Hinduism . . . A small army of yoga missionaries is ready to go to the West. They may not call themselves Hindu, but Hindus know where yoga came from and where it goes.”—*Editorial in Hinduism Today; cited in Christianity Today, April 8, 1991, p. 64.*

“America is on the verge of a breakthrough in Buddhadharma, a flowering of the wisdom that has enlightened billions of souls on the other side of the world.”—*Tracy Cochran, Buddhist Review, quoted in Newsweek, June 13, 1994, p. 46.*

Foremost among these “centers for spiritual principles and practices of Hinduism” are yoga classes. Hinduism and Buddhism, both of which advocate similiar yoga practices, have rapidly infiltrated **Western society, government, and even public schools** as “*science,*” while Christianity is banned as “*religion.*”

Yoga teaches that there is a “center” where all is peace and light and happiness; and that this is found when the mind, after repeating a mantra for half an hour or so, blanks out. This “center” is, according to the yogis, the Divine Self waiting to be realized within. Paramahansa Yogananda was “the first great master of India to live in the West for a long period, over thirty years.” Paramahansa Yogananda, *Autobiography of a Yogi*

(inside front jacket) made this statement:

“We are all part of the One Spirit. When you experience the true meaning of religion, which is to know God, you will realize that He is your Self, and that He exists equally and impartially in all beings.”—*yogananda-srf.org*.

Yogananda brought his style of Kriya Yoga to the West. In order to give it widest coverage, he established the *Self-Realization Fellowship* in the U.S. It has spread to over 500 meditation centers in more than 50 countries. The *Research Journal of Philosophy* said this about him:

“The unique contribution of Paramahansa Yogananda consists in the revelation of Kriya Yoga to mankind . . . By Kriya Yoga the union of the spiritual Self with God can be achieved by an individual . . . Elijah, Jesus, Kabir, and other prophets were past masters in the use of Kriya or a similar technique, by which they caused their bodies to materialize and dematerialize at will.”—*Research Journal of Philosophy*, March 1974, pp. 1-2.

“Karma” is said to be all the evil and badness in the world and in people. (This is as close as admitting the existence of sin as the Hindus and Buddhists get.) Sivanananda, a well-known yogi, declares that, by the repeated use of mind-blanking yoga mantras,—“the fire of Yoga burns all Karmas” (Sri Swami Sivananda, *Kundalini Yoga*).

This foolish theory reveals the basic goal of those poor deluded people: The problem is that it is only by the repeated use of mantras that the demons can keep increasing their hold on people; so the lie is told that **the only way to get rid of karma is to keep doing yoga trances,—because in this way**

the person can escape the wheel of reincarnation caused by karma. In fact, yoga is said to be the only way to escape constantly being reborn in this miserable world in the form of animals, birds, or people.

This “self-realization” is said to come when we discover our true identity as gods,—which can only come through practicing yoga. The grand “awakening” occurs when the *atman* (the individual soul) discovers that it is identical to *Brahman* (the Universal Soul). In that instant, godhood is more fully attained.

By the way, Sivananica—that guru we mentioned earlier—needs airplanes available which he can board and fly from one appointment to another,—yet he teaches his disciples that, by following his techniques, they will soon gain the power of “levitation”—and be able fly automatically. Everything in Satan’s world of charades is a lie.

It is of deep concern to the yogi (a yogi is one who practices yoga) to avoid reincarnation into this world as an animal or another miserable person. Yoga is a hoped-for means of escaping endless death and rebirths into lives of misery, and finally entering the heaven (Nirvana) of bliss. —**Yet this is a futile effort to fulfill Satan’s lie to Eve in the Garden:** “And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die” (Gen. 3:4).

Unless we accept Christ as our Saviour, and yield our lives to Him as His humble, obedient children, we will die! The hope presented to us in the Bible is not reincarnation,—but resurrection and an endless, happy life with our Lord and Saviour.

Here is an example showing how powerfully Hindu/Buddhist theories and practices have entered the Western world:

A leading Hindu, Yogi Bhajan, died in October 2004. **On April 5-6, 2005, respectively, the U.S. House and Senate unanimously passed a joint resolution praising this deceased Sikh leader for his “teachings . . . about Sikhism and yoga.”** On May 11, a special reception was held at the U.S. Capitol commemorating that Congressional Resolution. It was attended by “U.S. Senators and Representatives, members of the U.S. Department of State, and representatives from the Government of India . . .” **The news release praised Bhajan for how he had helped thousands “through his teachings on yoga and Sikh Dharma”** (*Sikh news release, May 11, 2005*).

Yogi Bhajan’s followers claim that it was he who brought Kundalini Yoga “to the West . . . in 1968.” He taught thousands how to release this “serpent force coiled at the base of the spine, waiting to spring up through the chakras” by means of yoga. Kundalini yoga is an especially vicious form of yoga. *More on that horrible monstrosity later.*

As for the Dali Lama, he claims to be the fourteenth reincarnation of the original Dalai Lama,—and therefore **a god on earth with the power to initiate others into their own godhood.** This is a repeat of the serpent’s lie in the Garden of Eden: “*Ye shall be as gods*” (Gen. 3:5). The Dali travels the world, initiating huge admiring and trusting audiences into “Tibetan Tantric Deity Yoga.” He promises initiates that they will become Bodhisatvas (little

Buddhas), realizing their inherent godhood and able to create their own reality. **For his work in initiating multitudes into yoga, he was given the Nobel Peace Prize in 1989.**

SUDDENLY BURSTS UPON THE WEST

By the late 1960s, it became apparent that the Eastern religions were being widely promoted in the West as something new and wonderful. While New Agers were enthusiastically advocating yoga, meditation, crystal gazing, spirit guides, and mantra-chanting as the way to achieve “global consciousness” and “enlightenment,” professing Christians were not buying the package.

But times have changed. Now it is solidly in American culture. The package has been accepted.

It is essential to understand the vastly different meanings given to the word, “meditation,” in the West—which are totally the opposite of those from the East.

What is genuine “meditation”? What is the false kind?

Meditation in the West has always been synonymous with contemplation, that is, **thinking deeply about something.**

Christian meditation involves seeking deeper insights into God’s Word (Psalm 1:2), pondering God Himself (Psalm 63:6), reflecting upon His works in nature (Psalm 77:12), and considering what our responsibility is and what our response should be (1 Timothy 4:15; 1 Peter 3:15) as His created subjects. **True meditation determines, with Christ’s help, to put away sin and obey God’s Ten Commandment moral law.**

In marked contrast, Eastern meditation associated with yoga involves *ceasing to think and emptying the mind*. Not filling the mind with great thoughts, good thoughts about God and our duties toward Him—but blowing the mind and emptying it, so a demon can enter.

Jesus spoke of the peril of an empty mind:

“When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none. Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, **he findeth it empty**, swept, and garnished.

“**Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter in and dwell there:** and the last state of that man is worse than the first. Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.”—*Matthew 12:43-45 (Luke 11:24-26)*.

Because these age-old, *heathen methods* are used, the person is saying, “Come on in, demons; I welcome you!” He opens the door to demonic possession by repeating a word or phrase (a mantra) over and over or focusing on a candle flame, the tip of one’s nose, or upon one’s breathing. **In yogic relaxation, the mind is emptied of rational thought and the person enters an altered state of consciousness.** Eastern meditation instructors say that this induced state is “perfectly natural.” But that it is not true.

Here is the tale that one of them tells:

“If you’re new to [Eastern] meditation, remember that all of us naturally meditate. We have ordinary experiences that regularly put us in a meditative state: watching the sun as it sets, listening to

soothing music, or just being at the water's edge. Our brain shifts into slower frequency,—and that's it: we are meditating.”—Jonathan Ellis, “Practicing Meditation,” in *Deepak Chopra's Infinite Possibilities for Body, Mind, and Soul*, October 1996, p. 4.

But that which Ellis describes is the opposite of contemplation! The Bible refers to eating or feeding upon God's Word. This is also called meditating on God's Word. For example, “In His [God's] law doth he meditate day and night” (Psalm 1:2). But **to feed or meditate upon God's Word means to think deeply about it in an effort to understand and gain greater insights.** —*But, in Eastern meditation, one is forbidden to think! The mind must become blank.* The demons flee when we pray to God or Christ; they come in droves when we imagine that practicing yoga is good for our minds and bodies.

John Loori, abbot of the Zen Mountain Monastery in Upstate New York, made this remarkable admission:

“Buddhism is a religion without a God or (depending on the school) an afterlife. **It is the search for the nature of the self, which ends in the realization that there is no self, that all the beings and objects are manifestations of the same underlying reality: godhood.**”—John Daido Loori, quoted in *Newsweek*, June 13, 1994, p. 46.

Leading writers are heartily recommending yoga and mantra meditation:

“Zen Buddhism should be taught in every fifth grade class in America.”—M. Scott Peck, author of *The Road Less Traveled*; in his book, *Farther Along the Road Less Traveled*.

“I do yoga . . . and three kinds of meditation— vipassana, transcendental and mantra meditation.”—*Jack Canfield, author of Chicken Soup for the Soul; in his book, Choosing to be Happy.*

“I look for inspirational messages from a variety of sources besides Jesus. Our folks get to hear words of wisdom from great prophets and spiritual leaders like Buddha, Mohammed . . . Yogananda and the Dalai Lama.”—*Ken Blanchard, author of The One-Minute Manager; in What Would Buddha do at Work? Forward.*

“I don’t believe that making disciples must equal making adherents to the Christian religion. It may be advisable to many circumstances to **help people become followers of Jesus and remain within their Buddhist, Hindu, or Jewish contexts.**”—*Brian McLaren, a Christian “emerging church” leader; quoted in his book, A Generous Orthodoxy, p. 260.*

“We need to become aware of the Cosmic Christ, which means recognizing that **every being has within him the light of Christ.**”—*Matthew Fox, author of The Coming of the Cosmic Christ; quoted in interview by Steve Turner, in Natural Mystic.*

Since the early 1980s, the Buddhist-type religious rites have been changing their names, stepping softly, while slowly penetrating the Christian churches.

At the present time, **“Christian yoga” and “Christian mantra meditation” is not only being practiced by many Americans—but is also taught by many Christian pastors, colleges, and seminaries.**

“Yoga is finding itself in an unusual position these days. Finally shaking its reputation as a 1960s

remnant, the practice has become a staple in some surprising circles . . . **Today, more than six million Americans practice yoga**, and the numbers are growing.”—“*Yoga’s Wider Reach*,” *U.S.A. Weekend*, March 27-29, 1998.

Seven years later, *Time Magazine* quoted one pastor as saying, **“Yoga is just another way to pray.”** Also noted was the fact that “a slew of books and videos are about to hit the market” (*Time Magazine*, September 2005, p. 12).

“Ultimately, yoga ‘workouts’ just may be the way that mysticism sneaks in the back door of American culture.”—*Professor Tiwari of Hindu University of America*, quoted in *Yoga Journal*, September-October 1994.

Here is an example: The following excerpt is from a lengthy article in America’s leading Christian magazine, ***Christianity Today***. The article is entitled, **“Yes to Yoga: Can a Christian breathe air that has been offered to idols?”**

“It’s 7:45 p.m. on a weekday and for the first time today, I consciously slow down my breathing . . . In . . . Out . . . Along with a group of 30 people . . . I use the unhurried cadences of the air filling and leaving my lungs to lull my muscles and joints into daring postures . . .

“Yoga has never had any negative influence on me . . . The three hours a week I spend doing yoga draws me closer to Christ . . .

“Now my enthusiasm for yoga doesn’t mean I’m in denial about its Hindu roots . . . I know that hard-core yogis believe that yoga is more than exercise or a relaxation technique. To them, it’s a religious ritual. But the Hindu gods don’t make it onto my mat.”—*Agnieszka Tennant*, “*Yes to Yoga*,”

Christianity Today, May 2005.

That professed Christian—like many others, including a growing number in our own denomination—is deluded. He is willing to have it so; and the demons, now inside him, are willing to give him happy feelings from time to time.

Down through the centuries, the teachings of Buddhism and Hinduism have blurred on several things, especially in regard to yoga.

While yoga may have started in India, through centuries of Buddhist meditations it was developed into its present form. Both Buddhist monks and Hindu gurus practice the same basic rituals.

A true Hindu yogi is deeply surprised at the effort of Christians to hide the fact that they are actually teaching and practicing part of his religion!

“It was quite astonishing to see on the flyer ‘*Christian Yoga! This Thursday night . . .*’ Now while Christians can practice yoga, **I am not aware of any Christian teachings about yoga. Yoga is not a Judeo/Christian word!** . . . It is a Hindu word, or more correctly a Sanskrit word from the Vedic civilization. So how did we get ‘Christian Yoga’? . . .

“**Hindus should reclaim its full heritage and not allow other groups to rename its sacred teachings under their banner,** especially when they have no history of those teachings within their own system. If they wish to ‘borrow’ and say this comes from our brothers and sisters in Hinduism, then that is another thing.”—*Yogi Baba Prem, Veavisharada, There is No Christian Yoga.*

How tragic it is that the yogi guru sees the

problem, but Christian leaders do not. In 2006, the same year this article came out, Thomas Nelson, one of the largest Christian Bible publishers, printed a book entitled *Yoga for Christians*. Many Christian colleges and bookstores are selling the book!

When entering a secular bookstore today, you are likely to find a section entitled *Spirituality: New Age*, and next to it, *Spirituality: Judeo-Christian*. The Hindu/Buddhist practices you will find in one section will mirror those in the other.

“Something very powerful is emerging . . . We are witnessing a spiritual revolution of great magnitude in the whole world . . . —the rise of a new school of mysticism within Christianity . . . It is growing year by year!”—*William Johnston (a Roman Catholic writer).*

Christianity Today published an article in 2008, entitled “The Future Lies in the Past: Lost Secrets of the Ancient Church.” Notice how Evangelicals started looking back to move forward.

“Last spring, something was stirring under the white steeple of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College . . . [and] filled the center’s Barrows Auditorium.”—*Chris Armstrong, The Future Lies in the Past, Christianity Today, February 2008.*

The remainder of the above article is about how the Christian church is returning to ancient Catholic monkish prayer rituals which, centuries ago, were inherited from the yoga practices of the ancient East.

GUIDANCE TO GOVERNMENT LEADERS

The present writer recalls when, while attending our Seminary, he was working as a hospital

chaplain in Washington, D.C. One day he met a witch. The most impressive thing about her was that her eyes shone with a strange light. In the hospital for that one day only, she immediately offered to provide me with supernatural guidance. When I quickly said no, she said that she regularly provided séances for leaders on Capitol Hill.

“At any given time, about one fourth of congressmen are engaged in exploring psychic phenomena.”—*U.S. Rep. Charles Rose, quoted in Arizona Republic, August 13, 1989.*

“Washington, D.C., rings with the opinions of futurists and spiritualists . . . There are gurus to Newt Gingrich . . .”—*Chicago Tribune, January 11, 1995.*

“It is unsettling that the speaker of the House drinks deep from the advice of spiritualists . . . The Clintons have met with Marianne Williamson, the best-selling author who promotes the power of miracles.”—*“The Bill-and-Newt gurus,” in U.S. News and World Report, January 23, 1995.*

In another news note, it was reported that Hillary Clinton was trying, through Marianne Williamson as her medium, to make contact with Eleanor Roosevelt.

The book, *Psychic Warrior*, by David Morehouse revealed the military’s secret remote-viewing program, based on spiritualism. Called *Star Gate*, it was (and perhaps still is) operated by the CIA (*Psychology Today, September-October 1996, p. 52*).

“The CIA did not go out of the mind control experiment business altogether. They only became more secretive. Two such projects were nicknamed Bluebird and Mkultra. These tests were conducted

primarily on unsuspecting human guinea pigs.”—*Thomas Rodar, et al., The Psychiatrists, p. 286.*

The *Monroe Institute* in Faber, Virginia, founded by Robert Monroe, which teaches out-of-body experiences (OBEs), has been a favorite with military and government officials and business leaders. After the death of his wife in 1992, Monroe claims to have taken an OBE to visit her, but couldn't handle the emotion of it; so he stopped using OBEs for fear that if he took another one he might not come back. Monroe received three patents for audio signals designed to induce an altered state of consciousness. Even Buddhist monks use the tapes “as a training tool.” Continuing on with this report, the *Wall Street Journal* stated:

“Retired General Albert Stubblebine, former director of the U.S. Army *Intelligence and Security Command*, confirms that the Army sent personnel to the *Monroe Institute* in the 1980s . . . while investigating the potential military applications of psychic phenomenon.”—*Bob Ortega, “Research Institute Shows People a Way Out of Their Bodies,” Wall Street Journal, September 20, 1994, pp. A1, A8.*

BUSINESS TRAINING SESSIONS

Even business executives and major corporations became deeply interested. Beginning in 1962, the Rand Corporation of Santa Monica, CA, began a four-year experiment in LSD, peyote, and marijuana.

“Representatives of some of the nation's largest corporations, including IBM, AT&T and General Motors, met in New Mexico this summer to discuss how metaphysics, the occult and Hindu

mysticism might help executives compete in the world marketplace . . . **There is a surge of interest in new metaphysical religions**, mediums, the occult, reincarnation, psychic healing, Satanism, 'spirit guides,' and other aspects of supernatural belief."—*Robert Lindsey, New York Times, September 29, 1986.*

"Western science is approaching a paradigm shift of unprecedented proportions, one that will change our concepts of reality and human nature, **bridge the gap between ancient wisdom and modern science**, and reconcile the difference between Eastern spirituality and Western pragmatism."—*Stanislav Grof (clinical psychologist), Beyond the Brain.*

The editor of a new-age magazine boasted of a gathering of **professionals "who came from eleven states" to discuss how better to infiltrate new-age thinking into their corporations.** As an example of this, he mentioned "a Southern California Ph.D., director of a successful hypnosis center . . . employed by two of California's largest publicly held companies **to teach 'success and positive thinking' to their employees**" (*Dick Sutphen, What Is, Summer 1986, p. 14*). Sutphen then added that **they could infiltrate Eastern mysticism into the West—simply by changing the names:**

"One of the biggest advantages we have as New Agers is, **once the occult, metaphysical and new-age terminology is removed, we have concepts and techniques that are very acceptable to the general public.** So we can change the names and demonstrate the power. In so doing, we open the new-age door to millions who normally would not be receptive."—*Ibid.*

By the 1980s, American major corporations'

new-age **“self-improvement programs”** were being pushed on employees. This accounted for “about \$4 billion in corporate spending each year” (*“Corporate Mind Control: New Age Gurus Want to Change Employee Thinking,” Newsweek, May 4, 1987*).

“At Stanford University’s well-regarded *Graduate School of Business* the syllabus for a seminar on ‘*Creativity in Business*’ includes **meditation, chanting, ‘dream work,’ the use of tarot [witchcraft] cards** and discussion of the ‘New Age Capitalist.’ ”—*Robert Lindsey, The New York Times, cited in St. Petersburg Times, December 6, 1986.*

“Harvard University has long been among the leaders in promoting the occult through psychic research. **One of the projects involved experimentation with Buddhist monks’ alleged psychic powers.**”—*D. Hunt, Yoga, pp. 148-149.*

Oddly enough, businessmen and corporate employees in special **“mind enhancing” training programs (“Creativity in Business” courses)** are often provided with similar trance-like programs, including yoga, **in order to provide the business world with a “spirit guide . . . to whom you can turn for guidance”** (*Ray and Meyers, Creativity in Business, p. 37*).

“First, relax. Make your mind still and quiet;—make it an absolute blank. **Now meet your inner adviser. With your quieted mind, invite a very loving, wise figure into your awareness.** It could be an old man or woman, a plant, a dog. Sit patiently and let an image emerge. **Then talk about whatever is troubling you.**”—*Sue Browder, “Basic Instincts,” in All Together: The Women’s Newsletter*

from SEARS, October 1994, p. 6.

HOLISTIC MEDICINE

“Indeed, **more and more medical schools are adding courses on holistic medicine** with titles like ‘Caring for the Soul.’”—*Dr. Wallace Sampson, Stanford University, Time Magazine, June 24, 1996, p. 59.*

“Spirit is seeping into medicine.”—*Joan Borysenko, Harvard Medical School, quoted in Brain/Mind and Common Sense, June 1993, p. 5.*

Most people flocking to holistic health practitioners seem to overlook the critical question as what is the nature of the power which is being used.

Michael Harner has pointed out that **holistic medicine is simply shamanism being practiced in our culture under new labels.**

“The burgeoning field of holistic medicine shows a tremendous amount of experimentation with techniques long practiced in shamanism, such as **visualization, altered states of consciousness, aspects of psychoanalysis, hypnotherapy, meditation for the purpose of improving positive attitudes, reducing stress, removing pain, and providing apparent healing.** In a sense, shamanism is being reinvented in the West precisely because it is needed.”—*Michael Harner, The Way of the Shaman, p. 135.*

Medical scientist Andrija Puharich, holder of more than 50 medical patents, became curious and did extensive research into this strange, new “holistic medicine” field. **He concluded that increasing numbers of persons today are getting in touch**

“with some source outside of themselves.” He considers these entities to have powers far beyond human capabilities.

“I am personally convinced that **superior beings from other spaces and other times have initiated a renewed dialogue with humanity** . . . While I do not doubt their existence, I do not know what they look like, how they live or even what their goals are with respect to humankind.”—*Andrija Puharich, Uri, p. 213.*

Marty Kaplan, Harvard *summa cum laude* in biology, made this discovery about holistic medicine:

“I got more from mind-body medicine than I bargained for. I got religion. Now I know there is a consciousness that transcends science, a consciousness toward which our species is sputteringly evolving . . . spurred ironically by our rendezvous with mortality.”—*Marty Kaplan, quoted in Time Magazine, June 24, 1996, p. 62.*

Dr. Reisser sums up holistic medicine:

“The holistic health movement has served as a platform for disseminating the world view of the **New Consciousness** and promoting occultism as an approach to health.”—*Paul Reisser, M.D., New Age Medicine, p. 158.*

A medical surgeon, Bernie Siegel, **was told that he could make spirit contact with deceased oncology (cancer treatment) experts** in the field of medicine, so he could increase his own medical abilities. Siegel tells how oncologist Carl Simonton (who said he learned the technique from Jose Silva, who in turn learned it from his spirit guide) **led Siegel “in a directed yoga meditation to find and meet an inner guide.”**

"I approached this exercise with all the skepticism one expects from a mechanistic doctor. Still, I sat down, closed my eyes, and followed directions [regarding the use of a mantra].

"I didn't believe it would work, but if it did. I expected to see Jesus or Moses. Who else would dare appear inside a surgeon's head?

"Instead, I met George, a bearded, long-haired young man wearing an immaculate flowing white gown and a skullcap. It was an incredible awakening for me, because I hadn't expected anything to happen . . . George was spontaneous, aware of my feelings, and an excellent advisor."—*Bernie Siegel, Love, Medicine, and Miracles, pp. 19-20.*

Later in the book, Siegel explains that **"George" eventually told him to begin teaching all his patients how they too could enter yoga mantra trances and in this way gain "renewed energy" and "mobilize their mental powers against disease."**

Gerald Jampolsky was a psychiatric physician, when guru Muktananda administered the *shaktipat* to him (by touching Jampolsky's "third eye" in his forehead with a feather).

"It seemed as though I had stepped out of my body and was looking down upon it. I saw colors whose depth and brilliance were beyond anything I had ever imagined.

"I began to talk in tongues. A beautiful beam of light came into the room and I decided at that moment to stop evaluating what was happening and simply be one with the experience, to join it completely . . . I was filled with an awareness of love unlike anything I had known before . . . **There was a complete feeling of oneness with God and the Uni-**

verse.”—Gerald Jampolsky, *Teach Only Love*, p. 3.

More on the shaktipat later.

YOGA EXERCISES

These are supposed to be extremely good for your body and mind, and therefore an excellent source of improved health. But this is another portal by which the spirits enter a person’s mind! *Here is additional information on this, another satanic, fraud used to capture human minds:*

“Disciplines like yoga and t’ai chi [or Tai Chi] are more than exercise regimens; they’re mind-body empowerment techniques that have developed over thousands of years.”—Dr. Sarah Sallon, Director, Natural Medicine Research Unit, Hadasah Medical Center, Jerusalem, quoted in *Jerusalem Post*, November 21, 1996.

Devanagari yoga is a term for a range of traditional systems of physical exercise and meditation in Hinduism.

Modified versions of the physical exercises in **Hatha Yoga** have become popular as a kind of low-impact physical exercise, and are used for therapeutic purposes (*Timothy McCall, Yoga as Medicine*, p. xvii; also see A. Ross and S. Thomas, “The Health Benefits of Yoga and Exercise,” in *The Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, January 2010, p. 16).

“Yoga,” in this sense and in common parlance, primarily refers to the *asanas* but less commonly to *pranayama*. **Aspects of yoga mantra or breath meditation are almost always included!** (*Georg Feuerstein, “Yogic Meditation.”* In Jonathan Shear,

The Experience of Meditation, p. 90).

An article, in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine*, says that **the system of Hatha Yoga teaches that prana, or healing “life energy,” is absorbed into the body during these exercises.**

A survey, released in December 2008 by the U.S. *National Center for Complementary and Alternative Medicine*, found that **yoga was the sixth most commonly used alternative therapy in the United States during 2007**, with 6.1 percent of the population participating (*CDC National Health Statistics Report #12, December 2012*).

Some of the training forms of **t'ai chi ch'uan** are especially known for being practiced at what most people categorize as “slow movement.” **Today, t'ai chi ch'uan has spread worldwide.** Most modern styles of t'ai chi ch'uan trace their development to at least one of the five traditional schools: Chen, Yang, Wu/Hao, Wu, and Sun.

The faster t'ai chi activities are used in developing fighting techniques, in order to maim or kill opponents.

T'ai chi training involves five elements: **nei gung** (spiritual meditation), **tui shou** (response drills), **sanshou** (self-defense techniques), weapons, and solo hand routines, known as **taolu**. While t'ai chi ch'uan is typified by some for its slow movements, many t'ai chi styles (including the three most popular: **Yang, Wu, and Chen**)—have secondary forms of a faster pace. Some traditional schools of t'ai chi teach partner exercises known as “pushing hands” and martial applications of the forms' postures.

“The focus and calmness cultivated by the meditative aspect of t'ai chi is seen as necessary in maintaining optimum health.”—Wong Kiew Kit, *The Complete Book of Tai Chi Chuan: A Comprehensive Guide to the Principles*.

—So yogic exercises have both an evil origin (instruction in how to fight and kill without a weapon) and yoga meditation. And both bring demons into your mind.

Here is a brief overview of some of the rest of these terms:

According to the *Patanjali Yoga sutras*, **Asana** refers to two things: the place where a practitioner (**yogin**, in general usage—**yogi** [male] or **yogini** [female]) sits and the manner (posture) in which he/she sits.

In the *Yoga sutras*, **asana** means “to be seated in a position that is firm, but relaxed,” for extended, or timeless periods. Modern usage has come to include variations from lying on the back and standing on the head to a variety of other positions.

Standing positions are called **kriyas**.

The eight limbs of **ashtanga**, in order, are the **yamas** (restrictions), **niyamas** (observances), **asanas** (postures), **pranayama** (breath work), **pratyahara** (mind emptied sense of withdrawal or non-attachment), **dharana** (concentration), **dhyana** (meditation), and **samadhi** (realization of the true Self or **Atman**), and **unity with Brahman** (the Hindu concept of God).

If you step into an exercise or reconditioning center, and hear any of the above Hindu words,—do not wait for definitions, explanations, or pleasing assurances;—*walk quickly to the nearest exit, and take your loved ones with you.*

INTO THE SCHOOLS

Yes, it is all entering our public schools, colleges, and universities as well!

“The media is concerned about a threat to education from the so-called religious right. There was no such outcry when the left began its pervasive brainwashing.”—*Thomas Sowell, Forbes, February 1, 1993.*

“My alienation from Christian values intensified in high school, where my teachers exposed me to fascinating ideas such as the theories of evolution, reincarnation, and extrasensory perception.”—*Will Baron, Deceived by the New Age, p. 19.*

“The humanist revolution is proceeding full tilt ahead in our time, and the ‘congregation’ for the new religion is a captive student audience.”—*John Steinbacher.*

“At present, I’m in a real battle. I’m training to be a Secondary Schoolteacher. **The syllabus includes ‘stilling’ or mystic meditation, introducing children to [power] animals and ancient spirits.** The school is a mainstream state school and the . . . [administration] is endorsing this shamanistic initiation technique.”—*Letter from England, quoted in D. Hunt, Occult Invasion, p. 312.*

In 1972, *Harvard University* Professor of Education and Psychiatrist Chester M. Pierce stated in his keynote address to the *Association for Childhood Education International*:

“Every child in America entering school at the age of five is insane because he comes to school with certain allegiances toward our founding fathers, toward his parents, toward a belief in a supernatural being . . . **It’s up to you, teachers, to**

make all of these sick children well—by creating the international children of the future.”—C.M. Pierce, quoted in Rodar, Kubillus, and Burwell, *The Psychiatrists*, p. 306.

As the *Iowa Report* puts it, OBE (Outcome Based Education) and ML (Mastery Learning) are designed for **manipulating students through behavior modification**, based on B.F. Skinner's methods, opening the door to destroying their traditional and religious values. In such an OBE/ML program, **traditional Christian values are not acceptable. Skinner considered all humans to be only animals which can be trained** like animals in a circus or zoo.

The *National Assessment of Educational Progress* (NAEP) evaluates programs in state schools. If the "outcomes" do not meet standards, material is distributed to the schools by the *National Diffusion Network* (NDN), to "remediate" the deficiencies in the students' learnings.

"The classroom will and must become the area of combat between the rotting corpse of Christianity and the new faith of Humanism."—*Humanist magazine*, January-February 1983.

Barbara Clark of the California State University system, in her book, *Growing up Gifted*, says that every teacher in California schools should teach **yoga meditation and the development of psychic powers**, which she calls "transcendence." This is to be established through a sense of unity consciousness among students by "**transpersonal communication.**"

During the time that he was governor of Arkansas, Bill Clinton, working closely with Hillary,

changed that public school system. Calling the “restructuring” the “Governor’s School,” **there was blatant promotion of gay lifestyle, free sex, and new age beliefs and practices.** Students were encouraged to act for themselves, apart from parental guidance.

As a reason for its concern to remold the children of our nation, the government professes concern for the psychological well-being of the child.

“The schoolhouse has become a vibrant psychological center, staffed not only by schoolteachers trained in ‘educational psychology’ but by sixty thousand guidance workers and seven thousand school psychologists whose counseling borders on therapy.”—*Martin L. Gross, The Psychological Society, pp. 4-5.*

Those who work to bring more occult into the public schools are honored as great heroes. **Jean Houston was named “Educator of the Year” in 1985** by the *National Teachers Education Association* (NEA) and by the National Catholic Education. Who is this woman?

Occult psychologist Jean Houston is notorious for her séance activities and promotion of them.

“During numerous lengthy stays with Hillary Clinton, Houston has led the First Lady into guided imagery (meditation) sessions to contact and consult with Eleanor Roosevelt.”—*Newsweek, July 1, 1996.*

As a child, Houston escaped into a profound mystical experience, an Eastern pantheistic monistic revelation (*New Age Encyclopedia, p. 221*).

In the 1960s, Houston married Robert Masters,

the psychotherapist and sexologist who coauthored the notorious Masters-Johnson Report. Together Houston and Masters began to experiment with LSD and other hallucinogenic drugs, believing that the drug-induced **altered states of consciousness “were most effective in conveying psychic truth to the participant,”** and “that **authentic religious and mystical experiences occur among the drug subjects”** (*New Age Encyclopedia*, p. 221).

Houston and her husband “also developed the ASCID (*Altered States of Consciousness induction Device*), better know as “the Witches Cradle,” as it was believed to have been used by witches using sensory deprivation and movement to enhance “fantasies and alteration in consciousness” (*Encyclopedia of Occultism and Parapsychology*, p. 485).

When legal restrictions made hallucinogenic drug research more difficult, Houston and Masters began to focus on the use of yoga meditation, guided imagery, and visualization as alternative techniques for inducing altered states of consciousness. They hoped these techniques would facilitate the emergence of man’s fullest potential.

When you send your child to the public school, you have little idea what he or she will learn! **Actual séance-type activities which urge the child to contact a spirit guide are regularly taught there!**

These techniques taught to children in public schools are similar to those used by witch doctors for contacting demons in order to obtain supernatural powers.

School children are taught to visulize themselves in various locations close to animals: Go

underwater and see Duso, the dolphin, coming to their side. Focus on the dolphin until its image becomes clear; then talk to it! It will talk back! Contact has been made, by your child in school, with a spirit entity. From that time onward, Duso needs only to be visualized, and he will come to the aid of the child.

Jean Houston and Robert Masters wrote a book, called *Mind Games*, which is so horrible that it captures the minds of those who read it. Throughout its pages, periodically, large captions appear. Wake Up!—because the so-called “games” tend to hypnotize the reader! Schools love it.

The book includes the materialization of the entity which they call the “Group Spirit.” It is created, they tell the reader, by a “method known and practiced for thousands of years in Tibet, where such entities are known as *thought-forms*, or “*tulpas*.” **Described as “an expression of the collective consciousness of all the players,”** the Group Spirit can be seen, heard, and touched by members of the group participating in the “game.” In response to questions, **it presents answers from an Eternal Knowledge.**

Houston and Masters explain that **the objective of these “games” is so the spirits can penetrate our natural defenses, and enter our minds:**

“The very best way and perhaps, for the present, the only way [of contacting these entities] is within the context of an altered state of consciousness.

“This may be true for the reason that **within that range of states which we think of as normal, conscious contact with these other life forms has**

been made impossible by some kind of shielding against it . . . **But by altering consciousness, we sometimes drop the shield, and the contacts become possible.**”—Houston and Masters, *Mind Games*, pp. 70-71.

—*What is that shield that is protecting us!* It is the Holy Spirit trying to keep us from dabbling in that which will surely destroy us!

But those willing to turn aside to consider evil activities—or satanic sorcery—will be captured!

Yet Houston, and so many yogis and others bent on destroying you, **keep promising, “If you will trust the spirit guide, and have confidence in the ability that the guide will protect you, then you will be safe from harm.”**

Another danger, used nationwide, is the language-arts curriculum, *READ*, which includes the following visualization exercise:

“Close your eyes and breathe deeply to relax . . . **Picture in your mind a place . . . become acquainted with your surroundings . . . ask to meet a guide. An animal, person or being will accompany you and give you whatever power you might need . . .**

“Watch what this new companion does or shows you. **Listen to what it says. Go wherever this guide wants to lead you.** You are safe . . .”—*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6, p. 4.

In California State public schools, **third graders were taught to visualize a personal spirit guide in the form of an animal**; then they were to write about their occult experience with this creature for a public bulletin-board display.

In Oregon, **students were seated in the order**

of their astrological signs for a Winter Solstice celebration as the “sun god” and “moon goddess” entered the auditorium, accompanied by chanting and the beating of drums.

“Celebrating Winter Solstice with ‘dance around the Solstice tree’ is one of the *Anti-Bias Curriculum’s* suggested alternatives to Christmas.”—*Desert News*, February 9, 1980, p. 11.

A mother living in Montana discovered that **her fourth-grader’s class was to pretend that it was part of a mythical Indian tribe.** The children were to imagine themselves going on a quest “alone in the wilderness . . . to prove to their tribe that they were worthy of being considered adults” (*World Goodwill Newsletter*, p. 5).

Wondering what this was all about, the mother studied the lessons, and learned that the children were introduced to a youth with supernatural abilities “from the Modat Tribe, known to have great shamans.” **The children studying this lesson at school were to follow him (in their minds) to a “deep canyon . . . where you feel many spirits rising . . . [and] calling you to visit this incredible place.”** After reading this, the students were to write a paper describing their adventures there (*ibid.*).

Many, many other examples of occultism are being taught to young children in our public schools.

Much of the credit for such infiltration of American schools with mysticism, occultism, and paganism must go to dedicated educators and psychologists who believe in those things.

Deborah Rosman, “a psychology instructor for the San Lorenzo Valley, California, adult school pro-

gram and an education consultant to many school districts,” wrote *Meditating with Children: A Workbook on New Age Educational Methods* which has received wide praise. As one newspaper declared enthusiastically:

“Educators who once turned to Ritalin and other drugs for hyperactive children . . . are now turning to daily meditation exercises instead—with positive results.”—*San Jose Mercury News*.

Let us briefly explore this book which is “helping children”:

The book, *Meditating with Children*, is **dedicated to “The Universal Mother of Compassion found in all nature,”** and also to “Paramahansa Yogananda, for some of the exercises and much of the inspiration for writing this book; and above all—to The One” (*Meditating with Children*, p. 3).

The basic premise of the book is “the Divine Nature of Childhood”; and its stated purpose is to help “children everywhere . . . to evolve towards their spiritual destiny.”

As you might expect, this book—so greatly lauded by educators—is **a compendium of blatant Hindu religious symbols and practices, including the Hindu/Buddhist chanting of OM constantly repeated, yoga exercises, and Self-realization.**

Yet, true to form, the book is declared to be “non-religious,” and therefore safe to be taught in America’s public schools. *East-West Journal* praises the book as “among the most enlightening of the new teaching books, a well-illustrated tool of practical psychology; and an absence of a religious point

of view in the book—make this volume an excellent learning vehicle” (*Deborah Rozman, Meditating with Children, from endorsements in the front of the book*).

Rozman’s Hindu handbook, and the many which are like it, are accepted and endorsed as nonreligious. While evolution and Hinduism is taught in our schools, creationism and Christian principles are excluded.

And then there are occult toys, games, books, and films; these are being heavily marketed for children and youth. **These “fantasy role-playing games” are extremely dangerous** because of the use of the imagination, which is the quickest way into the occult.

Children’s cartoons on TV and videos provide enticement and initiation into the occult. **There is a close parallel between these “superhuman” heroes and the ancient pagan gods and goddesses, both in appearance and in powers.**

For example, the Mutant Ninja Turtles maintain their special powers through Eastern meditation learned from their guru, Splinter the Rat. **She-Ra is the head of a group of sorceresses and goddesses who rule the universe from Crystal Castle, the source of all power.** The eyes of the half-human, half-animal Thunder Cats light up with an inner occult power. **Books and films about witches and wizards is standard fare for our youth.** But a book presenting Christianity would not be allowed in public schools because of the selectively enforced separation of church and state. **Occult religions are all right; Bible religion is not.**

Children are being brainwashed into a shamanic (pagan witchcraft) worldview, not only in our public schools but also through television cartoons, movies, comic books, toys, and games.

And then there is science fiction. It exerts a powerful influence on behalf of Eastern mysticism. Once looked upon as pure fantasy, sci-fi is now accepted as quasi-scientific.

“Every Saturday morning millions of kids of all ages are treated to lessons in shamanic practice on the ‘Ewoks’ cartoon show, produced by George Lucas of *Star Wars* and *Raiders of the Lost Ark* fame.

“Nearly every show involves good Ewok Shaman Logray doing battle with his arch enemy, Morag. And **the word, shaman [a variant name for a witch doctor], is used directly. Clairvoyant dreams, talking trees, magical spells, amulets, and wisdom teachings** are gently woven into this entertaining and popular series.”—“*Shamanism on Television*,” *Shaman’s Drum: A Journal of Experiential Shamanism*, Summer 1986, p. 19.

Truly, friends, we are nearing the end!

“Sin isn’t something many people spent much time worrying about in the past 25 years. But sin at least offered a frame of reference for behavior. But when the frame was dismantled during the sexual revolution, we lost the guidewire of personal responsibility.

“The United States has problems with drugs, high-school sex, AIDS and rape. None of these will go away until people in positions of responsibility come forward and explain, in frankly moral terms, that some of the things people do nowadays are wrong.”—*Reader’s Digest*, May 1992, reprinted

from the *Wall Street Journal*.

To add to the crisis that our children—and the rest of us face,—**there is the transformation of so-called “psychology” and “psychiatry” toward occult-favoring morality discouraging guidelines.**

“Yes, it is true, psychotherapy is subversive . . . **Therapy, theories and techniques promote a new model of man that is contrary to that which has been traditionally acceptable.**”—*Carl Rogers, quoted in Journal of Counseling and Christian Psychology, Vol. 48, p. 101.*

“We must face our own inner experiences without the guidance of the traditional foundation stones of Judeo-Christian experience . . . We are compelled to erect our own morality, arrive at our own faith and belief.”—*“Psychology Today, et al.,” in Chronicles, March 1986, p. 48.*

By 1994, the American Psychiatric Association’s *Diagnostic Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders (DSM)* listed 374 mental disorders! **Everything that you or your child does is listed there as some kind of mental disorder.** Someone who looked in that book, wrote this:

“Does your 10-year-old dislike doing her math homework? Better get her to the nearest couch because she’s got No. 315.4, *Developmental Arithmetic Disorder*. Maybe you’re a teenager who argues sometimes with your parents. Better get some medication pronto because you’ve got No. 313.8 *Oppositional Defiant Disorder* . . . I am not making these things up. (To do so would be *Fictitious Disorder Syndrome*.)

“I know there are some cynics out there who . . . wouldn’t be caught dead on a psychiatrist’s couch . . . Your unwillingness to seek professional help is

itself a symptom of a serious mental problem. It's right here in the book: 15.81, *Noncompliance with Treatment Disorder*.”—Bruce Wiseman, *Psychiatry: the Ultimate Betrayal*, pp. 357-358.

Modern psychology and psychiatry are against Bible religion and against the God of the Bible!

“Whatever it means to be a Christian in today’s world, it does not entail the acceptance of a legislating God . . . As the world of global culture settles on its new tack, there will be a new set of ‘virtues’ . . . Virtues that the human community chooses in that moment of time to espouse and adopt, not because they are legislated by divine authority . . . but because the community chooses them to be so.”—Anglican priest David Guthrie, administrator of Auckland’s Holy Trinity Cathedral, quoted in *New Zealand Herald*, October 29, 1996.

“It is indeed shocking that many, if not most, forms of psychotherapy currently offered to consumers are not supported by credible scientific evidence.”—R. Christopher Barden, psychologist, lawyer, and president of the National Association for Consumer Protection in Mental Health Practices, press release.

“A surprising number of today’s psychotherapists are following Carl Jung’s advice and are consulting a horoscope.”—*Wholemind Newsletter*, Vol. 1, No. 1, p. 5.

Public trust and media support remain high for “mental health professionals,” in spite of the fact that **psychiatrists, and related specialties, have more moral, emotional, and behavioral problems than any other medical professionals.** One out of four psychologists has suicidal feelings at times.

Many prominent ones (including Sigmund Freud) committed suicide (*Chronicles*, March 1986, p. 51). A report by the *American Psychiatric Association Task Force on Suicide Prevention* revealed that **“psychiatrists commit suicide at rates about twice those expected of physicians”** (*Journal of Humanistic Psychology*, Fall 1992).

HERE IS WHAT YOU WANT TO AVOID

Normal thinking, or meditation, involves thinking carefully about something. Catch that point: That is what genuine “meditation” is! But this strange, new penetration of ancient Buddhism entering the churches is keyed to the objective of **erasing all thought from your mind; so a spirit can enter and steer you into new avenues of thought** and thought patterns which he provides.

The channelers and masters will tell you that this mind-emptying “meditation” must be done daily.

“First and foremost, almost all mediums agree on the significance and the importance of regular daily meditation. **This single practice [of daily contact with the spirits], above all others, is no doubt the very shaft that drives the wheel of development.**”—Zolar, *Zolar’s Book of the Spirits*, p. 227.

OVER 120 NAMES FOR THIS

There is a new emerging so-called “spirituality,” through its emphasis on the teachings of the Desert Fathers (ancient Catholic mystics)

and Buddhist gurus, which is leading many Protestants back into Catholic monastic rituals, and beyond into ancient Buddhism and Hinduism.

It is important that you be aware of the names that are being used! They were listed here in the front of this book. But I will repeat them in one of the last chapters. They are placed here in larger print. You or your loved ones may be invited to take part in one or more of these rituals, all of which will lead to self-hypnotic procedures.

Some of the various names under which this supposedly wonderful new pinnacle of intense personal spirituality is entering the Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox churches are the following. Their meanings will be clarified or become obvious elsewhere in this book:

Spiritual formation, spiritual direction, spiritual redirection, spiritual directors, discipling, spiritual discipling, spiritual guide, mentoring, mentoring time, prayer stations, spiritual retreats, the silence, ancient prayer practices, centering, centering prayer, centering down, centering up, divine center, divine light, inner light, light space, tiny space, beyond words, Ignation contemplation, contemplative, contemplative prayer, sacred space, prayer rooms, prayer space, prayer stations, ancient prayer practices, mind emptying, Jesus prayer,

breath prayer, imaging, visualizing, guided visualization, mind-emptied meditation, and thought-emptied meditation.

There is more: **altered state of consciousness, ancient wisdom, Aquarian light, Christ consciousness, visualization, higher self, inner divinity, interspirituality, journaling, Kundalini, lectio divina, mantra, meditation, metaphysical light, mysticism, rebirthing, new age, new thought, occult, occultism, pantheism, panentheism, Reiki, samadhi, spirit guide, spiritual meditation, religious formation, Tantra, the god within, god in you, true self, the higher self, your higher self, mother god, labyrinths, prayer labyrinths, walking the labyrinth, walking the circle, Taize, chanting, OM, journaling (keeping a self diary).**

In addition, there is **yoga, yoga position, spiritual trance, thin space, a thin place, entrance into thin places, mind emptying, Reformation, Renovaré, rethink, emerging spirituality, emergent movement, the emerging church, emergence.**

There are many more terms—including **TM, transcendental meditation, Eastern lore, the wisdom of the East, channeling, spirit messages, Eastern healing, crystal power, mesmerism, hypnotism, magnetic healing, shamanism, Santería, Supernatural light, Spirit messages, Wicca, universalism.**

Other important people involved in this mysticism are the Desert Fathers; Ignatius Loyola; a lengthy list of Dark Ages' mystics in the Catholic Church; Buddhist and Hindu gurus; holy men; and modern Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish writers and speakers and their organizations.

"Spiritual formation" has been a basic identifying name for a number of years; but, because genuine Christians have recently become suspicious of it,—**in order to better hide its identity, religious leaders and teachers (including in our own denomination) are now changing the name from "spiritual formation" to "religious formation," "deepening religion," "religious dedication," "meditation," "spiritual meditation," or some other confusing term.**

Be on guard! Those who have dared to dabble in one of these mind-emptying rituals—have had an evil spirit enter their minds. And now their concern is for you to share in the experience also!

TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION

Transcendental Meditation is a veiled form of Hindu yoga, though it claims to be a religiously neutral method of relaxation and rejuvenation. Initiates to TM receive a mantra (Hindu holy word) to repeat while sitting in yogic postures and engaging in yogic breathing. The goal is to find God within themselves; since the Hindu god (Brahman) and the self (Atman) are said to be one.

Transcendental Meditation (TM) was introduced

into the West by Maharishi Mahesh Yogi as a Hindu religious practice in 1957. In that year, he started the *Spiritual Regeneration Movement* and taught that **TM would produce “a legendary substance called soma in the meditator’s body; so the gods of the Hindu pantheon could be fed and awakened”** (*Art Kunkin, “Transcendental Meditation on Trial, Part Two,” in Whole Life Monthly, September 1987, pp. 14-15*).

But when the TM form of yoga was excluded from public schools and government funding because it was recognized as a religious practice, **Maharishi quickly deleted all reference to religion—and presented TM as pure science.** The same has since been done to all other forms of yoga (*ibid.*, p. 17). As he told his followers:

“It doesn’t matter if you lie teaching people . . . because TM is the ultimate, absolute spiritual authority on the face of this Earth. Its practitioners are the only teachers and upholders of genuine spiritual tradition . . . They’re running the universe. **They are controlling the gods through the soma sacrifice.**”—*Ibid.*, pp. 15-17.

Craig Pruitt was an atheist who started on **TM (which, basically, is just typical yoga meditation into mental blankness and spirit reception)** because his life was not doing well, and he did not want God’s help. But later he discovered that TM was a religion also—and allowed pagan gods into his mind. *Just one month of TM did this to Pruitt and to others:*

“Several hundred of us from around the world studied for a month with Maharishi in Europe to become teachers of TM. We meditated eight or ten

times a day. It was called 'rounding'—and **the effect of so much involvement in yoga was at times very frightening.**

"Some would see grotesque spirit beings sitting next to them when they meditated. Some were attacked by the spirits. It was all very real, not imaginary in the least. **Others would find themselves suddenly overcome with blind rage,** even with the urge to murder someone. One girl was locked in a room because her behavior had become uncontrollable. The leaders ignored rather than cared for these people as though the problem would cure itself. Maharishi brushed it all aside by explaining that 'bad karma' was being worked out from past lives—a necessary part of our journey into 'higher consciousness.'

"I finally achieved Unity Consciousness, which made me the envy of others. However, the initial euphoric feeling that I had 'arrived' at one of the ultimate states soon gave way to panic. **I had lost the ability to decide what was 'real' and what wasn't.** I seemed to be the whole universe. There were no categories, no difference between myself and a tree or the sky or another person. **I felt that I was losing my mind.** Maharishi told me to stop meditating. Gradually I returned to a semblance of normality—but I suffered from frequent lapses into Unity Consciousness, much like a flashback from LSD.

"After coming back to the United States, I worked at Maharishi's International University. **My roommate there committed suicide. I was committed to a mental institution.**"—Craig Pruitt, *quoted in D. Hunt, Yoga, pp. 111-112.*

SHAMANISM

Shamans in Africa also use yoga-like mantra repetitions in order to enter into trances. —However, in Siberia and Haiti, loud, incessant noise is used to send the shaman into a trance.

“When the Siberian shaman gets ready to go into his trance, all the villagers get together and shake rattles and blow whistles and play whatever instruments they have, **to send him off into trance and spirit possession. There is a constant pounding, pounding, pounding.** And those sessions last for hours and hours.

“It was the same way with *The Doors* [a U.S. rock band] when we played in concert. The concerts didn’t last as long as the Siberian shamans, but I think that our drug experiences let us get into it that much quicker. **We knew the symptoms of the altered state, so that we could try to approximate it. And the audience felt it too.**”—Ray Manzarek, quoted in *Jerry Hopkins and Daniel Sugarman, No One Here Gets Out Alive*, pp. 158-160.

Here is a description of the voodoo ceremony in Haiti (where it is called *vodoun*). **It uses drums to send various ones in the audience into possession by spirits**, at which time they fall to the ground, roll around, and do other grotesque things—which causes the crowds around them to scream and howl excitedly:

“The drum pounded relentlessly deep solid blows that seemed to strike directly to the woman’s spine. She cringed with each beat . . . **And upon this wave of sound, the spirit arrived** . . . Slowly she lifted her face to the sky. She had become possessed . . .

“Apparently the spirits could be greedy, for soon

two other *hounsis* [two other bystanders] were possessed . . . **The drums beat ceaselessly.** Then, as suddenly as the spirits arrived, they left.”—Wade Davis, *Serpent and the Rainbow*, pp. 76-77.

The connection between voodoo and the powerful drum noise of shamanism and Haitian witchcraft are close; for they have the same supernatural source. An alternative method is Yoga stretching and meditation which also provide “rushes of energy” and similar strange mental excipients.

“Vodoun [in Haiti] is not an isolated cult; it is a complex mystical worldview, a system of beliefs concerning the relationship between man, nature, and the supernatural forces of the universe . . . **In Haiti, as in Africa, there is no separation between the sacred and the secular . . .** Vodoun not only embodies a set of spiritual concepts, it prescribes a way of life . . . **Each believer not only has direct contact with the spirits, he actually receives them into his body . . .** Haiti will teach you that good and evil are one . . . For the vodounist there seem to be no absolutes [no morals].”—Wade Davis, *Serpent and the Rainbow*, pp. 104, 114.

It is said that Haiti is “85 percent Catholic and 110 percent vodoun.” Every voodoo ceremony begins with a Catholic prayer, and proceeds in a manner that is totally demonic.

If it seems farfetched that similar conditions could exist in America, remember that **millions of eager New Agers and rock music lovers are caught up in the same shamanic powers through the spirit contacts which their drugs and music bring to them.**

Let us now turn our attention to music and the spirit world:

ROCK MUSIC AND POSSESSION

Rock music affects the mind in a manner similar to that of a yoga trance. For much, much more on the devilish nature of this kind of music, see the present author's book, *Inside Rock Music*.

In 1963, the Beatles arrived in the United States and took the nation by storm. But the source of their inspiration was unquestionably demonic. **All the rock groups were on drugs, and their fans began using them too. Drugs and rock music go together.** Most rock music lyrics and scores are written under the influence of "spirit entities" contacted in altered states induced by LSD or other hallucinogens. Speaking of how he wrote his songs, John Lennon said:

"It's like being possessed, like a psychic or a medium. [As a teenager] I used to literally trance out into alpha [mentally transfixed] seeing these hallucinatory images of my face changing, becoming cosmic and complete."—*Interviews with John Lennon and Yoko Ono*, p. 203.

The Beatles' press agent, Derek Taylor, in a well-known interview, blurted out:

"They're completely anti-Christ. I mean, I am anti-Christ as well, but **they're so anti-Christ they shock me!**"—*Saturday Evening Post*, August 6, 1964.

The Beatles played a key role in leading a generation of youth into drugs. **Timothy Leary (who first popularized LSD in America and had just**

come back from India, where he was initiated into yoga by the gurus there) called the Beatles **“the four evangelists.”** “The Beatles have taken my place; their music is a complete celebration of LSD” (*Leary, quoted in Jay Stevens, Storming Heaven: LSD and the American Dream, p. 345*).

“Through music, you can hypnotize people . . . When you get them at their weakest point, you can preach into the subconscious minds what we want to say . . . Definitely, I’m trying to change the world.”—*Jimi Hendrix, quoted in David Henderson, The Life of Jimi Hendrix, pp. 206, 233.*

“I figured that the only thing to do was to steal their kids. I still think it’s the only thing to do . . . I’m not talking about kidnapping . . . but about changing young people’s value systems.”—*Crosby of the Crosby, Stills, and Nash Group, in Rolling Stones magazine, Vol. 1, p. 410.*

Drug use led the Beatles, as it would their fans, into Eastern mysticism and into yoga. They became followers of Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and practiced his Transcendental Meditation (TM) style of yoga. Maharishi called it the “Spiritual Regeneration Movement.” But when he changed the name to “The Science of Creative Intelligence,” it exploded, especially among Hollywood and other celebrities. It had become the fashionable thing to do.

“The drugs of the ’60s was LSD and marijuana. I think the drug of the ’80s is cosmic consciousness . . . yoga.”—*New York Times, September 29, 1986.*

Instead of calling it “freaking out,” **the new terms were “spiritual enlightenment” and “spiritual meditation.”** It was said to lead to “higher

states of consciousness.”

Here are statements by two men who managed to escape. The first man escaped from drugs and rock music; the second man escaped from yoga:

“I recall how exciting it seemed to be part of a global federation of youth, given a new vision of peace, love, and brotherhood, bonded by drugs and music. It all seemed so new and wonderful going in. Coming out was another story.

“I was fortunate to get out with my mind intact, though it took me years to recognize and be freed of the spiritual bondage I’d entered. Other friends were not so lucky. Deaths, broken minds and spirits were the order of the day.”—*Quoted in D. Hunt and T.A. McMahon, The New Spirituality, p. 266.*

Yes, rock music also leads to suicide.

“Some of its victims have been tormented to the point of committing suicide or murder. Seventy-six cases of this have been documented.”—*David Tame, The Secret Power of Music, p. 140.*

This next account is by a person who managed to get out of the so-called “rebirthing” produced by repeated yoga spirit possessions—before it was too late:

“Rebirthing is a powerful occult technique that some have called ‘Yoga for the West.’ It is in fact closely related to Paramahansa Yogananda’s Kriya Yoga . .

“I began to see that a deception was involved, that I was being drawn ever deeper into confusion and control by other beings.

“In the five years since I left the movement I have struggled to regain the ability to think clearly and be unafraid. **I know of others who, like myself,**

have been left drained and mentally fogged for years even after they stopped rebirthing.

“After lengthy observation of the entire new-age scene, I am convinced that these techniques—rebirthing, yoga, TM, visualization of inner guides, etc.—have an intrinsic power in themselves.

“They work because they are designed specifically to blow open doors and knock down barriers that God has placed in the human spirit to prevent a takeover—by demonic beings that I came to realize are real and very destructive.”—

Ibid, pp. 266-267.

The screaming and the incessant blast of drums, both in shamanism and in rock music, permit the spirit guides to flow into the audience.

SANTERIA

Santería is a religion of Nigerian and Caribbean origin, which is influenced by Roman Catholic ceremonies and symbols. **Instead of mantas, it uses drums to hypnotize the mind**, so contacts with spirits can occur.

Santería is a system of beliefs that merges the Yoruba religion (which was brought to the New World by slaves imported to the Caribbean to work the sugar plantations) with Roman Catholic and Native Indian traditions. These slaves carried with them various religious customs—**including a trance for communicating with their ancestors and deities, animal sacrifices, and sacred drumming.**

The emphasis is on beating on drums, so that all those present can enter a demonic spell—and become spirit possessed. Obviously, a rock concert produces similar effects!

In Cuba, this religious tradition has evolved into what we now recognize as Santería.

Santería is spreading throughout America. The *Los Angeles Times* did a major article on it.

Monife Balewa, a follower of Santería, was typical of the horrors they face by indulging in it.

“I have been possessed by Oshun, and I’ve prayed that it not happen again. It’s usually the drum that brings it on. The last time, I don’t remember what happened, but I’ve been told I jumped out a second-story window.”—*Los Angeles Times Magazine, February 7, 1988, p. 32.*

The Times article revealed the wide extent of Santería.

“The winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1986, Wole Soyinka of Nigeria, is a believer in the Yoruba gods. Most of his works are about the *orishas* [Santería spirits] . . . **Santería is the majority religion in Brazil, in Haiti, and in Cuba.**”—*Ibid.*

In the Los Angeles South Bay area, a Santería priest numbers among his clients of “doctors, lawyers, business executives, as well as laborers.”

“There are hundreds and hundreds of people who live around here that are into this. You would be surprised, typical, blond hair, blue-eyed Americans . . . **There are Santeros all over.**”—*Ibid.*

The criminals and drug dealers working in the city also belong to Santería. They pay Santería priests large amounts of money to obtain protection from the demon gods.

“I believe occult religions like Santería help certain gang members commit criminal acts. They believe their demon god protects them from any harm that could possibly happen, even from

bullets. With that kind of belief, they do things they wouldn't normally do."—*Ibid.*

Santería's rituals and ceremonies take place in what is known as a house-temple or *casa de santos* (house of saints), where the dead make contact with the living. It is quite obvious that Santería produces similar effects as does yoga.

YOGA

Yoga is everywhere. Classes are taught in churches and nursing homes, through city recreation programs, and at elementary schools—both private and public.

Perhaps it has become so common that it is easy to overlook its heathen origins. Yet Hindu and yoga communities are loudly proclaiming, "Yes, all of yoga is Hinduism. Everyone should be aware of this fact" (*from an e-mail written to Laurette Willis by a staff member of the Classical Yoga Hindu Academy in New Jersey*).

Doctors encourage the elderly, depressed patients, the mentally ill, and terminally ill patients to practice yoga for its mental and spiritual benefits—as if there is no better comfort available in the world than yoga.

According to *Yoga Business Academy*, one in ten Americans practice yoga.

On January 15, 2011, **Rick Warren (of Saddleback Church in Orange County, California) announced the new "Health and Wellness Plan," which includes Yoga and Reiki.** *More on Rick Warren later.*

Holy Name Catholic Cathedral in Chicago now offers "Holy Yoga."

Christian Yoga Magazine carries news and resources about Christian spirituality, yoga, and books such as *Yoga for Christians: A Christ Centered Approach to Physical and Spiritual Health*, by Susan Bordenkircher. **It assures Christians that they can “safely” practice yoga.**

The *American Yoga Association* says, “The practice of yoga will not interfere with any religion”; and news writer Ann Pizer says, “Yoga can be a spiritual practice, but it is not a religion because it does not dictate the nature of a God to be worshipped.”

However, *Webster’s Library Dictionary* gives a clear definition of yoga: **“Yoga is a system of Hindu philosophy and strict spiritual discipline practiced, to gain control over the forces of one’s being in order to gain occult powers but chiefly to attain union with the Deity or Universal Spirit.”**

The word, “yoga,” means “to unite.” According to Buddhist gurus, the body is to be united with a supernatural power.

Hans-Ulrich Rieker, in his book *The Yoga of Light*, warns that **misunderstanding the true nature of Yoga can mean “death or insanity.”** A little known fact is that virtually every major guru in India has issued warnings similar to this. They state that **mind-emptying techniques, such as the ones taught in Yoga, are a powerful method for entering altered states of consciousness** and for developing so-called psychic power. Yet **to have “psychic power” through Yoga—is to be as demonically controlled as was the witch of Endor** (1 Samuel 28:7-25). Yoga is one of the basic means of

reaching this altered state of consciousness. **That altered state is the doorway to the occult; it leads directly into spiritualism of the darkest order.**

It is for such reasons that John Weldon and Clifford Wilson wrote, in *Psychic Forces and Occult Shock: A Biblical View*, that Yoga is really pure occultism. Emptying the mind makes a Christian vulnerable to Satan's attacks.

According to legend, **yoga was first introduced in the *Bhagavad Gita* by Lord Krishna, a leading Hindu god as the sure way to Hindu heaven.** Shiva, the most feared Hindu deity (known as "Shiva the destroyer") is addressed as *Yogeshwara, Lord of Yoga*. The average yoga instructor in the West may not know (and never tells) the many warnings in the ancient texts, that **"Hatha Yoga is a dangerous tool. One can be possessed by a Hindu deity (i.e., demon) through the altered state of mental consciousness induced by yoga."**

Many new-age gurus, as well as Teresa of Avila (1515-1582), who was a prominent Catholic mystic in Spain, say that there is a difference between meditation and contemplation: **According to their definition, "meditation" is the mind-emptying process that leads one into a brain-emptied state, which they call "contemplation." At this point, they tell us, the person experiences "great peace" and imagines that he is "in the presence of God."** For Catholic mystics, New Agers, and non-Christian meditators, one of the primary purposes of meditation/contemplation is to experience God.

Although Teresa of Avila wrote that "she is being

taught by this Divine Master, who is suspending her faculties,”—it is not by the suspension of our faculties that we come into the fullness of God’s love or by which He teaches us!

Genuine Christianity is active, alive, thinking, unselfish. It is not self-centered.

A true Christian studies and obeys God’s Written Word. He lives to help and bless others. We learn to walk in His Word, fulfilling the command of Jesus. He said that whoever loves Him keeps His commands, which results in the perfection of His love.

“He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth His Word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him. He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as He walked.”—*1 John 2:4-6*.

“ ‘Let us not love in word,’ the apostle writes, ‘but in deed and in truth.’ **The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within.** It is the atmosphere of this love surrounding the soul of the believer that makes him a savor of life unto life and enables God to bless his work.”—*Acts of the Apostles, 551*.

Contrast that selfless way of life with the self-centered one which yoga practitioners try to achieve.

For example, there is a form of yoga where one concentrates on the various parts of the body (arms, legs, etc.) to bring them to a point of relaxation. The adherent is told to concentrate on each part of the body and release tension in each part one by one.

The repetition of Scriptural phrases, in or-

der to attain an altered state of consciousness, is not why God gave us the Bible! It was given so that we can understand God and His ways. **It was given so we can identify sin and, through the grace of Christ, cast it from our lives and obey God's holy, moral law of Ten Commandments.** Scripture is to be read and studied and understood with a fully alert mind, not used as a technique to bring a person to a state of silence in which his mind is confused and cannot think.

But spiritual formation—rooted so strongly in the practices of the Buddhists, the Desert Fathers, and the Jesuits—**teaches that, in order to attain to godhood, we must withdraw within ourselves.**

“Eastern Orthodox Christianity has an old form of meditation practice, called **hesychastic practice, that has been practiced by Christian ascetics and the Desert Fathers from the earliest days** of the church. **Hesychasm** (translates as “stillness, rest, quiet, silence”) involves the process of retiring inward, withdrawing from the senses, so as to achieve a direct experiential knowledge of God. These practices even involve **physical postures and breathing exercises similar to Hindu yogic practices.**”—*Professor Rafael Espericueta, “Christian Mystics.”*

Yoga, which is deeply rooted in Hinduism, essentially means to be “yoked” with the divine. Yogic postures, breathing, and chanting were originally designed not to bring better physical health and well-being (Western marketing to the contrary), but **a sense of oneness with Brahman—the Hindu word for the absolute being that pervades all things. This is pantheism—all is divine;—it is**

not Christianity.

“Rabi Maharaj, at one time a yogi and Hindu Guru, was delivered by Christ from the ‘gods’ he faithfully served but who eventually tried to destroy him. He advises, ‘If you want to enhance your health, adopt an exercise program specifically designed to do just that. Don’t get involved in exercises that were designed and practiced for thousands of years as a means of self-realization (*i.e.*, realizing that you are god, one with the universe).’ ”—*Dave Hunt, Yoga and the Body of Christ, p. 40.*

Ken Harakuma operates a yoga studio in a Tokyo suburb and claims to have been the first yoga instructor to operate in Japan. Many of his students, just like those in America, only come in to learn exercises; yet **Ken freely admits that his students are on the wrong track if they do not recognize the dangers in those exercises.**

“Many instructors want nothing more than for their students to be able to strike a few body poses.”—*Ken Harakuma, quoted in Mainichi Daily News, Japan, September 20, 2005.*

Ken goes on to explain that each physical position is specifically done to enable the student to “create energy” from contact with the gods.

“When you take up a particular position, it teaches you how to create energy, otherwise it has no right to call itself yoga. Students are creating energy but don’t know how to use it, so the energy ends up being used the wrong way. This can lead to physical and mental harm.”—*Ibid.*

Yoga—even when only its exercises are done—creates an “energy” that could do physical and mental harm. This is not physical energy!

It is imparted by demons who enter the bodies of those willing to use body position sequences dictated centuries ago by Hinduism/Buddhism.

David Pursglove, a therapist and transpersonal counselor who tried to help people out of these mental crises for decades, warns that **those involved in Eastern meditation can encounter “Frightening ESP and other parapsychological occurrences, out-of-body experiences, encounters with death and subsequent rebirth, awakening of the serpent power [Kundalini], and violent shaking and twisting.”**

In an unusually frank interview in *The Yoga Journal*, Ken Wilber, a practicing yoga instructor, warns that **any form of Eastern meditation, even done “correctly,” involves “a whole series of deaths and rebirths, extraordinary conflicts and stresses . . . some very rough and frightening times”** (Ken Wilbur, quoted in *Yoga Journal*, September-October 1987, p. 43).

“It is not uncommon for the practitioners of Eastern mysticism, even in its various Westernized self-help forms, **to suddenly find themselves ‘out of body’ or thrown across the room by some unknown force, or else encountering what seem to be very real alien entities who attempt ‘possession.’**” —D. Hunt and T.A. McMahan, *The New Spirituality*, p. 49.

Former TM instructor, R.D. Scott, tells of numerous “Spirit manifestations” among those using yoga. Such experiences include: **“Visions of floating green eyes . . . creatures of light floating above the puja table** [initiation ceremony altar; see R.D. Scott, *Transcendental Misconceptions*, p.

119], as well as **ghoulish creatures materializing periodically to stare with terrifying expressions at the person. Scott says these cannot be explained as hallucinations**; for, at times, more than one person saw “the same procession of spirit creatures simultaneously and without any advance warning.” Of course such possibilities are never mentioned in the ads and brochures promoting TM and other forms of yoga.

W. Brugh Joy, a medical doctor who became an Eastern guru, made this comment:

“Not one person knows what this is or all of its aspects, and no one has ever known, despite attempts over thousands of years to master this knowledge.

“Tapping these energies is [like setting a] fire, and the consequences . . . can be psychosis, aggravation of neuroses, acceleration of disease processes and suicide.”—*W. Brugh Joy, M.D., Joy’s Way, pp. 8-9.*

One writer spoke of how he was horrified to “personally meet Satan face to face” during an exorcism—an attempt to cast out demons from two people:

“When the demon finally spoke clearly in one case, an expression appeared on the patient’s face that could be described only as satanic. **It was an incredibly contemptuous grin of utter hostile malevolence . . .**

“When the demon finally revealed itself in the exorcism of another patient, it was with a still more ghastly expression. **The patient suddenly resembled a writhing snake of great strength, viciously attempting to bite the team members.**

“More frightening than the writhing body, however, was the face. **The eyes were hooded with lazy reptilian torpor—except when the reptile darted out in attack**, at which moment the eyes would open wide with blazing hatred . . . and frequent darting movements . . .

“Almost all the team members at both exorcisms were convinced they were at these times in the presence of something absolutely alien and inhuman. The end of each exorcism proper was signaled by the departure of this ‘presence’ from the patient and the room.”—*M. Scott Peck, People of the Lie, p. 196.*

The *Brain/Mind Bulletin* warns that “such experiences are common among people involved in Yoga meditation.” Another expert adds his sober words of warning:

“I advanced in the occult sphere so fast that twice a week I taught yoga on television. Hatha Yoga [the most common form of yoga, often called stretching exercises] sounds like a nice simple set of exercises; everyone thinks it is just gymnastics [body movements].

“I want to warn that it is just the beginning of a devilish trap! After I became an instructor in Hatha Yoga, my guru showed me that the only thing these exercises do is open your appetite for the occult. They are like marijuana; they usually lead you on to a drug that is worse and stronger, binding you so completely that only Christ can deliver you. **Many people think that occult power is just the power of the mind. This is not true. There is a point beyond which the power of the mind ends and the demonic power takes over.**”—*Colin Weightman and Robert W. McCarthy, A Mirage from the East, p. 8.*

The true yogis from India state that **yoga, in all its forms, is a means of arousing a spiritual energy that generates—not increased physical strength—but strange psychic powers that could be very destructive.**

“New Agers who are charging into the relatively unmapped wildernesses of the psyche . . . should remember that **strange beasts with unknown habits lie hidden in new territories.** The uncleared and unfenced regions of the psyche contain a good many vipers, carnivores, freaks, and monsters . . . The necessary weapons and instructions for confrontation have not yet been issued to the average person.”—*Dennis Stillings, “Ramtha, Channeling and Deceptions,” in Critique: A Journal of Conspiracies and Metaphysics, Issue 25, pp. 106, 110-111.*

Three professional researchers add details:

“There are many documented cases of persons involved not only in TM but in other forms of yoga and autosuggestion having extremely frightening and uncontrollable spiritual experiences. As a result, some have been driven to insanity and even suicide—but these facts are deliberately suppressed.”—*Ken Wilber, Jack Engler, and Daniel P. Brown, Transformations of Consciousness. Especially see pages 53-63.*

Differences in various forms of Eastern meditation aside, **they all aim at a supposedly “higher” or “altered” state of consciousness.** Meditation is practiced in order to suspend rational patterns of thought.

This helps explain why so many Eastern mystics claim that divine realities are utterly beyond words, thought, and personality. **In order to find**

“enlightenment,” one must extinguish one’s critical capacities—something the Bible never calls us to do (Rom. 12:1-2). In fact, suspending our critical capacities through meditation opens the soul to deception and even to spiritual bondage.

No amount of chanting, breathing, visualizing, or physical contortions will melt away the sin that separates us from the Lord—however “peaceful” these practices may feel. Moreover, Paul warns that “Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light” (2 Cor. 11:14). “Pleasant” experiences may be portals to peril. Even yoga teachers warn that yoga may open one up to spiritual and physical maladies.

Here is an outstanding statement on the origins and practice of yoga, written by an Eastern guru:

“What is yoga?—It’s a practice by the means of which a spiritual seeker strives 1) to control *prakriti* (nature) **to make the *jiva* (the soul) fit for union with *purusha* (the Oversoul), and 2) to attain *nirvikalpa samadhi* (union with God) and thus *jivanmukta* (the liberation of the soul from the rounds of birth and death).**

“Afterwards, the yogi is said to be a *jivanmukti* or *atmajnani* (a possessor of Self-knowledge). **Western yogis prefer to call the goal ‘God-consciousness’ or ‘Self-realization.’ Some call it ‘Christ-consciousness.’ But it is really of Hindu origin.**

“When did the practice begin?—Evidence of the practice, say Hindu scholars, appears in the *Upanishads* (c. 1000 B.C.), which declare that *atma jnana* is the goal of life. Further evidence appears

in the *Bhagavad Gita* (c. 500-400 B.C.), **which advises serious seekers of God to practice ‘control of the self [your mind] by the Self [spirit guide].’** But yoga was officially systematized by Patanjali, a student of the *Samkhya* philosophy, in his *Yoga Sutras* (c. A.D. 150).

“Is yoga a religious or spiritual practice?—Unquestionably, yes, as its history, methods, and goal prove. Four main yogas now exist. Depending on temperament and attainments, **the yogi may choose one or more of ‘paths’ to liberation:** *karma* (work), *bhakti* (devotion), *raja* (meditation), *jnana* (*atmajnana*, Self-knowledge: *Atman* equals Brahman).

“Ironically, *Hatha Yoga* is the third of eight limbs in Patanjali’s system of *raja yoga*, the adoption of which presupposes the completion of the first two. **To practice *Hatha Yoga* is to accept the doctrines of *Raja Yoga*, involving the coiled serpent-power at the base of the spine (*kundalini*), seven *chakras*, postures (*asana*), breath control (*pranayama*), and meditation (*dharana* and *dhyana*).”**—*Yoga: An Overview, Watchman Expositor, Vol. 18, No. 2, 2001.*

What is this talk about “serpent power”?

THE KUNDALINI SERPENT POWER

The worship of the serpent and the dragon is to be found, down through history, all through the pagan religions. Both are highly symbolic of Satan! (Gen. 3, Rev. 12, etc.). **The dragon is the leading symbol of African and Haitian Voodoo, and is found on thousands of temples throughout southeast and far east Asia.** The dragon is an important symbol in China and Japan. It dominates the religions of India. Serpents are in the hair of Shiva

the Destroyer, a chief god. In yoga, there is no attempt to hide the important role of the serpent. An important position in yoga is called the cobra. **When stretching (exercises) in the various positions, the serpent in its various positions is honored and worshiped.** According to Krishna, one of the earliest yogis, yoga itself is symbolized as a raft made of cobras upon which one crosses waters to enlightenment.

“Serpent worship in some form permeated nearly all parts of the earth. The serpent mounds of the American Indians; the carved stone snakes of Central and South America; the hooded cobras of the Druids; the Midgard snake of Scandinavia; the Nagas of Burma, Siam and Cambodia . . . The mystic serpent of Orpheus; the snakes at the Oracle of Delphi . . . the sacred serpents preserved in the Egyptian temples; the Uraeus coiled upon the foreheads of the Pharaohs and priests—**all bear witness to the universal veneration in which the snake was held.**”—*Manley P. Hall, The Secret Teachings of All Ages, pp. 87-88.*

In Greek mythology, a serpent was wrapped around the Orphic egg, the symbol of the cosmos, showing its dominance over the universe and all within it. And, of course, **the main altar in the center of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome has immense twisting columns above it, in the shape of four gigantic serpents.** Aesculapius, the ancient god of healing, was worshiped with snakes. **His symbol is the caduceus, two snakes entwined around a rod.** Still honored when the M.D. degree is bestowed, **the Hippocratic oath begins with these words:** “I swear by Apollo the Physician and

Asclepius and Hygieia and Panacea, and all the gods and goddesses, making them my witnesses.” Of course, it would never be permitted for the statement to instead honor the God of the Bible!

“The chakras act as conduits or conductors for what is called kundalini or serpent energy. **They say this force lies coiled but dormant at the base of the spine like a snake.** When awakened during meditation, it is supposed to travel up the spine activating each chakra as it surges upward. **When the kundalini force hits the crown chakra, the person experiences enlightenment or Self-realization.** This mystical current results in the person knowing himself to be God. That is why kundalini is sometimes referred to as the divine energy. **According to new-age proponents, all meditative methods involve energy and power,** and the greater the power, the greater the experience.”—*Ray Yungen, For Many Shall Come in My Name, pp. 76-77.*

The yogic *asanas* (physical positions of the body) and *pranayama* (breathing) are said to “improve health.” **But the ultimate goal of all yoga remains the awakening of the Kundalini “divine power” through the asanas and pranayama,** which is said to be a serpent coiled three and a half times when at rest at the base of the human spine. Awakened, it is said to move up through the seven *chakras* along the spine—and bursts into the “thousand-petaled lotus” in the cerebral cortex.

At that point, the yogi (the one blanking out his mind through yoga meditation) is flooded with the “divine ecstasy of the alleged union of *atman* (the individual self) with *Brahman* (the uni-

versal self), resulting in the self-realization of self-godhood.

This could involve Tantra, which brings uncontrollable sexual urges that the entering demon causes the person to fulfill, as well as other dangers.

The objective of all Hindu/Buddhist activities is to achieve personal pleasure, and in so doing become one with god.

“All agree that the one aim which man has in all his acts is to secure happiness for himself.

The highest as well as the ultimate end of man must, therefore, be to attain eternal, infinite, unbroken, supreme happiness. This happiness can be had in one’s own Self or *Atman* only. Therefore, search within to attain this eternal Bliss.”—*Sri Swami Sivananda, Kundalini Yoga, preface.*

The Hindu texts by ancient yogis warn that the “Kundalini serpent force” often manifests itself in frightening and destructive ways. But these texts are generally not known by yoga enthusiasts today.

“Kundalini Yoga is the most powerful Yoga ever known and is the mother of all the other yogas. **It centers on awakening the Kundalina . . . the serpent power . . .** It rewards Yogis with spiritual transformation and unity consciousness.”—*abc-of-yoga.com.*

Christina and Stanislav Grof, founders of the *Spiritual Emergency Network* (SEN), wrote the book, *Spiritual Emergency: When Personal Transformation Becomes a Crisis*. **The book contains fourteen papers by doctors and other experts on the following types of mental crises which can**

be caused by yoga, in one form or another:

“1. The shamanic crisis; 2. **Awakening of kundalini**; 3. Episodes of unitive consciousness (“peak experiences”); 4. Psychological renewal through return to the center; 5. The crisis of psychic opening; 6. Past-life experiences; 7. Communications with spirit guides and ‘channeling’; 8. Near-death experiences; 9. Experiences of close encounters with UFOs; 10. Possession states.”—C. and S. Grof, *Spiritual Emergency*.

“**Shamanic crisis**” refers to demon encounters, such as occurs with African witch doctors.

“**Kundalini awakening**” refers to demon control of one’s sex organs.

“**Psychic opening**” occurs when the emptied mind is suddenly flooded by a spirit with horrible thoughts, including suicidal ones.

“**Past-life experiences**” is about a fictional reenactment of what one did in a “previous life” on earth.

“**Communication with spirit guides**” is direct talk from a demon.

“**Near-death experiences**” relate to imagining that you are about to die.

“**UFO encounters**” is another fictional portrayal to the yielded mind.

“**Possession states**” is about total control by an evil spirit—so that, helpless in his power, you cannot escape for hours or days.

The Grofs add this:

“Spiritual experience can feel like bliss, but it can also feel like hell. **It can cause hallucinations, seizures, pain, panic attacks, mania, severe depression—all the symptoms of physical and men-**

tal illness. When people suffer this way, they may feel like they're going crazy, and their doctors may agree [and place them in insane asylums]. But the authors of this book think that, in many cases, such a diagnosis is mistaken. They urge the adoption of a new category of clinical diagnosis, 'spiritual emergency.'"—*Ibid.*

Some yoga practitioners use the "power of Kali" to gain control over the minds of their yoga enthusiasts. Yogi Bhajan, for example, could send a person into an altered state of consciousness through *shaktipat*—by touching him or her with a feather. The person would then lie unconscious and helpless before him.

After being introduced, by his psychotherapist, to the Siddha Yoga of Swami Muktananda (guru to many business leaders as entertainment industry stars), Michael Ray was initiated fast into believing in spirit possession. **An assistant to Muktananda ran a peacock feather across the (imaginary) "third eye" in the center of Ray's forehead:**

"I saw a bolt of lightning, like a pyramid of light. I began literally bouncing off the floor and trembling. I cried. I felt tremendous energy, love, and joy.

"What I had experienced, I later learned, had been *shaktipat*, or spiritual awakening of Kundalini energy inside me."—Michael Ray, quoted in Bill Thomson, "Spiritual Values in the Business World," *Yoga Journal*, January-February 1988, p. 52.

This mysterious *shakti* power is one of the names of the terrifying female Hindu goddesses, known as *Kali* and *Durga*, who, in India, has gar-

lands of freshly severed hands around her statue and is said to drink human blood from a fresh skull. Her leading temple is in Calcutta.

Puran Bair, an American Sufi Master, declares:

“There is great danger in raising Kundalini in the first place: It may not turn off or the state it produces may become addictive. Having taught upward meditation for decades, **I have seen many cases of aborted careers, broken marriages, dissociated psyches and neurological illnesses** that I believe were caused by kundalini.”—*Puran Bair, heartseva.com.*

Because street drugs act in a similar manner, we will pause for a moment to consider them.

STREET DRUGS

It was mentioned earlier that **it was the use of street drugs which helped introduce Eastern meditation to the West.** For example, Richard Alpert teamed up with Timothy Leary in using and promoting LSD, psilocybin, and other psychotic drugs. As a result, Alpert was dismissed from Harvard in 1963. But he then went deeply into yoga and other Oriental mysticisms. Taking the Hindu name, Ram Dass, Alpert became a yogi—and spread Buddhist/Hindu teachings widely among his former LSD friends.

Significantly, LSD, street drugs, and psychiatric drugs work in similar ways to yoga in producing seizures, and other damaging effects on the brain.

“Ironically, psychiatric drugs cause rather than cure biochemical imbalances in the brain. In fact, the only known biochemical imbalances in the brains of patients are brought about by the psy-

chiatrists themselves through the prescription of mind-altering drugs.

“Psychiatric drugs ‘work’ precisely by causing imbalances in the brain—by producing enough brain malfunction to dull the emotions and judgment or to produce an artificial high . .

“Nearly all psychiatric symptoms, including hallucinations and delusions, can be produced by these drugs . . **Unfortunately, drugs that affect the brain and mind can seriously impair your mental function before you recognize that anything is the matter . .**

“In its attempts to overcome the effects of psychiatric drugs, the brain becomes distorted in its functioning. And as already emphasized, **the brain cannot immediately recover its original functions once the drugs are stopped. In some cases, the brain may never recover.**”—*Peter R. Breggin, M.D., and David Cohen, Ph.D., Your Drug May Be Your Problem: How and Why to Stop Taking Psychiatric Medications, pp. 41, 43-47.*

For additional information on this, see *Mark D. Epstein and Jonathan D. Lieff, “Psychiatric Complications of Meditation Practice,” pp. 53-63, in Ken Wilber, et al., Transformations of Consciousness.*

TANTRA

Tantra—This is the name of the ancient Hindu sacred texts that contain certain rituals and secrets. It is now, for the most part, quietly entering the West.

Tantra is that form of Buddhist/Hindu yoga in which, when the spirit comes,—it has sex with the one who yields his mind to him! Other sexual activities are also performed.

I only mention this in order to show you the

type of totally immoral “spiritual being” you are dealing with.

If you decide to try to “find God” by the use of mantras,—you are going to encounter a demon! He may be very kind at first, but you cannot tell what may occur later.

In the present author’s book, *Witchcraft Ruins Lives*, you will find a complete chapter on the dangers of trying to please the spirits (*The Spirits are Vile and Vicious*, pp. 52-64). Unable to restrain their own passions, demons are known to terrorize their most faithful followers. They tend to wait to do this until they have the person solidly in their power.

If you are going to buy the “contemplative prayer” package, you ought to know all that is included in it. Although it is claimed that the spirit which arrives to fill the void in your emptied mind is the presence of God, in reality it is a sensual, vile spirit. It is a horrible demon!

SAMADHI

The supposed Buddhist/Hindu goal is to have special knowledge that others do not have. **In Hinduism, this secret “all knowing” is called *samadhi* or “enlightenment.”**

The word, “occult,” means beyond the realm of human comprehension; it is something that is available only to the initiate, as in “occult lore.” But occultism is actually another name for witchcraft, and is a device of Satan to fulfill his statement to Eve in the Garden of Eden: **If you disobey God and seek for advanced knowledge through indulging in sin,—you will enter upon a higher realm; you will have knowledge you did not have before, and**

you will be as God Himself.

“And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.”—*Genesis 3:4-5*.

In Hinduism, samadhi is the final objective of yoga meditation. Sitting cross-legged, or even sitting in a chair, as one mindlessly repeats a single word or phrase until his mind is self-hypnotized,—**a spirit enters and gives him thoughts and physical sensations which cause him to imagine that he has entered a higher sphere of existence.** The thought comes forcibly to him that God is in everything—a force flowing through all that exists.

William Johnston, in his efforts to explore mantra “meditative prayer”—came face to face with this strange force which entered his mind. **He clearly recognizes that the samadhi concept of god in all and all in god—has now penetrated the modern Christian churches.**

“What I can safely say, however, is that **there is a Christian samadhi . . . This is the thing that is nearest to Zen.** It is this that I have called Christian Zen.”—*William Johnston, Lord, Teach Us to Pray, p. 54.*

MANTRAS

The most common method used to induce this thoughtless state is mindlessly repeating one word until your mind just blanks out. An alternate method is think about breathing. Either way, **you are told to eliminate all thinking from your mind; so that a strange, new sense of re-**

laxation can take control of your whole body.

Remember that, when this is done, a person is voluntarily trying to stop mental functions, so he can experience something pleasant. But, in doing this, he is opening the doors for a demon to enter!

Since mantras are central to this type of so-called “meditation,” we want to carefully learn more about them. **“Mantra” is a Sanskrit word which means “man,” meaning “to think,” and “tra,” which means “to be freed from.”** And that is exactly what it does to those willing to practice this ancient Buddhist method for making contact with the spirit world. **It puts them into a trance—using the same basic method which we earlier learned that a witch uses**—in order to make contact with the spirit world!

The word, “yoga,” means “to unite” in Sanskrit. The mantra repetitions free them from control of their own mind, and yoga unites them with a demon. Simple as that!

A person spends about twenty to thirty minutes stopping his conscious thinking process until an altered state of consciousness envelops him.

One therapist, Jacquelyn Small, cites so-called “contemplative prayer” as a gateway to the spirituality to which she belongs. **But “contemplative prayer” (also called “centering prayer”) is just a Christian name for mantra yoga mind-blanking exercises, used to make contacts with spirits.** Christians will be told that they should repeat “Jesus” over and over again—but that does not make it safe

nor Christian!

In the following statement, Ms. Small reveals what the mind-emptying procedure results in:

"A form of Christian meditation, its practitioners are trained to focus on an inner symbol [a mantra] that quiets the mind . . . When practitioners become skilled at this method of meditation, they undergo a deep trance state similar to auto-hypnosis."—*Jacquelyn Small, Awakening in Time, p. 261.*

Jacquelyn Small is an expert in the field. **You do not have to dabble with mantra self-hypnosis in order to learn what it is like! Listen to the experts. They are quoted in this book.**

Both psychiatrists and psychologists are required to study how to hypnotize people in order to obtain their professional degrees. Keep that in mind, the next time you are considering visiting one.

"I met a woman who was studying for her Ph.D. in psychology and experimenting with past life regression. I volunteered to be one of her subjects, and it was a day that has forever changed my life. [Just one submission to mind-blanking changed her entire attitudes and purposes in life!]

"During the regression, a 'consciousness,' which explained itself as a guide, began talking through me to the psychologist. I had the bizarre sensation of being somewhere else, though at the time was vaguely conscious of a conversation taking place. I decided it was the most peculiar experience. **It was my first experience as a medium!** Something I wanted to continue doing!"—*Reflections Resource Directory, Fall 1986, p. 16.*

Individuals usually get started by accident when someone else either hypnotizes them, or

shows them how to blank out their minds through mantra meditation. **An almost overpowering thought stays with them from then on—to repeat the experience** over and over, and encourage others to do it also; so they too can meet their spirit guides!

“One of my earliest and most powerful hypnotherapy experiences was meeting my inner guide.

“Although meeting my inner guide was a very moving experience, I also have the great fortune of helping others meet their guides.”—*Meeting Your Inner Guide*.

“My work has for some time been based on empowering my clients. This empowers my clients in a brand-new way because of the inner resources that we discover. **Seeing a client smile or cry when they bond with their inner child [i.e., tightly connect to the spirit who enters their mind]**, or create a new family experience—makes my work so rewarding, because I know **they are taking these wonderful new friends home with them for their daily life!**”—*David Quigley, Alchemical Hypnotherapy: A New Dimension in Therapeutic Technology, Alchemical Technology, Alchemical Hypnotherapy Institute, March 1993. (“Alchemists” claim to have secret knowledge and profound powers received from antiquity.)*

A mantra is a single word or brief phrase repeated over and over until the mind simply blanks out. —**But a hypnotist uses similar devices to mesmerize people.**

“This state of self-hypnosis is an altered state of consciousness (**a hypnotic state**) that **Buddhists, Catholics—and now many Christians—interpret as being in the presence of God.** Yet similar prac-

tices of repeating phrases or the name of a god are also practiced in various non-Christian religions:

“The repetition of any mantra or name of the Lord is known as *Japa*. **From Buddhists to Muslims, Christians to Sufis, this path is hailed as one of the most meritorious forms of prayer** in many spiritual traditions . . . Japa (which means ‘muttering’ in Sanskrit) practice is perhaps the highest common spiritual factor among all religious traditions. It is a discipline involving **the silent, subvocally muttered, or chanted aloud invocation of a word or phrase, usually pertaining to the divine, sometimes termed a mantra**. It is practiced among Hindus—from the Vedantists to the followers of Sri Ramdas at Anandashram in Kerala, India—and also among Buddhists, Sufis [Islamic gurus] and Christians alike. Moreover, despite its apparent simplicity, it is regarded as one of the most meritorious forms of prayer in all these traditions . . .

“Japa spirituality is not unknown among Christians either. It is most prevalent among Orthodox Christians, but also among Catholics and Protestants.”—*Luis S.R. Vas, “The Path of Japa,” May 2004.*

Here is another quotation which helps clarify the origin of this dangerous mind-altering method:

“The most highly developed psychosomatic expression of the Jesus Prayer, presented by Nesophorus of Jerusalem and St. Gregory of Sinai (who actually learned it in Crete and brought it to the Holy Mountain) in the fourteenth century, and by St. Gregory Palamas in the century following, **reproduce even to details the *dhikr* method of the Sufis of the thirteenth century. The Name used**

by the Sufis, of course, was Allah, while that used by the Orthodox Christians was the Name of Jesus. This dhikr method in its turn reproduces down to details the *nembutsu* method of meditation used by Buddhists in the twelfth century.”—Basil Pennington, *Centering Prayer*, pp. 32-33.

In genuine prayer, we actually talk to God and He replies with messages to us. In marked contrast, **the mantra-type prayer is purposely used to blank out the brain so it cannot think, much less talk. By doing this a demon is permitted to gain access to the mind.**

But why do people do this? —**They do it because, when the demon arrives, he gives them sensations of peace and pleasure. He also gives them distorted ideas of reality and truth** which they afterward share with others.

The Eastern religions also provide several other ways to permit Satan to gain access to the mind, so he can give peace as he moves in and takes up his abode inside. We will consider several of them in this research study.

The *Leadership Institute Journey* teaches how to achieve a deeper walk with God by using the methods of spiritual formation by American leaders in it at this time. This includes Willard, Nouwen, Foster, and Campolo. (We will discuss the broad influence of each later.) On the home page of the *Leadership Institute Journey* website is to be found a quotation from Henri Nouwen’s book:

“The quiet repetition of a single word can help us to descend with the mind into the heart . . .

This way of simple prayer . . . opens us to God's active presence."—Henri Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart*, p. 81.

It is clear that there are distinct dangers associated with these various spiritual formation prayer practices.

One of the authors recommended in Dybdahl's book, *Hunger*, cautions that a very different sort of spirit may be encountered in these practices.

Richard Foster gives a warning in regard to contemplative prayer, saying that this is for more mature believers and that "we are entering deeply into the spiritual realm," where we may encounter "spiritual beings" who are not on God's side. (*Richard Foster, Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*, pp. 156-157).

In another book, Foster said, "So that we may not be led astray, however, we must understand that we are not engaging in some flippant work. We are not calling on some cosmic bellhop. **This is a serious and even dangerous business**" (*Richard Foster, Celebration of Discipline*, p. 16).

If a leader in the Spiritual Formation Movement—Richard Foster—warns of the possibility of meeting evil spirits through contemplative practice, how dare he, or anyone else, recommend these peculiar activities to others?

May I suggest that, instead of trying to knock yourself senseless, by repeating a mantra,—plead with God on your knees for forgiveness of sin, and strength to obey His Ten Commandment law! Give yourself to Christ and become His humble, believing child. —That is something that the spiri-

tual formation advocates never mention!

Mantras are used in yoga, Zen, Hindu, and transcendental meditation, as shown by these quotations from new-age websites:

“Mantra Meditation is a *very* powerful technique! You will discover that the repetition of a mantra allows your mind to focus and concentrate more completely on sound, and clear away other thoughts, emotions and distractions which divert our energies.”—*“Meditation,” Rhea’s Rhapsody website.*

“The repetition of a mantra . . . is meant as a method of practice which brings about a power (siddhi) to reach the supreme state of consciousness. In this state there is silence within the mind which becomes still (*shaant*), and **eventually you will merge the mind or individual awareness with the whole, which is Pure Consciousness and Knowingness.**”—*“Four Stages of Mantra Meditation,” Meditation4Life website.*

Yoga instructors recommend that the yoga student use a Hindu word given him as the mantra to be repeated over and over.

“The mantra, a secret word to be repeated while meditating, is not the meaningless sound which it is represented to be,—but is the name of a Hindu god. Moreover, according to the authoritative texts on Yoga, the repetition of this sound in meditation is a call to that entity to possess the meditator.”—*D. Hunt and T.A. McMahon, The New Spirituality, p. 31.*

But capture by a demon would occur if the word, “Jesus,” was used in place of a Hindu word. We are forbidden to use witchcraft methods of making contact with the supernatural. Those who imagine that

they will be safe by continually repeating “Jesus” will not be protected!

MANTRAS ARE SELF-HYPNOSIS

The practicing of mantra mind-blanking is a form of self-hypnosis!

“Centering prayer is essentially a form of self-hypnosis. It makes use of a ‘mantra,’ a word repeated over and over, to focus the mind while striving by one’s will to go deep within oneself. The effects are a hypnotic-like state: concentration upon one thing, disengagement from other stimuli, a high degree of openness to suggestion, a psychological and physiological condition that externally resembles sleep but in which consciousness is interiorized and the mind is subject to suggestion.

“After reading a published description of centering prayer, a psychology professor said, ‘Your question is, is this hypnosis? Sure it is.’ He said the state can be verified physiologically by the drop in blood pressure, respiratory rate, lactic acid level in the blood, and the galvanic conductivity of the skin.”—*John D. Dreher, “The Danger of Centering Prayer,” This Rock, Vol. 8, No. 11 (November 1997).*

“There are several stages in self-hypnosis. The first is to get yourself into the trance state by creating a focus of attention. You can stare into the flickering of a candle flame, or a black dot on a white background, until the eyes tire. A more common method is to be seated comfortably with eyes closed, and concentrate on the breathing or repeating a mantra . . . During this stage, **your awareness would slowly drift away from external influences**

and distractions towards a more internal awareness.”—Asia One News.

“According to psychologists, **about 70 per cent of the population can be hypnotized**, and the rest cannot. That’s why hypnosis should be done only by competent and highly trained hypnotists.

“It is very easy to place a person under hypnosis. Some psychics, fortune tellers, mediums, exorcists, and even *feng shui* specialists practice it.

“Never allow anybody to hypnotize you, no matter how professional or nice he may seem to be, unless you know the background of the person doing it. It should never be done by anybody who is not properly and competently trained for it.”—*The dangers of hypnotic regression*, by Jaime T. Licauco, September 16, 2011, Asia One News.

The warning is given: Have nothing to do with hypnotism!

“In dealing with the science of mind cure [hypnosis], **you have been eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which God has forbidden you to touch . . . Cut away from yourselves everything that savors of hypnotism, the science by which satanic agencies work.**”—*2 Selected Messages*, 350.

We cannot take something that has an intrinsically false foundation such as Contemplative Christian Meditation with its focus on breathing, staring at a candle, repeating a phrase or the name of Jesus, all for the purpose of bringing the mind into an neutral state,—and believe that God will come more closely to us.

CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER

This mind-blanking experience is frequently re-

ferred to in Christian churches and books as “contemplative prayer” or “centering prayer.” That sounds very inviting and entirely harmless. But **Buddhist concepts, when clothed with Christian terminology, become more deceiving.** The beautiful words are designed to entrap people!

In normal usage, “contemplation” means to think about something. But this Oriental twisting of the word means to stop thinking! A mantra (usually a single word or syllable) is repeated over and over until the mental functions blank out.

“Do not reflect on the meaning of the word; thinking and reflecting must cease, as all mystical writers insist. **Simply ‘sound’ the word silently, letting go of all feelings and thoughts.**”—*Willigis Jager, Contemplation: A Christian Path, p. 31.*

One new-age follower later became a Christian. Upon discovering that the same Buddhist practices were now entering Protestant churches, she exclaimed, “That’s what I did when I was into Ashtanga Yoga!”

When they practice yoga, **the road that they all take,—whether they be Buddhists, Hindus, Shintoists, Shamens, Catholic monks, New Agers, or modern Catholics and Protestants—leads to the same place.** *It is not a road that you and I want to take!* Stay with the Bible and with Christ; do not dabble in this lower-level witchcraft!

“It’s not so much what New Agers believe that sets them apart from other movements . . . but rather how they come by their beliefs.”—*Mark B. Woodhouse, Paradigm Wars: World Views for a New Age, p. 47.*

Healing Power—In the following statement, a

woman describes what happened when she began trying it. **Not long after, a spirit told her in a dream that it was now going to cooperate with her on a fuller level.**

“Soon I began to notice unusual sensations in my body while meditating, I felt like energy flowing through me. In the morning, I woke up feeling happy and energetic and filled with a glowing warmth as though I had been sleeping in the sunshine on a sandy beach.

“Gradually the sensations became stronger; and, after awhile, it seemed like electric currents were coursing through my body. My fingers tingled and I felt a slight throbbing in the palms of my hands. I had no inkling of the significance of this energy until one night in a very lucid dream,—I was told that I could heal others.”—*Mary Ellen Jafferty, Life Times, Issue No. 3, p. 59.*

(More on the Reiki Yoga form of healing later.)

CENTERING PRAYER

The phrase refers to quieting and then blanking out the mind; so that it can enter into “communion with God.”

“Just use the prayer word to keep your mind otherwise blank as you wordlessly spend time with God . . . **Do not give in to endlessly contemplating the sound and meaning of the prayer word.** Just say the word within yourself.”—*Centering Prayer: An Ancient Christian Prayer Form, King of Peace Episcopal Church, Kingsland, Georgia.*

One Christian writer sounds the warning against centering prayer in these words:

“Centering prayer is essentially a form of self-hypnosis. It makes use of a ‘mantra,’ a word repeated over and over to focus the mind while

striving by one's will to go deep within oneself. The effects are a hypnotic-like state.—John D. Dreher, *"The Danger of Centering Prayer," This Rock*, Vol. 8, No. 11 (November 1997),

BREATH PRAYER

A person is supposed to sit and think about nothing but breathing, while casting out all thoughts until the mind stops functioning. The person is told that he will then make contact with a spirit—and he does. His mind is empty and something enters. Breath prayers are actually a part of yoga.

"Breath prayer is used or described as a technique to silence the mind or supposedly to 'practice the presence.' Richard Foster also advocates breath prayers as a method to achieve the same purpose. Remember **it is repetition that brings one into an altered state of consciousness. Breath prayers are just another way of using meaningless repetition to gain an altered state.** The practitioners believe they will feel closer to God through this method."—Brian Flynn, *Running against the Wind*, p. 199.

"One powerful tool for meditation is breath prayer. **Many of us exclusively associate this method with Eastern religions.** But it is also a venerable ancient method used in Christian meditation. It has similarities to the Eastern methods on a physical and psychological level, but has its own distinct Christian flavor and tone from a theological and mystical perspective . . .

"In Hinduism and Buddhism uniting meditation with breath is fundamental. It is a way to give the body and mind something to do without distracting it into complications. It also slows the body, the emotions, and the thoughts, so as to bet-

ter focus all of them on the meditation at hand. **Focusing on the breath is often the beginning stage of meditation . . .**

“With both Christian and non-Christian expressions **some bodily posture is recommended that will enable the practitioner to stay relatively still and quiet for an extended period of time**, say twenty to thirty minutes.

“How do we do it? I teach that we must first find a quiet place that will be relatively free from intrusion for the meditation time. **Next we sit either in the traditional cross-legged position [the yoga position]** or in a straight back chair with feet flat on the ground.”—*John Michael Talbot, “Breath Prayer,” Living Water.*

THE SO-CALLED “JESUS PRAYER”

There are continual pathways across from modern Protestant spiritual formation techniques—and the earlier Catholic monastic forms, going all the way back to the Eastern religions. The so-called “Jesus Prayer” as taught by *“The Way of a Pilgrim”* is comparable to the practice of **dhikr** (Muslims), **nembutsu** (Buddhists) and **Japa** (Hindus), and was used by the Hesychast as a means of self-hypnosis, to achieve a mystical meditative state. (The Hesychast was a traditional “stillness prayer” in the Eastern Orthodox Church which also tended to blank out the mind.)

The connection here is stated clearly in the *Zondervan Handbook to the History of Christianity*:

“Hesychasm developed, in part, from the quest for *apatheia* or passionlessness . . . **Monks sought to attain this state through mastery of the mind**

and body alike, conceived as a unity. **They used breathing techniques and repetitive prayers to achieve a state of self-hypnosis, whereby the mind would become completely cleared of thoughts** and, it was believed, able to see God.

“A prayer known as the ‘Jesus prayer’ (first described by John Climacus) was used, which in its basic form was simply ‘Jesus, son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ **The form of words varied and sometimes was nothing more than the name ‘Jesus’ repeated over and over again.** Chanted in time with the monk’s own breathing, the prayer would almost lose all meaning, but this was precisely the intent, since **they sought a state of mind empty of thoughts**, into which God might move. Although its roots lay much earlier, hesychasm became especially popular and well known in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.”—*Jonathan Hill, Zondervan Handbook to the History of Christianity (Oxford, England, 2006), pp. 137-138 (author’s emphasis).*

“**Meditation practice focuses on stilling or emptying the mind. Typically, meditators concentrate on their breath or a sound (mantra) they repeat to themselves,**”—*Andrew Vickers, Catherine Zollman, and David K. Payne, “Hypnosis and Relaxation Therapies.”*

TRYING TO IMPROVE ON CHRISTIANITY

Three leading proponents of mantra-yoga “centering prayer” wrote the book, *Finding Grace at the Center*. They urge their Protestant readers to become more deeply acquainted with Eastern religions and gurus; so they can enter more deeply into those experiences. Just as Eve plucked the fruit in the Garden, so—

“We should not hesitate to take the fruit of the age-old wisdom of the East and ‘capture’ it for Christ. Indeed, those of us who are in ministry should make the necessary effort to acquaint ourselves with as many of these Eastern techniques as possible.”—*Thomas Keating, Basil Pennington, and Thomas Clarke, Finding Grace at the Center, p. 5.*

—And many Christian pastors and teachers are doing just that! They are studying this flood of spiritual formation books now in Christian bookstores.

“Many Christians who take their prayer life seriously have been greatly helped by Yoga, Zen, TM [transcendental meditation], and similar practices.”—*Ibid., p. 6.*

Anthony de Mello is a Jesuit priest who, by his own statement, has studied with Hindu gurus in India in order to deepen his “contemplative [mind-emptying] prayers.” In his book, he explains, “I want you now to discover the revelation that silence brings.” And then he explains that the silence (actually an overpowering demon) will so control you—that you cannot even move for awhile!

“There will be moments when the stillness of your blank mind will be so powerful that **it will make all exercise and all effort on your part impossible.** In such moments it is no longer you who goes in quest of stillness. **It is stillness that takes possession of you and overwhelms you.** When this happens, **you may safely, and profitably, let go of all effort (which has become impossible anyway) and surrender** to this overpowering stillness within you.”—*Anthony de Mello, S.J. (Jesuit), Sadhana: A way to God, p. 15.*

Samadhi is a deep mystical state induced by

focusing on something monotonously repetitive, until thought ceases and a spirit enters.

There are various types of yoga induction into the demon gods (Vedic, Vedantic, Yogic, Dharmic, Bhakti). But they are all based on the same simple methods of mantra brain-silencing that Christians are now being taught.

ENTRANCE INTO THIN PLACES

According to Buddhist and spiritual formation teaching, **practicing the centering prayer will lead us into “thin places”—where it is said that we will meet and unite with “God”; thus for a time, becoming “God.”**

This term, “thin place,” originated with Celtic spirituality (*i.e.*, contemplative) and is in line with this thinking. The Celts were ancient pagan worshipers in northwest Europe, Britain, and Scotland.

Marcus Borg, a professor at Oregon State University and a pre-emergent author, speaks of “thin places.” One commentator discusses Borg’s ideas on this:

“In *The Heart of Christianity*, Borg writes of **‘thin places,’ places where the division between the sacred and the profane becomes thin.** Borg writes that he owes this metaphor of ‘thin places’ to Celtic Christianity and the recent recovery of Celtic spirituality. **His understanding of ‘thin places’ is deeply connected to his pantheism.**”—*Chris Baker, “A Positive Articulation of Marcus Borg’s Theology” (Sandlestraps Sanctuary blog), April 5, 2007.*

“God is a nonmaterial layer of reality all around us, ‘right here’ as well as ‘more than right here.’ This way of thinking thus affirms that there are minimally two layers or dimensions of reality, the

visible world of our ordinary experience and God, the sacred Spirit.”—*Marcus Borg, The Heart of Christianity*, p. 155.

Mike Perschon (of Youth Specialties), in his search for the god which spiritual formation offers, also found these thin places as he went into the silence:

“We held ‘thin place’ services in reference to a belief that, **in prayer, the veil between us and God becomes thinner. Entire nights were devoted to guided meditations, drum circles, and soul labs.**”—*Mike Perschon, “Desert Youth Worker: Disciplines, Mystics and the Contemplative Life” (Youth Specialties)*.

Notice, in the above quotation, that Perschon also made use of beating on drums, to help bring the spirits.

When others recommend that you attend a training session in spiritual formation,—do not go there!

“And that, knowing the time, that now **it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.** The night is far spent, the day is at hand: **let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light.**”—*Romans 13:11-12*.

YOUR HIGHER SELF

Shakti Gawai, author of *Creative Visualization*, explains how **it may require several of these mantra meditations before the spirit contact gains a more powerful control over your mind.** Some call that contact your **“higher self”**:

“Almost any form of [Eastern type] meditation will eventually take you to an experience of yourself as source, or your higher self . . . Eventually,

you will start experiencing certain moments during your meditation when there is a sort of 'click' in your consciousness and you feel like things are really working. **You may even experience a lot of energy flowing through you or a warm radiant glow in your body.** These are signs that you are beginning to channel the energy of your higher self."—*Shakti Gawai, Creative Visualization, p. 57.*

In the Western world, **it is frequently claimed that these varied yoga-type activities will relax the mind.** —But, when the spirit enters the emptied mind, the result may be far from relaxing!

"One source of meditation problems comes from the attempt to turn a powerful, psychological technique into a simple physical therapy. **When a meditator is led to expect stress reduction and instead comes face to face with his True Self [the spirit now controlling him], the result can be anything but relaxing.**"—*Nathaniel Meed, quoted in Andrea Honebrick, "Meditation: Hazardous to Your Health?" Natural Health, November-December 1993.*

Although these channelers and spiritual formation directors declare that you must make contact with your "higher self" through the mantra meditations, **they also point you to the fact that there is a visible presence there as well.**

"Your Higher Self can appear to you in many forms, depending on what you need at a particular time. Some people report experiencing the Higher Self as specifically male or female. **But more often, people report perceiving their Higher Self as a being of light** which seems beyond sexuality—beyond the physical separation between male and female."—*Kathy Juline, "Wellness Works: A*

New Lifestyle for a New World, Science of Mind Magazine, June 1990.

Obviously, **this fiction of a “Higher Self” is used to cover up the fact that something—that is far different than yourself—enters your mind and takes control!**

“You must be willing to slow down, to stop and just be quiet. **It is into this quiet space, not the noisy one, that the Spirit enters. Make a sacred space for your High Self to enter by being silent and willing to listen,** willing to simply be receptive. This attracts your super-conscious essence like a magnet.”—*Kathleen Vende Kieft, Innersource: Channeling Your Unlimited Self, p. 114.*

This mysterious “presence” sometimes reveals itself in a more spectacular way.

“I saw the form of a very tall, overpoweringly confident, almost androgynous human being. A graceful, folded, cream-colored garment flowed over a figure seven feet tall, with long arms resting calmly at its side . . . It raised its arms in outstretched welcome . . . It was simple, but so powerful that it seemed to ‘know’ all there was to know . . . ‘Who are you?’ I asked. The being smiled at me and embraced me! ‘I am your higher unlimited self,’ it said.”—*Shirley MacLaine, interview with James Fadiman, Science of Mind Magazine, June 1988, p. 77.*

Ken Wilber, an expert in the field of “higher consciousness,” made this comment:

“If you’re doing meditation correctly, you’re in for some very rough and frightening times. Meditation as a relaxation response is a joke.”—*Ken Wilber, quoted in William Lee Rand, “The Nature of Reiki Energy,” Reiki News, Autumn*

2000.

Those who are caught in this net sometimes recognize that they have been captured.

“It ambushed me. Unwittingly, I was engaging in a practice [yoga meditation] that has been at the heart of religious mysticism for millenniums . . . **Now I know there is a consciousness that transcends science**, a consciousness toward which our species is sputteringly evolving.”—*Marty Kaplan, “Ambushed by Spirituality,” Time Magazine, June 24, 1996.*

PANENTHEISM

Normally, in Buddhism, this is called *pantheism*, which means “everything is god.” But the Christianized Hindu form of it is called *panentheism*, which is a combining of pantheism (**god is everything**) with theism (**god is a personal presence**).

The occult journal, *Spirituality and Health*, had a major polling organization gauge the spiritual beliefs of the American public. This national poll revealed that **84 percent of those questioned believed God to be “everywhere and in everything”** rather than “someone somewhere” (*Katherine Kurs, Are You Religious or Are You Spiritual?* *Spirituality and Health Magazine, Spring 2001, p. 28*).

A leading journal for Christian women, included this comment:

“In Christianity and other traditions that understand God to be present everywhere, **contemplation includes a reverence for the Divine Mystery, ‘finding God in all things,’** or ‘being open to God’s presence, however it may appear.’ ”—*Agniexzka Tennant, “Drawing Closer to God,” Today’s Chris-*

tian Woman, September-October 2004, p. 14. (This journal was published by Christianity Today, the leading Christian monthly journal in America.)

In reality, the true God is not everything. The Bible truth is that our Creator is a definite, divine Personal God. *(For additional information on this, see our book, Defending the Godhead.)*

GOD IN YOU

Swami Muktananda, a highly respected new-age guru in the 1970s and early 1980s, **told of how he had reached his higher self—and it brought with it new knowledge.** —His so-called “Higher Self” told him that the “deeper knowledge” was that he should worship himself!

“Kneel to your own self. Honor and worship your own Being. Chant the manta always going on within you. **Meditate on your own self. God dwells within you—as you.**”—Swami Muktananda, *quoted in David Eastman, “Kundalini Demystified,” in Yoga Journal, September-October 1985, p. 43.*

But please understand that the spirit world is hard on its own followers. When Muktananda died in 1983, one of his closest followers revealed that his master **“ended as a feebleminded, sadistic tyrant,** luring devout little girls to his bed every night with promises of grace and self-realization” (*“Baba Beleaguered,” Yoga Journal, July-August 1985, p. 30*).

Yet Muktananda had been deceived into thinking he was a great god! While imagining that he was a divinity, the swami had sunk lower and lower into depravity. After mentioning the above com-

ment about Muktananda, his disciple made this comment:

“There is no absolute assurance that enlightenment [through yoga] necessitates [improves] the moral virtue of a person . . . **The enlightened are on an equal footing with the ignorant in the struggle against their own evil.**”—*Ibid.*

—*So there you have it!* This is where “Christian meditation” and “Christian yoga” will lead you to!

Please, please, cling to Bible truth and to Jesus Christ your only Saviour! Study the Bible daily, talk to God in prayer (for that is what prayer is!), and obey His law—the Ten Commandments. Jesus, by His enabling grace, will enable you to separate from sin and live a clean, godly life.

When the spirits arrive and enter his mind, the person enters upon a downward path, which affects every part of his life.

“[Eastern mantra] Meditation can, and does, change your life because it changes you.”—*Betty Bethards, Way to Awareness: A Technique of Concentration and Meditation, p. 23.*

An instruction manual says that, unless you accept that you are god, you cannot experience the fullness of this contact:

“Tune in to the Inner Divinity, the Source, the God within, and feel that Presence as being you. This first step is essential. If it is incomplete, the rest of the process will not work.”—*Kathy Julien, Wellness Works: A New Lifestyle for a New World, Science of Mind Magazine, June 1990.*

This objective of unconverted men and women to change themselves into gods has been

taught for centuries. Here are several examples:

“I will be like the most High [God].”—*Lucifer speaking in Isaiah 14:14.*

“As human beings we each have this one, unique calling, to achieve *theosis* [godhood] . . . We are each destined to become a god, to be like God Himself.”—*Christoforos Stavropoulos, Orthodox scholar, explaining the heart of Eastern Orthodoxy, quoted in D.B. Clendenin, ed., Eastern Orthodox Theology, p. 184.*

“For the Son of God became man, **so that we might become God.**”—*Catechism of the Catholic Church, quoting St. Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274), 1994 ed., para. 460, p. 116. Also called Doctor, Aquinas was an Italian Dominican priest, and acknowledged as the leading theologian in the history of the Catholic Church.]*

“Man is called to cooperate with . . . **in his salvation and divinization** . . . The divinization of man comes from God.”—*Pope John Paul II, quoted in Crossing the Threshold of Hope, p. 195. (John Paul II's official statements were written by Joseph Ratzinger, now Pope Benedict XVI.)*

“Today I lay claim to all the attributes of God . . . and **as a divine being, I rejoice in my Divine nature.**”—*Science of Mind Mind Magazine, December 1986, p. 8.*

“As the Haitians say . . . vodounist dances in the hounfour **to become God.**”—*Wade Davis (anthropologist), Serpent and Rainbow, p. 76.*

“Man was created in the God class . . . **We are a class of Gods** . . . God Himself spawned us from His innermost being.”—*Kenneth Copeland with Paul Crouch on Trinity Broadcasting Network, February 5, 1986.*

“Eventually . . . all perspectives and messages lead us . . . to return to the truth of truths . . . **that we are God.**”—*Jon Klimo, summarizing channel messages from the spirits, Channeling, p. 296.*

The underlying principle of the new-age/spiritual formation penetration into the Western world by Eastern religions is this:

“You are one with the Deity, as is all of humanity . . . Everything is one with everything else. All that is on Earth is an expression of the One Deity and is permeated with its energies.”—*Deborah Hughes and Jane Robertson-Boudreaux, Metaphysical Primer: A Guide to Understanding Metaphysics, p. 27.*

Ken Kaisch, an Episcopal priest and instructor in what he calls “mystical prayer,” says it this way:

“Meditation is a process through which we quiet the mind and the emotions and enter directly into the experience of the Divine . . . There is a deep connection between us . . . God is in each of us.”—*Ken Kaisch, Finding God: A Handbook of Christian Meditation, p. 283.*

The primary teaching is that god is within you.

“The Sacred is not ‘somewhere else’—spatially [located at a point] distant from us. Rather, **we live within God** . . . Yet [when not in mantra-induced trance] we commonly do not know this or experience this . . . We commonly do not perceive the world of Spirit.”—*The Learning Annex.*

Back in the 1960s, a synonym for the new age was “the age of Aquarius.” It sounded very scientific, but most did not know the inner meaning of this term. Here it is:

“A major theme of Aquarius is that God is within. The goal of the Age of Aquarius is to bring this idea into meaningful reality.”—*Marion Weinstein, Positive Magic Occult Self-Help, p. 25.*

“Occultism [new ageism] is defined as the science of mystical evolution; it is the employment of the hidden (*i.e.*, occult) mystical faculties of man to discern the hidden reality of nature; *i.e.*, **to see God as the all in all.**”—*Richard Kirby, The Mission of Mysticism, p. 6.*

CHANNELING

The *witchcraft* of earlier centuries, in more recent times, was renamed *Wicca*. This form of spiritualism has, more recently, become known as *new-age channeling*. But now, its basic principle of seeking a spirit, so it can enter the mind, is becoming more subtle and is known as *spiritual formation or spiritual direction*—which is causing millions to embrace it. But, regardless of the name by which it is called—it is still dangerous in the extreme. To say it again: **This is voluntarily placing oneself where contact can be made with a demon, and then persistently doing that which will invite him to enter the mind.** One mystic practitioner mentioned that **mantra meditation “brings with it a curious kind of knowing that there is somebody else there with you; you are not alone”** (*W.E. Butler, Lords of Light, p. 164*).

This should cause you to run, not walk, to the nearest exit! And take your family with you!

Because of the success of “Christian Buddhism,” witchcraft which uses similar methods of mind control is also having a resurgence. Under its modern name of “Wicca,” this deadly instru-

ment of Satan is experiencing great success in penetrating modern society.

“Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards, to be defiled by them: I am the Lord your God.”—*Leviticus 19:31*.

Scott Cunningham’s book, *Wicca for the Solitary Practitioner*, has sold over 600,000 copies since 1988 and is now in its 37th printing.

One new-age leader, Peter Caddy, related an incident in which he met several Christians who, he said, wanted to “save my soul.” He told them to come back when they were deep into the same mystical experiences he was having.

Another new-age writer (a woman priestess) advises her readers with these words:

“When Christians ask if ‘you believe you are a sinner,’ respond with, **‘We have not perfectly realized our divine potential, but are still in the process of unfolding it through meditation and higher states of consciousness.’**” —*Leddy Hammock, Questions, Answers, and the Ultimate Answer (pamphlet distributed by her Clearwater, Florida Church)*.

SUPERNATURAL LIGHT

The spirit rewards the mantra seeker, so he will keep coming back for more refreshment from the incoming spirit.

In his book, *This Wondrous Way of Life*, a British Catholic mystic, Brother Mandus, **described his experience as being “fused in Light . . . the greatest experience in my life” that gave him “ecstasy transcending anything I could understand or describe”** (quoted on the cover of Michael Ray and Rochelle Meyers’ book, *Creativity in Business*).

Philip St. Romain is also a devout Catholic priest. In his book, *Kundalini, Energy and Christian Spirituality*, he describes his journey into the depths of yoga mantra mind-blocking. He calls it “contemplative prayer” in which he is about to “rest in the still point”—when his brain is totally turned off. Then things begin to happen!

“Then came the lights! The gold swirls that I had noted on occasion began to intensify, forming themselves into patterns that both intrigued and captivated me . . . There were always four or five of these; as soon as one would fade, another would appear, even brighter and more intense . . . They came through complete passivity and only after I had been in the silence for awhile.”—Philip St. Romain, *Kundalini Energy and Christian Spirituality*, p. 24.

SPIRIT MESSAGES

But it did not stop there. **Soon St. Romain was beginning to sense “wise sayings” coming into his mind, and he recognized that he was “receiving messages from another” (*ibid.*).**

To his delight, he felt that the divine world was approaching closer. He would feel “prickly sensations” on top of his head; and, at times, his head would seem to “fizz with energy” (*ibid.*, pp. 28-29). **Sometimes these sensations would continue for days. He was convinced that he was on the right path to soul liberation.**

“No longer is there any sense of alienation, for the Ground that flows throughout my being is identical with the Reality of all creation. It seems that the mystics of all the world’s religions know something of this.”—*Ibid.*, p. 107.

Yet St. Romain did not need to be surprised; for having begun with, what the churches are today calling “Christian yoga” or “Christian Zen,”—it led him into “Christian samadhi.”

Really now, what is it you want for your life? Is it a closer walk with God, or an infilling of Buddhist mind control? In the place of Bible truth, St. Romain chose physical sensations caused by an outside force. Gradually, it gained more and more control over him.

“I cannot make any decisions for myself without the approbation of the inner adviser, whose voice speaks so clearly in times of need . . . There is a distinct sense of an inner eye of some kind ‘seeing’ with my two sense eyes.”—*Ibid.*, p. 39.

—He has admitted that he can no longer think for himself. The spirit must tell him everything to do!

NEW AGE HINDUISM

New Agers use the same mantra methods now used by Protestants and Christians. **That, which at first appeared to be a harmless fad in the 1960s, has grown into an exciting, recreational, or religious diversion for millions of people.** Back then, a leading new-age promoter, David Spangler, wrote that in 1965 “there weren’t many places where such a vision was being taken seriously or even considered” (*Emergence, The Rebirth of the Sacred*, p. 26). But, by 1992, a secular journalist, in his analysis of the fabulous growth of the New Age Movement, said:

“Sociologists at the University of California at Santa Barbara estimate that **as many as 12 mil-**

lion Americans could be considered active participants and another 30 million are avidly interested . . . New Agers would constitute the third largest religious denomination in America.”—*Michael D. Antonio, Heaven on Earth, p. 13.*

Alice Bailey was a well-known advocate of the occult and witchcraft. She was the one who coined the term, “new age.” Looking back on the movement, at the time when it was beginning to penetrate some Christian churches, she said:

“It is, of course, easy to find many passages which link the way of the Christian Knower with that of his brother in the East. **They bear witness to the same efficacy of method.**”—*Alice Bailey, From Intellect to Intuition, p. 193.*

Yet there are a few who recognize the great danger that is entering the Christian churches as these new-age/Buddhist concepts and practices are becoming widespread. One of these is David L. Smith, an Evangelical researcher.

“Not since Gnosticism at the dawn of the Christian era has there arisen a philosophy as pervasive and threatening to orthodox Christianity as the New Age Movement . . . It would be difficult to find any area of life which has not been touched or redirected to some degree by the concepts of this movement.”—*David L. Smith, A Handbook of Contemporary Theology, p. 273.*

Smith declares that **these new concepts which were introduced by Americans, who in the mid-20th century studied for a time under Buddhist gurus in India,** are impacting the entire social fabric of modern society. People are trying to use the mantra mind-silencing technique to restructure

themselves for one purpose or another.

“A prominent, influential speaker and corporate seminar leader, **Brian Tracy, promotes the use of the ‘superconscious mind’** (i.e., the higher self), **‘to improve productivity, performance and output’** in the corporate world.”—*Brian Tracy, Maximum Achievement, p. 179.*

Others use it in the hope that it will somehow improve their health. An article in a major Pacific Northwest newspaper has a large full-color photograph of a local university professor in a Zen Buddhist position. The caption says he is trying to reverse a heart condition through Eastern meditation (*Sunday Oregonian, September 19, 1993*).

A popular morning talk show tells the viewers that they can solve problems with their spouses if they will use yoga. The new-age author, Wayne Dyer, is seen urging viewers to “go into the silence of mantra guidance” when they get angry with their mates (*Northwest Morning Talk Show, KATU, March 27, 1997*).

Julia Cameron wrote the book, *The Artist’s Way*, which has sold two million copies. It teaches “the spiritual path to higher creativity.”

These pagan concepts, brought in from Buddhism and Hinduism, plus African Shamanism mingled in—may be summarized in eleven points:

(1) All that exists is divine; **everything is god.** (2) That divinity includes all of humanity. (3) There dwells within each person **the higher self, which is the divine essence** within him. (4) **This higher self is the guide** to realizing the wisdom of the

ages—of the universe itself. (5) **Emptying the mind** of thought and waiting for awhile—is the way to connect to this divinity, this higher self, which is this god within each of us. (6) **This higher self will seem to be another person** as it teaches us and tells us what to do. (7) A person can control his life better when he has begun to **regularly make contact with his higher self**; for he is then working in unison with its powers. (8) One of the remarkable lessons he will discover, as he achieves the highest ranks of this self-realization—is the twin facts that (9) **there is no sin**, and (10) **nothing therefore is immoral**. (11) If he rises high enough in the ranks of practicing gurus, **he will avoid the wheel of reincarnation** into another earthly life—and will escape into Nirvana.

—Just as Satan said in the Garden: You are god, and you are certain never to die.

REIKI—EASTERN HEALING

This is a Hindu/Buddhist method of applying miraculous healing. Reiki (pronounced *ray-key*) came to America from Japan in the mid-1970s. It is claimed that, within 15 years, the number of Reiki practitioners was about 500,000. But, according to W.L. Rand, by the year 2005, the number was nearing a million (*William Lee Rand, "Keeping Reiki Free," in Reiki News magazine, spring 2005.*)

Reiki is a Japanese word which means "universal god energy." It originated as an ancient Tibetan Buddhist healing system, which was discovered by a Japanese man in the 1800s. Only recently has it arrived in the West.

In her book, *Hands of Light*, **Barbara Ann Bren-**

nan explains how to become possessed by a spirit for these healings. A picture in her book shows a woman applying healing energy to another woman. On either side are two faceless figures, which are supposed to be the *beings of lights* described elsewhere in her book. Power is flowing from the supernatural beings (which she calls “guides”) through Brennan into the woman. The caption below the picture says:

“The healer must first open and align herself with the cosmic forces [that is, be submissive to them]. This means not only just before the healing, but in her life in general.”—*Barbara Ann Brennan, Hands of Light, p. 187.*

From time to time, Brennan has conversations with one of her guides. He has told her that his name is Heyoan, and that he comes from the “cosmic forces.”

It is said that the healing is done by placing the hands on the recipient and then activating the energy to flow through the practitioner and into the recipient. One practitioner describes it in these words:

“When doing it, I become a channel through which this force, this juice of the universe, comes pouring from my palms into the body of the person I am touching, sometimes lightly, almost imperceptibly, sometimes in famished, sucking drafts. I get it even as I’m giving it. It surrounds the two of us, patient and practitioner.”—*“Healing Hands,” New Woman magazine, March 1986.*

Here is more information about this from a well-known Reiki healer:

“A Reiki attunement is an initiation into a sa-

cred metaphysical order that has been present on earth for thousands of years . . . By becoming part of this group, you will also be receiving help from the Reiki guides and other spiritual beings who are also working toward these goals.”—*William Rand, Reiki: The Healing Touch, p. 48.*

Compare the above statement with the following one:

“Not a few in this Christian age and Christian nation resort to evil spirits, rather than trust to the power of the living God. The mother, watching by the sick-bed of her child, exclaims, ‘I can do no more. Is there no physician who has power to restore my child?’ **She is told of the wonderful cures performed by some clairvoyant or magnetic healer, and she trusts her dear one to his charge, placing it as verily in the hands of Satan as if he were standing by her side.** In many instances the future life of the child is controlled by a satanic power which it seems impossible to break.”—*EGW, Counsels on Health, p. 454.*

“Angels of God will preserve His people while they walk in the path of duty, but there is no assurance of such protection for those who deliberately venture upon Satan’s ground. **An agent of the great deceiver will say and do anything to gain his object. It matters little whether he calls himself a spiritualist, an ‘electric physician,’ or a ‘magnetic healer.’**” —*Ibid., p. 459.*

While it is not often mentioned, **Reiki practitioners depend heavily on their “spirit guides.”**

Obviously, we have here but another form of demonic witchcraft. It is as much a spiritistic séance, as is regular yoga spirit contact.

One Reiki master who has enrolled hundreds of other masters spoke of her interaction with the spirit

guides:

“For me, the Reiki guides make themselves the most felt while attunements are being passed. They stand behind me and direct the whole process, and I assume they also do this for every Reiki Master. When I pass attunements, I feel their presence strongly and constantly. Sometimes I can see them.”—Diane Stein, *Essential Reiki*, p. 107.

The moments of “attunement” are the moments when the energy flow enters the patient through the hands of the Reiki practitioner. **Reiki is growing rapidly in popularity, both in America and in Europe. It may already be in your local hospitals, schools, and youth organizations.** It is being taught in some medical schools.

“Over the years, there has been a shift in the belief system of the general public, allowing for greater acceptance of alternative medicine. As a result, we are seeing a growing interest in Reiki from the public at large. People from all backgrounds are coming for treatments and taking classes.”—William Rand, “Reiki: A New Direction,” *Reiki News*, Spring 1998.

In 1998, there were approximately 33,000 Reiki listings on the internet. There are now 53,000. They include practitioners, instruction, and comments about it.

Many people (including many Christians) imagine that, because it seems to help them, it must be from God. But the following quotation reveals that it is accomplished through a variation of Wicca (witchcraft):

“During the Reiki attunement process, the avenue that is opened within the body to allow Reiki

to flow through also opens up the psychic communication centers. This is why **many Reiki practitioners report having verbalized channeled communications with the spirit world.**—*Phylameana lila Désy, The Everything Reiki Book, p. 144.*

Significantly, **Reiki practitioners have no control over when it starts and stops flowing as they touch the patient. It is clear that an outside intelligence is doing this.**

“Nurses and massage therapists who have been attuned to Reiki may never disclose when Reiki starts flowing from their palms as they handle their patients. Reiki will naturally ‘kick in’ when it is needed and will continue to flow for as long as the recipient is subconsciously open to receiving it.”—*Ibid., p. 270.*

Reiki is also called “Therapeutic Touch.” Either way, **it is based on the occult *chakra* system** which, in the Hindu system, is described as the seven *energy centers* in the body, when they are aligned with spiritual forces. **The seventh chakra connects the person with the god-in-all reality.**

“At the sixth chakra, a person opens to a higher level of intuition and inner guidance. **At the seventh, the person feels a sense of merging with Spirit.**”—*Joy Gardner-Gordon, Pocket Guide to Chakras, p. 13.*

In reality, there are no such things as “chakras.” Originally, these concepts were taught by demons to gurus. It may sound very “scientific,” but it is all a fabrication of evil spirits.

“Therapeutic Touch” is widely practiced by nurses in clinics and hospitals as a healing addition to standard nursing care. The nurse just qui-

etly places her palms on the patient for a few moments, so the energy can flow through.

“Ten million American adults now say they practice some form of meditation regularly, twice as many as a decade ago . . . In fact, it’s becoming increasingly hard to avoid meditation. It’s offered in schools, hospitals, law firms, government buildings, corporate offices and prisons.”—*Joel Stein, “Just Say Om,” Time Magazine, August 4, 2003.*

“In a confluence of Eastern mysticism and Western science, doctors are embracing Reiki meditation.”—*Ibid.*

One woman tells how she first encountered Reiki in graduate nursing school. “It was the craziest stuff I’d ever seen or heard,” she said.

“I got through the semester, though, and in the process Dr. Krieger [the teacher] performed the procedure on me. **It was then I knew something very real was going on, so I continued to learn about it, and practice it.**”—*D. Scott Rogo, “The Potentials of Therapeutic Touch,” interview with Janet F. Quinn, Ph.D., R.N., Science of Mind Magazine, May 1988, p. 14.*

A primary reason for the popularity of Reiki is the pleasurable sensations that the patient experiences. A successful business woman gives Reiki the following praise:

“Reiki should be available through every medical, chiropractic and mental health facility in this country. Your fees are a small price to pay for such impressive results. I don’t know how Reiki works, but it works; that’s all that counts in my book.”—*Barbara Ray, Ph.D., The Reiki Factor, p. 63.*

The spiritualistic source of this healing power is obvious. The channeler of Reiki can do, what

is called, **absentee healing**, in which the energy is sent over long distances!

“Just by having a name or an object of the person or perhaps even a picture in your hand, you can send Reiki to them wherever they are in the world.”—*Vincent J. Barra, “Psychic Healer Transmits Reiki Energy,” Meditation magazine, Summer 1991, p. 31.*

That is a significant statement; it clearly shows that the entire thing is demonic. A number of years ago, the present author wrote an article on water witching; during this experience he learned that some water witchers can hold a “pendulum” (a small object suspended on a string), or a witching stick, over a hand-drawn map sent to them from another continent. They mark “x” somewhere on the map and mail it back. The person receiving the map goes to the place shown and digs and finds water. The supernatural power behind all these things is the same, something none of us should dabble with.)

Unless in the strength of God he resists it, **the person receiving a Reiki treatment is very likely to begin thinking differently than before.** This is because a spirit will now be able to affect his mind on an ongoing basis.

“It frequently happens that **patients will come into contact with new ideas after a few Reiki treatments. Some will start doing yoga or autogenous training or start to meditate or practice some other kind of spiritual method** . . . Fundamental changes will set in and new things will start to develop. **You will find it easier to cast off old, out-lived structures** [beliefs] and you will notice that you are being led and guided more and more.”—

Bodo Baginski and Shalila Sharamon, Reiki: Universal Life Energy, pp. 33, 49-50.

In Japan, **the word, Reiki, is the standard term for “ghost [spirit] energy.” It is ghost energy because, when Reiki is practiced, contact is made with “spirit guides.”** William Rand, the head of the *International Center for Reiki Training*, explains:

“There are higher sources of help you can call on. Angels, beings of light and **Reiki spirit guides, as well as your own enlightened self are available to help you** . . . The more you can open to the true nature of Reiki . . . the more the Reiki spirit guides can help you.”—*William Lee Rand, “Reiki: The Healing Touch.*

As mentioned earlier, Reiki (*ray-key*) is the Japanese word for “*Universal Life Energy.*” Reiki is an ancient natural healing art rediscovered by Dr. Mikao Usui when studying sacred Tibetan sutras in the late 1800s.

“Many people have experienced the Reiki energies as an assist to their personal inner clearing and transformational process. During the First Degree workshop, a series of four attunements are given by a Traditional Reiki Master, which will align and tune in the energy centers of the student. After this process is completed, the Universal life Force becomes amplified when drawn through the hands.”—*Dr. Paula Horan, Common Ground of Puget Sound, Winter 1992, p. 38.*

CAUTIOUSLY PENETRATING EVER DEEPER

Gently, ever so carefully, the Eastern religions are penetrating deeper and deeper into the Christian churches. But it is recognized that

they must proceed with caution, so as not to arouse fear or rejection. This is well-stated by new-age publisher Jeremy Tarcher in an interview:

“They have to learn to present their perceptions in appropriate language and actions that don’t arouse fear or resistance.”—*Jeremy Tarcher, “Living with Vision,” in Science of Mind Magazine, April 1, 1992.*

—And **this Buddhist/Hindu invasion is** not only into Christianity; **it is now spreading all over the globe and is powerful!**

Wayne Teasdale, a lay Catholic monk who coined the term, “interspirituality,” says that interspirituality is **“the spiritual common ground which exists among the world’s religions”** (*Wayne Teasdale, “Mysticism as the Crossing of Ultimate Boundaries”*).

“She [the church] also has a responsibility in our age to be a bridge for reconciling the human family . . . **The Spirit is inspiring her [the Christian Church] through the signs of the times to open to Hindus, Buddhists, Muslims, Sikhs, Jains, Taoists, Confucians, and indigenous peoples.**”—*Teasdale, quoted in Philip St. Romain, Kundalini Energy and Christian Spirituality, pp. 75-76.*

One well-known New Ager revealed what his guiding (familiar) spirit confided in him:

“We work with all who are vibrationally sympathetic; who feel our spirit moving, but for the most part, **only within the context of their current belief systems.**”—*Henri Nouwen, The Way of the Heart, Bread for the Journey, p. 66.*

In other words, fill the world with demon guides,

while at the same time keeping the people in their own religions.

In regard to Christianity, the spirits encourage those they have captured to retain membership in their churches, even though their thinking has been changed so that they no longer believe in its fundamental beliefs.

It is significant that, as far back as the 1960s, **New Agers have predicted that there would be a great “spiritual awakening” throughout the world. The spirits had predicted it** (*The Celestine Prophecy*, November 2011). Now it is coming to pass.

In his book, *Streams of Living Water*, Richard Foster (a leader in the Spiritual Formation Movement) says he is working toward an **“all inclusive community” of religions, which he believes God is helping today. He sees this as “a great, new gathering of the people of God”** (*Richard Foster, Streams of Living Water*, p. 273).

In a 2003 book, published by Zondervan, Brian McLaren declares that the Christian churches are changing. According to “emerging church” leaders, **Christianity is “a broad, diverse, and often paradoxical emerging culture defined as having passed through modernity and being ready to move to something better beyond it”** (*Brian McLaren, Leonard Sweet, and Jerry Haselmayer, A is for Abductive*, p. 239).

One Christian college professor, who is critical of this desire to go beyond “mere Christianity” to something greater that is “beyond it,” describes the danger in this way:

“Proponents of post-modern ministry believe that the modern culture, which began with the [18th century] Enlightenment, has recently been completely replaced by a world view that is post-modern.”—*Robert Wright, “The Emerging Church.”*

The tragedy is that so many Christians today are not satisfied with old-fashioned Bible religion. They want something exciting and sensational beyond it. They want something strongly appealing to their senses. They want a good feeling!

“In a post-Christian world, pluralism is the norm. Buddhism, Wicca, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, or an eclectic blend—it’s all part of the [emerging church] soil.”—*Dan Kimball, The Emerging Church, p. 60.*

A significant leader in urging changes is Erwin McManus. He makes this comment about Kimball’s efforts to thrust the churches forward into this strange unknown—by bringing in ancient Catholic concepts and rituals:

“The future of the church in North America hinges on innovators like Dan Kimball and the ideas presented in [his book], *The Emerging Church*. **Vintage [ancient Catholic] Christianity can be applied to new and existing congregations to help reach the next generation.**”—*Erwin McManus, The Emerging Church, cover quotation.*

The objective is to go into the unknown, and see what it has for us. Yet such an attitude makes Buddhism and “sensory religion” very attractive. McLaren writes this:

“We are ‘exploring off the map’—looking into mysterious territory beyond our familiar world on this side of the river, this side of the ocean, this

side of the boundary between modern and post-modern worlds. **We are looking into an exciting, unmapped world on the other side of all we know so far.**—*Brian McLaren, Church on the Other Side, pp. 7-8.*

And, of course, in changing our practices, we will be changing our faith.

“Perhaps we as Christians today are not only to consider what it means to be a 21st century church, but also and perhaps more importantly—what it means to have **a 21st century faith.**”—*Doug Pagitt, Church Re-Imagined, pp. 17, 19 (also published by Zondervan).*

OTHER VARIATIONS

LECTIO DIVINA

Lectio divina takes a few words of Scripture—and turns them into a mantra!

The essence of the Spiritual Formation Movement utilizes methods such as *lectio divina*, visualization, altered-state-of-mind meditation using breath prayers, Jesus prayers, centering prayer, and prayer labyrinths for achieving this free and open communication with heaven.

How is lectio divina done? Lectio practitioners begin by reciting a chosen phrase or word over and over, to help free the mind by partially or wholly blanking it out. Then they are prepared to receive from a spirit the proper meaning of a verse of Scripture.

The new liberals, having borrowed so much from the East, now use the Buddhist/Hindu

method of studying the sacred Scriptures. They no longer call it “Bible Study;” they call it “*lectio divina*.” Why? First, because it is the name that Catholics prefer. Second, because it is not searching the Bible in order to find Christ, learn correct doctrines, and how to live a Christian life, put away sin, and obey God’s law. Instead, **it is making a mantra out of a couple of Bible words.**

Lectio divina is the mouthing of a few words of Scripture in order to relax, feel good, and prepare your mind for yoga or another mind-emptying procedure.

Lectio divina is Latin for “divine reading,” “spiritual reading,” or “holy reading” and represents a method of prayer and scriptural reading intended to promote communion with God and to provide special spiritual insights.

The principles of lectio divina have been practiced by Catholic monks, especially the monastic rules of Sts. Pachomius, Augustine, Basil, and Benedict.

The practice of lectio divina is currently very popular among Catholics and gnostics, and is gaining acceptance as an integral part of the devotional practices of the Emerging Church.

Lectio is also said to be adaptable for people of any religion in reading their scripture—whether it be the Bhagavad Gita, the Torah, or the Koran. Non-Christians may simply make suitable modifications of the method to accommodate secular traditions. Further, the four principles of lectio divina can also be adapted to the four Jungian psychological principles of sensing, thinking, intuit-

ing, and feeling.

How is lectio divina done? Lectio practitioners begin by reciting a chosen phrase or word over and over, to help free the mind by partially or wholly blanking it out. Then they are prepared to receive from a spirit the proper meaning of a verse of Scripture.

This is why Pope Benedict XVI could approve of lectio divina study of a Bible verse. He said, in a 2005 speech, “I would like in particular to recall and recommend the ancient tradition of lectio divina.” **A Bible student will never learn the truth when he has first used a mind-emptying technique—which opens his mind to the guidance of a demon.**

“**Lectio divina**, literally meaning ‘divine reading,’ is an ancient practice . . . **The current resurgence of Lectio divina owes much to the reformations of Vatican II and the revival of the contemplative dimension of Christianity**” (*contemplativeoutreach.org*).

The Jesuits of the 16th century expanded on theories about Bible study by the earlier Desert Fathers—and **developed it into its present lectio divina format:**

“Jesuits are called to be contemplatives: seeing God in all. The Spirituality of the *Exercises* [a book dictated by a spirit to Ignatius Loyola] enables us to perceive the Divine at the heart of the secular. Sensitivity to the unfolding of the Kingdom of God in all realms of life is the dynamics of Jesuit spirituality.”—“*Jesuit Community, Leadership and Spirituality Today: S. Asian Perspective*,” *ranjesu.org*.

IMAGING AND VISUALIZATION

Lectio divina study is also concerned with intensifying a high level of imagining scenes. This is supposed to help a person be more spiritual.

A Jesuit explains still more about this false Bible study, called lectio divina; **this combines emptying the mind of normal thinking and emotions, so excitable feelings can flow in.**

In the following passage, Rodrigues explains lectio divina perfectly: **Read something brief in the Bible, then forget it, then use yoga to contact a spirit!** This is a way to pretend to use the Bible, while totally ignoring it!

“Ignatian (Jesuit) contemplation makes use of guided imagery and active imagination within a selected gospel text. **It is advisable to choose an action-filled passage**, so that it brings one’s personal desires, inclinations, emotions, problems, shadows, etc. into focus in prayer, without planning to air these. Choose an action filled passage from the gospel—one that has a lot of colour and movement. **Avoid discourses, teachings and parables, for these will lead you to moralize** [seek for deeper morality] **or intellectualize** [try to understand the meaning of the passage].

“Read the passage . . . Read it once or twice more in case you feel you need to do so. **Do not struggle to remember details or words or passages. Be fully satisfied with whatever you remember. Remembering the passage or its details is of no importance at all.**

“Place yourself in the presence of God. **Center yourself using any of the centering methods** you feel suits you best [breathing, yoga, etc.]. **Center-**

ing is a help to create an empty mind, a mind free of worries and distractions. Have no fixed agenda or definite graces.

“Do not try to find parallels in the scriptures, or in your personal life. Avoid moralizing like saying, ‘It should be like this,’ ‘I must,’ ‘we must,’ ‘we could,’ ‘it is better,’ etc. No judgments or comparisons are to be made.”—*Savio Rodrigues S.J., Goa Jesuits in Prayer.*

It is of highest significance that **professional hypnotists use a combination of intense imagery and mind emptying in the process of hypnotizing a person**—so he will do what he is told, so his moral patterns can be restructured.

“Visualization and imagery techniques involve the induction of a relaxed state followed by the development of a visual image, such as a pleasant scene that enhances the sense of relaxation. **These images may be generated by the patient or suggested by the practitioner.** In the context of this relaxing setting, **patients can also choose to imagine themselves** coping more effectively with the stressors in their lives.”—*Andrew Vickers, Catherine Zollman, and David K. Payne, “Hypnosis and Relaxation Therapies.”*

TAIZE CHANTING

While repeatedly saying a mantra enables the mind to go asleep, **chanting a very brief phrase from the Bible, over and over again helps the congregation to totally lose its meaning!**

When you ask what the purpose of doing this is, you will be told that **“it opens up the channels of the body.”** This meaningless phrase masks the fact that you are enabling spirits to enter.

Former new-age medium Brian Flynn, in explaining the nature and objective of Taize, reveals the underlying danger:

“By taking passages of Scripture which have an intended meaning and breaking them down into smaller, separate segments, often for the purpose of chanting over and over, the true meaning of the passages are lost. Rather a form of occult mysticism is practiced—with the hope and intention of gaining a mystical experience **that God never intended** when He gave the inspired words to His servants.”—*Brian Flynn, “Lectio divina: Sacred Divination,” One Truth Ministries.*

“Welcome to **Taize!** Prayer Around the Cross. Join us for an hour of prayer the first Sunday of each month, beginning at 7pm. Participating Churches: Hillcrest Congregational Church; Church of the Resurrection, Episcopal; Christ the King Catholic Church; St. Andrew’s Presbyterian Church; **Seventh-Day Adventist Church.**”—*Christ the King Catholic Church website, Pleasant Hill, California.*

“**Taize** (pronounced *tay-zay*) consists of sung and silent participatory prayers accompanied by readings from Scripture. It is a time of contemplation of our Lord through music, song and silence. **Practicing the silence with icons, candles, incense and prayer stations, this very contemplative community is attracting young people from around the world.**

“**Using just a few words, the chants express a basic reality of faith,** quickly grasped by the mind. **As the words are sung over many times,** this reality gradually penetrates the whole being.”—*Faithworks Magazine, quoted in Saint Matthew’s Anglican Church website, “Where Spirit and Tradi-*

tion Meet.”

“**Taize services** are mystical services of prayer and chanting that originated in an ecumenical Christian monastic order in France.”—*Dan Johnson, Argus-Courier, “Residents find solace, inspiration in contemplative, mystical tradition,” December 4, 2009.*

“**The rhythm of the group includes . . . chanting, two periods of sitting in silence separated by walking meditation,** and a time for optional sharing.”—*Anne Kline, “A New Language of Prayer,” Shalem Institute Newsletter, Winter 2005.*

The surprising experience one student had during a summer course at a Lutheran theological seminary:

“I recently took a seminary course on the book of Luke. It was a summer intensive and was one of only two classes being offered at the time. About midway through the week, while the class was steeped in trying to discern the intent and significance of the book of Luke, **we began to hear the echoes of mystic chanting coming through the walls.**

“As it turned out, the other class being offered was parked right next to ours. The paper thin walls were carrying the choruses of **a class exploring the life and teachings of Catholic mystic Henri Nouwen.** We proceeded, trying to concentrate on studying the Scriptures while tuning out the chants that were carrying on next door.

“**Perhaps what was more unsettling though is the class studying Nouwen was chock full,** while there were plenty of empty seats next door [in our classroom] for anyone wanting to learn about the inspired book of Luke.”—*Ryan Hebbena, a course*

he took during the summer of 2005 at Bethel Theological Seminary in Arden Hills, Minnesota.

Genuine Hindus and Buddhists are not happy with the “Christianization” of their chants. They fully recognize that, **from ancient times, the purpose of chanting is to praise their demon gods whom they worship.** The names of their gods are repeatedly chanted, over and over again. **Westerners often do not know the meaning of the Hindu words they are told to chant,—because these are the names of Hindu gods.** But because they are willing to enter into these experiences, they do not understand why their lives later take such terrible turns for the worst. They have placed themselves in the power of evil forces.

WALKING THE LABYRINTH

Walking the labyrinth is another part of the occult package.

Many prayer practices emerging in Christianity today are not of Christian origin but instead originated in ancient mystical rituals. One such ritual is labyrinth walking.

The first labyrinth was born out of the Greek myth of the Minotaur, a story filled with jealousy, murder, and bestiality. Labyrinths have been found in the art and architecture of civilizations throughout history and around the globe; the first labyrinth discovered was on a clay tablet in Pylos.

One famous labyrinth is on the floor of the Chartres Cathedral in France. Another is in Hoysaleswara, a Hindu temple dedicated to the god Shiva.

Many pagan religions have used the labyrinth as a way to contact the gods, either by

walking silently or praying for an infilling of divinity as it is done. Finally, at the center of the labyrinth, the merging into godhood occurs.

“The labyrinth is a maze-like structure that is growing in popularity, used during times of contemplative prayer. The participant walks through this structure until he comes to the center, then back out again . . . Often prayer stations (with candles, icons, pictures, etc.) can be visited along the way. The labyrinth originated in early pagan societies. The usual scenario calls for the seeker to do some sort of meditation practice, enabling him or her to center down (*i.e.*, reach God’s presence) when he reaches the center of the labyrinth.”—Roger Oakland, *Faith Undone*, p. 67.

“Labyrinth walking is not a Christian practice, but a ritual enfolded into many world religions. According to the president of the *World Systems Research Group*, Carl Teichrib, ‘labyrinth walks and prayer journeys are being promoted by Rosicrucian groups, at new-age festivals and celebrations, and throughout the neo-pagan world.

“Not surprisingly, one of America’s largest witch, shaman, and neo-pagan assemblies, the 2005 Pagan Spirit Gathering at Wisteria, OH, held a night-time Summer Solstice Labyrinth ritual, which was described as a ‘transformative, walking meditation through an all night labyrinth formed by 1000 lighted candles.’ ”—Jill K.H. Geoffrion, *Christian Prayer and Labyrinths: Pathways to Faith, Hope, and Love*.

“We are currently in a period of historic labyrinth revival. Churches, retreat centers and Christian camps are placing these prayer tools inside and outside. **Christians all over the world are installing labyrinths** in their yards and gardens. Many

are using the labyrinths as a ministry tool, bringing portable versions to prisons, national denominational conferences and church group meetings. It is conservatively estimated that **there are over 5,000 labyrinths in the United States alone.**—*Geoffrion, ibid.*

“The labyrinth is a large, complex spiral circle which is an ancient symbol for the divine mother, the god within, the goddess, the holy in all creation . . . a spiritual tool meant to awaken us to the deep rhythm that unites us to ourselves and to the Light that calls from within.”—*Dr. Lauren Artress, Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Practice.*

“You walk to the center of the labyrinth and there at the center, you meet the Divine.”—*Artress, ibid.*

New York Times reporter Natalie Angier describes labyrinth walking as **“a ceremony that is at once ancient and new-age mysticism”** (*Natalie Angier, “A Twisting Walk to Inner Peace on a Painted Purple Canvas,” The New York Times, August 29, 1992*). If the secular media can make these connections, how much more aware should Evangelical Christians be of the dangers associated with labyrinth prayer?

According to an article posted on the website of *Grace Cathedral* in San Francisco, **labyrinths pre-date Christianity by over 1,000 years.** And the purpose of that article is to make Christians aware that **labyrinths are not in any way a Christian practice.**

They are found in many sizes and shapes, and made from just about any natural material. Some are built in a permanent fashion from stones; oth-

ers are cut into the turf formed by mounds of earth or placed in imbedded designs in the floor of buildings.

The foremost promoters of it are Jean Houston and Lauren Artress, both women priests. In 1996 Artress created *Veriditas*, a nonprofit organization dedicated to introducing people to the healing, meditative powers of the labyrinth.

Dr. Jean Houston is the past president of the *Association for Humanistic Psychology* and is one of the leading new-age promoters and speakers in North America.

Here is an example of her non-Christian ramblings: "The Starseed Transmissions, channeled by [the dead man] Raphael through Ken Carey is perhaps the finest example of 'channeled knowledge' I ever encountered."

She uses the yoga and related trances to make contact with the supposed dead. She wrote: "The very best way and perhaps for the present the only way [of contact with these entitles] is within the context of an altered state of consciousness." **Houston is the one who introduced Artress to labyrinths, and brought the labryinth to Grace Cathedral,** on top of Knob Hill in San Francisco, California.

Over one million people have walked that particular labyrinth to date. People from all different backgrounds and religions are using it. Jews, Buddhists, and even Christians use the institute's labyrinth, located at Grace Cathedral. If one visits its website, he finds that they offer every conceivable religious item, from new-age holistic to inter-

faith to the Koran. **There is nothing Christian about Grace Cathedral anymore; yet thousands of Christian churches (including many of our own) are now using labyrinths in the futile hope that they will help them contact God.**

It is said that self-realization occurs when you complete the labyrinth to the center—and discover the divinity that is within us all, bridging the separation of us from our own truth, from the Creator that is within us. Leading advocates of labyrinths recommend that you ask your deity of choice, or your higher self to walk with you.

“The labyrinth is a large, complex spiral circle that is an ancient symbol for the divine mother, the God within, the goddess, the holy in all creation.”—Lauren Artress, *Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Tool*, p. 67.

“You walk to the center of the labyrinth and there, at the center, you meet the Divine.”—*Ibid*, p. 18.

In his book, *Soul Tsunami*, Leonard Sweet, a leading spiritual formation advocate, promotes spiritualism by promoting labyrinth walking.

In the book that Sweet is recommending, Artress writes this:

“Labyrinth walking is an ancient way of praying. Read Lauren Artress’ book *Walking a Sacred Path: Rediscovering the Labyrinth as a Spiritual Tool*. Take an ‘audio tour’ of the labyrinth or go on one of the ‘pilgrimages’ at Grace Cathedral’s ‘Veriditas: The Worldwide Labyrinth Project.’ ”—*Leonard Sweet, Soul Tsunami*, p. 432.

Beulah Malone, Past Grand Matron and Secretary of the *Order of the Eastern Star* (an order, much

like the masons, that both men and women can join), explains:

“Hundreds of Christians have taken part in labyrinth prayer walks, and many churches across North America and Europe are embracing this tool as a means to expand their spiritual experience.”

Another woman priest, Jill Geoffrion, a “certified labyrinth facilitator” and author of such books as *Christian Prayer and Labyrinths* and *Praying the Labyrinth*, on her labyrinth prayer website, offers suggested prayers for different labyrinth events.

In dedicating a new labyrinth, she suggests that those in attendance form a circle on the pattern and extend “the energy that is in our hearts and minds through their hands towards the labyrinth.” Following this exercise is a meditative time where each person physically lays hands on the labyrinth and calls forth “the image of a loved one walking this labyrinth and receiving what is needed.”

Geomancy (spiritualism combined with geometric designs) and other occult arts are often incorporated in the building of labyrinths. Charles Gilchrist, a labyrinth promoter, states that it has a direct connection to “*Sacred Geometry*,” a powerful potential as an oracle. And **there are other “oracle systems” that are related to Sacred Geometry, including Astrology, Numerology, I Ching, Rune Stones, and the Tarot Cards.**

The labyrinth is a shared esoteric tradition; **in Native American culture, it is called the Medicine Wheel and Man in the Maze.** The Celts described it as the Never Ending Circle. It is also called

the kabala in mystical Judaism. **One feature they all share is that they have one path which winds in a circuitous way to the center.**

"Veriditas Project founder Lauren Artress promotes **the labyrinth as a way to connect with the divine feminine, the god within.**"—*Lee Penn, The New Age Movement in the Episcopal Church (1999).*

JOURNALING

Since all of spiritual formation is focused on thinking about yourself, it is to be expected that "journaling" would be also.

Journaling consists of writing down your thoughts—not about helping others,—but *about yourself*. **It is actually an introspective diary! You are to present this to your "spiritual director" who is teaching you how to do mantras, so he or she can regularly check on your "spiritual progress."**

Instead of journaling, learn how to give Bible studies and start giving them to others. Learn how to help others, and begin doing it.

The guru Masters recommend that a person not only regularly practice yoga—but also do **"journaling."** **The student must keep a diary of impressions that he or she feels** through the day, and especially after a yogi exercise or spiritual retreat. **—Everything is centered on self! The student becomes the center of his own universe!** Not Christ, not the Bible—but himself!

On pages 156-157 of his book, *Spiritual Friend*, **Edwards teaches "journal keeping."** As he describes it, **what he is here referring to is not a diary! It is a day-by-day letting your hand be**

moved by an unseen power as it writes randomly across the page.

“Christian experience points to trusting not primarily in our own isolated prowess, or ultimately these blind or hostile forces, but **in a collaborative flow of the ‘Powers of Light’ in and around us.**

“Journal keeping, in helping us be in touch with this flow, can include any form of writing: poetry, prose, dialogue, picture. These can be spontaneous or focused . . . They can deal with thoughts, feelings, intuitions, and dreams, the past, present, and future.

“The more casual our writing, the better. If it is too ‘heavy,’ too full of expected ‘good’ insight [*i.e.*, too moralistic], ego easily becomes attached. No longer is something flowing freely through us, but we are ‘trying’ to do something, trying to make something happen. There is an extreme form of avoiding this tendency [to try to control the flow] in **a Zen Buddhist writing practice**, where no pronoun is allowed to be used (*e.g.*, ‘hand moves across page,’ not ‘*my* hand writes in *my* journal’).”—*Spiritual Friend: Reclaiming the Gift of Spiritual Direction*, p. 157.

Notice that the objective here is to turn men and women into robots, which obediently do what the spirits tell them to do. Practice in doing this is gained by letting the spirit guide their writing.

Also notice that what they write about is themselves! What they feel, what they are experiencing. Everything is self-centered, encouraging people to live for themselves, not for God, and never helping others.

CRYSTAL POWER

Crystal power—This is another part of the occult package! The use of quartz crystals also dates back into the ancient past. Their use is found in virtually all occult traditions.

Today they are primarily used “to help their users meditate and to store energy.”

Some gaze into the crystal (sometimes in the form of a spherical ball), while **others just want some crystal in the room when they mantra themselves into a mental emptiness.** They believe it provides power to more easily make contact with the spirit. They say that the presence of crystals “amplifies the energy during the meditation.” But such foolishness is not in the Bible!

“An interesting phenomenon happens when you begin to work with crystals—for whatever reason. **You will start becoming aware of an energy or force greater than what you presently contain.** This force has been called your Higher Self, and it encompasses ‘that which you are capable of becoming.’ It is your perfected self. **Quartz crystals, in their wonderfully helpful way, will help you tune into this higher aspect of yourself.**”—*Phyllis Galde, The Truth about Crystal Healing, p. 9.*

As with Reiki, therapeutic touch, and other energy healing techniques, crystal work is also based on the chakra system. One practitioner explains it this way:

“Crystal work, psychic work, healing work, or any work of a metaphysical nature, uses the higher chakras or energy centers; the third eye, crown, throat, and/or heart center.”—*Magical Blend Magazine, Issue 14, p. 14.*

Whatever aspect of these Buddhist/Hindu practices you may wish to play around with,—you are, as it were, walking through the doorway of an emptied mind so demon spirits can enter your brain and do things with it. Is this what you really want for your life?

WHY IT IS BEING URGED

Leith Anderson, current president of the *National Association of Evangelicals*, has urged us to enter this glorious, new experience inside the Eastern religions which is affecting all the churches.

Read how he identifies correct religion!

“The old paradigm [pattern] taught that if you had a right teaching [right doctrine], you will experience God. **The new paradigm says that if you experience God, you will have the right teaching!** This may be disturbing for many who assume propositional truth must always precede and dictate religious experience.”—*Leith Anderson, A Church for the 21st Century, p. 21.*

That which Anderson ridicules as “propositional truth” is old-fashioned Bible truth. Bible doctrines are no longer modern enough for these new religionists—who crave a momentary excitement instead the directions to heaven which God gives in His Inspired Writings.

BRING MORE PEOPLE INTO THE CHURCH

Because Bible doctrine and the old-fashioned religion of putting away sin and keeping the commandments of God is being ignored, the churches are gradually emptying. Because they

enjoy remaining in their sins, the great majority want some excitement, some opiate to help them forget the misery which accompanies those sins.

“In many of the revivals which have occurred during the last half century, the same influences have been at work, to a greater or less degree, that will be manifest in the more extensive movements of the future.

“There is an emotional excitement, a mingling of the true with the false, that is well adapted to mislead. Yet none need be deceived. In the light of God’s Word it is not difficult to determine the nature of these movements. Wherever men neglect the testimony of the Bible, turning away from those plain, soul-testing truths which require self-denial and renunciation of the world, there we may be sure that God’s blessing is not bestowed.”—*Great Controversy*, 464.

Dan Kimball appeals to ministers in the churches to rethink how they reach the masses of people in our modern age. **New methods must be tried in order to get them to come to church.**

“What once was a Christian nation with a Judeo-Christian worldview is quickly becoming a post-Christian, unchurched, unreached nation . . . New generations are arising all around us without any Christian influence. **So we must rethink virtually everything we are doing in our ministries.**”—*Dan Kimball, The Emerging Church*, pp. 13-14.

Jim Wilson, in his book, *Future Church*, declares that **the churches must devise ways to give people a sensory experience in feeling the presence of God, in order to get them into the church.** Something mystical which will “usher them into the presence of God” (*Jim L. Wilson, Future Church*,

pp. 38-39).

It is said that worship services should be changed, and the music inside should appeal to the people outside on the street.

“A common approach to the worship awakening among Protestant churches is to **create a blended service combining older and newer liturgical elements and musical styles.**”—*Robb Redman, The Great Worship Awakening, p. 129.*

In order to do this, we need to talk far less about doctrines,—and partially, at least, return to the rituals. These are the rituals in the monasteries which the Catholics have developed down through the centuries. We must appeal to the senses, in order to get “post-moderns” to walk in the church doors. At any rate, *we must find some way to get them all in!*

“Post-moderns prefer to encounter Christ by using all their senses. That’s part of the appeal of classical liturgical or **contemplative worship: the incense and candles, making the sign of the cross, the taste and smell of the bread and wine, touching icons [statues] and being anointed with oil.**”—*Julie B. Sevig, The Lutheran: Ancient and New, in The Lutheran, September 2001.*

One of the leading spiritual formation writers, Leonard Sweet, describes it this way:

“Post-moderns want a God they can feel, taste, touch, hear and smell—a **full sensory immersion in the divine.**”—*Leonard Sweet’s book, Soul Tsunami, quoted in Sevig, The Lutheran, et al., The Lutheran, September 2001.*

These quotations reveal why some of our own church leaders have been urging band music,

swaying singers up front in our churches, and yoga instruction for the church members! —They have been reading what leaders in the other denominations have been urging for over 15 years!

“Evangelicals are using traditions from all liturgical churches from Orthodox to Lutheran to Catholic . . . Though they have limited experience using their new-found symbols, rituals and traditions, they’re infusing them with vitality and spirit and life, which is reaching people.”—*Sevig citing Karen Ward, in The Lutheran.*

In their feverish craving to bring new members into the churches, well-meaning church leaders are forgetting that, by promoting various forms of spiritual formation, they are unleashing a superhuman power from beneath—which will sweep away from Christ vast numbers of church members,—while at the same time they will apparently remain on the church rolls, initiating still more members into the apostasy.

“Christians cannot truly evangelize unless they are prepared to be evangelized in the process. In sharing the good news, **people are enriched by the spiritual insights. Honest questions and depth of devotion is demonstrated by those of other faiths.** Including others involves listening to them, learning from them. Much of what exists in other faiths may not necessarily be hostile to the kingdom. Christians can learn a lot from other walks of faith.”—*Eddie Gibbs and Ryan K. Bolger, Emerging Churches: Creating Christian Community in Post-modern Cultures, p. 131.*

A professor of theology at a United Methodist college explains that **something new is needed to fill the sense of spiritual emptiness in Protes-**

tant churches.

“A spiritual vacuum exists in organized religion that might be filled by theologies that draw—for better or worse—from what is called parapsychology, paranormal studies, psychic phenomena and, somewhat pejoratively, the New Age Movement.”—David R. Griffen, *San Francisco Sunday Punch*, March 8, 1987.

This emptiness is both felt and seen. Not only do the worshipers at these churches go home spiritually unfilled after each church service,—but a growing number are not coming back!

“The traditional religious world is just beginning to make changes, but it’s a slow process—denomination by denomination. When religious institutions begin to lose members year after year, they eventually become aware that they’re not meeting people’s needs. Before long they’re scurrying around looking for innovative programs and improvements.”—James Fadiman, *Science of Mind Magazine*, June 1988.

Even atheist science-fiction writers, like Richard Geis, have noticed what is happening in the churches.

“The mainstream Christians are lip-service religions in the main, convenience religions, social religions, and they are the ones most subject to erosion, defections, infiltration, and subversion. A large and successful effort seems to have been made by the occultists’ new-age planners to dilute and alter the message of most of the mainstream Christian religions.”—Richard E. Geis, *The Naked Id*.

In a newspaper interview, the owner of a new-age bookstore in Salem, Oregon, said this:

“A lot of people come in who are very Christian. **They are looking, by whatever means, to move closer to God on an individual basis.**”—“*New Age Isn’t New to Salem,*” *Statesman Journal*, March 9, 1991, p. 2-A.

Searching, searching, ever searching and becoming desperate!—because they are not being fed at church! **All they are told there is that they are already saved, and they should not worry when their consciences trouble them** because of their ongoing sins.

—**Yet, if they would only read their Bibles, they would find the wonderful truth that if, bypassing the theories of the ministers, they will come to Jesus Christ Himself in sincere repentance for their sins—He will forgive them and enable them by His grace to obey His moral code for mankind, the Ten Commandments!**

The well-known “Christian” writer, Marcus Borg, wrote how he went from being a traditional Christian to a “mature” Christian:

“I learned from my professors and the readings they assigned that Jesus almost certainly was not born of a virgin, did not think of himself as the Son of God, and did not see his purpose as dying for the sins of the world . . . **By the time I was thirty, my childhood faith had fallen into pieces. My life since has led to a quite different understanding of what the Christian tradition says about God.**”—*Marcus Borg, The God We Never Knew*, pp. 25, 29.

Sounds pitiful, doesn’t it? If he had just read the Bible. But instead he went to college. Whatever religion he had, they took it all away. But

Borg still wanted peace, soothing peace. He found it in Buddhist mantra descents into mindlessness.

“I learned about the use of mantras as a means of giving the mind something to focus and refocus on as it sinks into silence.”—*Ibid.*

Borg’s message now is the same as that which the spirits teach all the others who keep saying mantras—that God is already in everyone and everything, and “we live within God” (*ibid.*). **Yet such a concept means that the Bible is not necessary, Christ need not have died on Calvary, sin is acceptable, and moral standards do not exist.**

Spencer Burke is boldly leading the way in showing how to bring more people into the church. **“Every few weeks” he takes his church members to other churches and unites with them in worship. As a result, one Buddhist family is now worshipping with them, while still practicing Buddhism.** His church “reaches out to other traditions, and sees them as beloved children of God. **With a focus on kingdom rather than on church, people find that their relationship with other faiths changes”** (*ibid.*). These men believe that the various religions are already part of the kingdom of God; so we need to become better acquainted, not to convert, but in order to make the kingdom stronger.

Leonard Sweet, one of the most prominent Protestant leaders in the Spiritual Formation Movement in the churches, is quite adamant:

“The key to navigating post-modernity’s choppy, crazy waters is not to seek some balance of ‘safe middle ground,’ but to ride the waves and bridge the opposites, especially where they converge in reconciliation and illumination.”—*Leonard*

Sweet, Soul Tsunami, p. 163.

“A sea change of transitions and transformations is birthing a whole new world and a whole new set of ways of making our way in the world . . . It is time for a Post-modern Reformation . . . Re-invent yourself for the 21st century or die. Some would rather die than change.”—Leonard Sweet, *ibid*, pp. 17, 75.

There are those who want to not only invite the Eastern religions into our churches,—but also to close the door tightly to the fundamentalists who preach Bible doctrines and to the study of the book of Revelation, both of which discourage acceptance of all religions.

“The leader of the nation’s largest Lutheran denomination has called for a global Christian council to address an ‘identity crisis’ on how churches interpret and understand the Bible. Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America . . . has called for Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, Anglican and Lutheran churches to come together to **combat a fundamentalist-millennialist-apocalyptic reading of Scripture.**”—Kevin Eckstrom, “Lutheran leader calls for an ecumenical council to address growing Biblical fundamentalism,” *Religious News Service*, August 11, 2005.

As would many others, **Hanson would like to reverse the outcome of the 16th Century Reformation,**—by joining hands with the Catholic Church.

“We continue to express our commitment to Eucharistic hospitality and sharing with the Roman Catholic Church.”—Hanson, quoted in *ibid*.

The February 2008 issue of *Christianity Today* had a key article entitled “*The Future Lies in the*

Past.” **A very large gathering of Protestant leaders from the various denominations were in attendance at this gathering** (briefly mentioned earlier in this report) at the Billy Graham Center in Wheaton College. The keynote theme for the immense gathering was **“*The Ancient Faith for the Church’s Future.*”**

One of those who attended was the president of Baylor University, D.H. Williams. His enthusiastic comment was like that of so many other leaders:

“Who would have thought, a decade ago, that one of the most vibrant and serious fields of Christian study at the beginning of the 21st century would be the ancient church fathers!”—D.H. Williams, quoted in Chris Armstrong, *“The Future Lies in the Past,” Christianity Today, February 2008.*

In view of the profound change in direction taking place among American Protestant leaders, Armstrong, the writer of the above article, made this comment:

“Just what was going on in this veritable shrine to pragmatic evangelistic methods and no-nonsense, back-to-the-Bible Protestant conservatism? Had Catholics taken over?”—Chris Armstrong, in *ibid.*

The answer is not just Catholic ritual, but also Hindu/Buddhist practices. But Armstrong says not to worry. Surely, our wise leaders will not lead us astray.

“[The fact that] more and more Evangelicals have set out upon it [this new path] is reason for hope for the future of gospel Christianity. That they are receiving good guidance on this road from

wise teachers is reason to believe that Christ is guiding the process. And that **they are meeting and learning from fellow Christians in the other two great confessions, Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox**, is reason to rejoice in the power of love.”—*Ibid.*

ENTERING THE CHURCHES INTO MODERN PROTESTANTISM

Mainline Protestant traditions (Presbyterians, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, United Methodists, United Church of Christ, etc.) **have energetically entered into the deep waters of mysticism.** Their leaders tell them that “contemplative prayer,” which uses mantras, will give the members a new “spiritual formation.”

The twentieth century search, by church leaders for greater liberalism away from Bible truth, plus their sociopolitical activism, had left their churches spiritually dry. Their members wanted something that seemed to be more fulfilling, or they would leave and find it elsewhere.

Marcus Borg, professor of Religion and Culture at *Oregon State University*, has researched into the matter:

“In some mainline denominations, emerging-paradigm [code word for contemplative yoga] Christians are in the majority. Others are about equally divided between these two ways of being Christian.”—*Marcus Borg, Living the Heart of Christianity, p. 7.*

Publisher's Weekly magazine printed an article on the changeover in Protestantism. An article writ-

ten by a woman in the publishing field included this statement:

“Many Protestants are looking to satisfy that yearning by a return to the Western contemplative tradition.”—*Kimberly Winston.*

That is code for a return to mantra mind-emptying rituals of Catholic monks down through the centuries. Bruce Epperly, a college professor, made this startling discovery:

“My students have been typically middle-aged and upper middle class Methodists, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, and Baptists, active in the lay leadership of their churches. To outward appearances, they are quite conventional people. Yet I have found that **virtually every one of my students has encountered the new age in one of its many forms and has been attracted by its mystery.**”—*Bruce Epperly, Crystal and Cross, p. 14.*

This is what people want today! A shallow experience in Bible knowledge and history, united with an emotional experience accompanied by a spirit purporting to be from God. — And all of it is called “Christian.”

A number of major spiritual formation writers and organizations started, as early as the late 1980s, to actively promote this Eastern way of spirit life. But it did not become a major landslide until the late 1990s.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS AND GUIDES

One of them, *Spiritual Directors International* (SDI), focuses on training “spiritual directors” (also called “spiritual guides”) who work quietly to initiate other Christians into the various mystic practices of spiritual formation, especially

mantra meditation.

Do not misunderstand: These are not the “spirit guides” (demons) encountered during mantra yoga. **So-called “spiritual directors” and “spiritual guides” are people who have gone on training retreats at Catholic and Protestant organizations—and been taught how to guide other Christians**, week by week, as they venture more deeply into mystical experiences.

“This workshop offers an opportunity to study and experience the [spiritual] director’s role in a person’s move into the beginning and early stages of contemplative prayer, silence, and openness to new sorts of praying.”—*Spiritual Directors International, Conference Workshops: “Exile or Return? Accompanying the Journey into Contemplative Prayer,” December 2005.*

Notice how pleasant and “Christian” it all sounds. The fruit that the serpent offered Eve in the Garden appeared very pleasant also.

“With every truly converted soul the relation to God and to eternal things will be the great topic of life. **But where, in the popular churches of today, is the spirit of consecration to God? The converts do not renounce their pride and love of the world.** They are no more willing to deny self, to take up the cross, and follow the meek and lowly Jesus than before their conversion. Religion has become the sport of infidels and skeptics because **so many who bear its name are ignorant of its principles. The power of godliness has well-nigh departed from many churches.**”—*Great Controversy*, 463.

Both individual and group instruction is provided at these “worshops.” **While it may appear**

casual, the initiation into mind-emptying activities is very real.

Here is an advance announcement by one of the two largest training organizations, the **Shalem Institute**, located near Washington, D.C.:

“The rhythm of the group includes . . . chanting, two periods of sitting in silence separated by walking meditation, and a time for optional sharing.”—Anne Kline, “A New Language of Prayer,” Shalem Institute Newsletter, Winter 2005.

People are anxious to receive assurance, and even pleasure, in doing something that will help them escape from their responsibility to put away sin and obey the Bible truth.

The entrance of a spirit into a mind willingly made empty—helps to bring release from the voice of conscience. But eventually, if flirting with demons is continued long enough an important decision is made in heaven: “Let him alone; he is joined to his idols” (*Hosea 4:17*).

One among the many tens of thousands who have attended these spirit-induction gatherings at SDI or Shalem is Jack Canfield, author of the popular “Chicken Soup” Series of books. Now a totally initiated yoga practitioner, he tells how he got started into it:

“I attended a meditation retreat that permanently changed my entire life . . . As you meditate and become more spiritually attuned, you can better discern and recognize the sound of your higher self or the voice of God speaking to you through words, images, and sensations.”—Jack Canfield, *The Success Principles*, pp. 316-317.

Spiritual Directors International says that **its**

primary objective is “tending the holy [people] around the world and across traditions.” Because it is so closely connected with the various Christian denominations—plus many which are not Christian,—its 2008 membership is highly significant.

The list has 652 **Episcopalians**, 239 **Presbyterians**, 239 **Methodists**, 175 **Lutherans**, and 2,386 **Roman Catholics**. With another forty or so “across traditions” added to it, the total count comes to 6,648. This information comes from the SDI website subhead: “Demographics of our Learning Community.”

The “across traditions” include **Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Gnostic Christian, Siddha Yoga, Jewish, and even Pagan/Wicca** (code word for witches). Both men and women in Wicca are now called “witches.” (Men used to be called “wizards.”)

An author close to the action is Eckhart Tolle. In 2011, he was listed by the *Watkins Review* as the most spiritually influential person in the world. A *New York Times* writer called Tolle “the most popular spiritual author in the United States” (*New York Times*, March 3, 2008). In an interview, Tolle made this thoughtful comment:

“Without considering the Eastern world, my estimate is that at this time **about ten percent of people in North America are already awakening [to accultism]. That makes thirty million Americans alone . . . about ten percent of the population of Western European countries is also awakening.** This is probably sufficient *critical mass* to bring about a new earth.”—Eckhart Tolle, quoted by Kathy Juline, “Awakening to Your Life’s Purpose,” *Science of Mind Magazine*, October 2006.

INTO MODERN CATHOLICISM

Actually, the “new spirituality” entered modern Catholicism a little ahead of its entrance into modern Protestantism. This is due to the fact that some of its monks and priests were the earliest to begin declaring it to be the great need of Catholics in our time. But this is also because Hindu practices first entered Christianity many centuries ago through the Desert Fathers. *More on their startling discoveries later.*

In 1992, *Newsweek* magazine did a cover story entitled “Talking to God.”

“Silence, appropriate body posture and, above all, emptying the mind through repetition of prayer—have been the practices of mystics in all the great world religions. And they form the basis on which most modern spiritual directors guide those who want to draw closer to God.”—*Kenneth L. Woodward, “Talking to God,” Newsweek, January 6, 1992.*

If you substitute “prayer” for a “mantra,” Woodward describes it exactly: “Emptying the mind through repetition of prayer” is how it is done, and then something calling itself “god” enters the vacant brain and takes up residence there.

In a September 2005 issue of *Newsweek*, a seventeen-page report was released. **The report, “In Search of the Spiritual,” began by describing the origin of mantra worship in modern Catholicism. It started with a Catholic monk named Thomas Keating.**

“To him [Keating], as a Trappist monk, meditation was second nature. He invited the great Zen master Roshi Sasaki to lead retreats at the abbey

[in Spencer, Massachusetts]. And surely, he thought, **there must be a precedent within the church for making such simple but powerful spiritual techniques available to laypeople.**

“His Trappist brother William Meninger found it one day in 1974, in a dusty copy of a 14th-century guide to contemplative meditation, [named] ‘*The Cloud of Unknowing.*’ ”—Jerry Alder, “*In Search of the Spiritual,*” *Newsweek*, August-September 2005, p. 48.

Elsewhere, Keating has said:

“In order to guide persons having this experience [of “divine oneness”], Christian spiritual directors may need to dialogue with Eastern teachers in order to get a full understanding.”—Thomas Keating, quoted in Philip St. Romain, *Kundalini Energy and Christian Spirituality*, Forward.

Michael Leach, former president of the *Catholic Book Publishers Association*, is well acquainted with the entire field. He made this comment:

“But many people also believe that the spiritual principles underlying the New Age Movement will soon be incorporated—or rather reincorporated—into the mainstream of Catholic belief. In fact, it’s happening in the United States right now.”—Michael Leach, *America Magazine [R.C.]*, May 2, 1992.

Basil Pennington, a prominent spiritual formation writer, and a committed Catholic, has declared: **“We are part of an immensely large community . . . ‘We are Legion’ ”** (*M. Basil Pennington, Centered Living: The Way of Centering Prayer*, p. 10).

A major Catholic resource company, which also reaches across to Protestant churches, adds this:

“Contemplative prayer has once again become

commonplace in the Christian community.”—*Sheed and Ward Catalog, Winter/Lent, 1978, p. 12.*

William Shannon, an important Catholic writer, says that **contemplative spirituality has now widely replaced old-style Catholicism** (*William Shannon, Seeds of Peace, p. 25*). Regardless of their religious affiliation, people want peace from having to worry about their sins. The spirits gladly provide this. **Instead of avoiding God, now they can have the false assurance that, whatever immorality they continue in, they will go to heaven just as they are.**

“This forgetfulness, of our oneness with God, is not just a personal experience, it is the corporate experience of humanity. Indeed, this is one way to understanding original sin. **We are in God, but we don't seem to know it. We are in paradise, but we don't realize it.**”—*William Shannon, Seeds of Peace, p. 66.*

Very close contacts are being made today by Catholic priests and Eastern gurus, in an effort to learn still more about how to enter this deeper spirituality.

“A Jesuit friend once told me that he approached a Hindu guru for initiation in the art of prayer. The guru said to him, ‘Concentrate on your breathing.’ Then **the guru said, ‘The air you breathe is God.** You are breathing God in and out. **Become aware of that** and stay with that awareness.’”—*Anthony de Mello, S.J. (Jesuit), Sadhana: A Way to God, inside front cover. (De Mello says that “sadhana” is a Hindu word for “spiritual exercises.”)*

De Mello's book, *Sadhana*, is no third-rate book, but a leading best seller among Christians, both Catholics and Protestants.

“This book has come to be recognized universally as a masterpiece in the art of teaching people how to pray. After its first publication in 1979, it ranked among the top U.S. Catholic best sellers for many years. More than 20 translations have been published. Now all over the world this classic text has been acclaimed as the best how-to-do-it book on prayer available in any language. *Sadhana* is perhaps the best book available today in English for Christians on how to pray, meditate, and contemplate.”—*Wake Up to Life*, p. 2.

Since so many Catholics and Protestants highly value the book, *Sadhana*, as a way to make contact with God, what does the word, *sadhana*, mean? A dictionary on Hinduism explains:

“The person practicing *sadhana* is called a *sadhu*. Since *siddhis* [knowledge derived from *sadhana*] are magical in character, **the terms *sadhana* and *sadhu* are also frequently used for sorcery and sorcerer respectively.**”—*Benjamin Walker, Hindu World*, p. 394.

Thus we see that this best seller, *Sadhana: A Way to God*, actually means “Sorcery: A Way to God”!

Mantra meditation is taught in Catholic high school and colleges. It is frequently part of the students' curriculum; and these classes are led by priests. In the chapter on “*Prayer, Seeking Union with God*,” in one Catholic high school textbook (*Your Faith and You: A synthesis of Catholic Belief*), the following statement is made:

“Numerous Catholic retreat houses offer ‘Yoga retreats’ or teach Zen meditation methods. But these techniques are totally removed [borrowed] from the Buddhist or Hindu faiths. They are often used by Christians to help them develop a conscious faith relationship with Christ in prayer. Likewise, **the Buddhist or Hindu uses these same techniques to enter into a deeper union with God—**as his own religion has taught him to believe in him.”—*James Finley, Michael Pennock, Your Faith and You, p. 205 (published by Notre Dame University).*

It is thus obvious that the Catholic position is that Catholics, Buddhists, and Hindus are worshipping the same god!

Yet, as we will learn below, **Protestants are now being taught by Catholic writers and speakers that, in order to have a closer walk with the God of the Bible, they also need to approach Him through Buddhist mantra meditations!**

“Indeed, today Catholics practice Zen meditation. There are Christian-Hindu monasteries in India. And Fr. Raimundo Panikkar has suggested that Indian philosophy might prove a better base for Christian theology than Aristotle.

“[The Catholic monk] Thomas Merton predicted that the twenty-first century would belong to two things: Christianity and Zen. Today these great traditions as well as others are meeting one another in a spirit of humble inquiry. **Perhaps it is just this coming together of our world traditions that will provide the spiritual impetus needed in a new age of the Spirit.**”—*Richard Chilson, Full Christianity, p. 136.*

Another Jesuit priest describes the experience

in these words:

“The twentieth century, which has seen so many revolutions, is now witnessing the rise of a new mysticism within Christianity . . . **For the new mysticism has learned much from the great religions of Asia. It has felt the impact of yoga and Zen and the monasticism of Tibet. It knows the music of the mantra and the silence of samadhi.**”—*William Johnston, The Mystic Way, Forward.*

While the mass, idol veneration, candles, beads, processions, and sacraments remain unchanged, additional **mind-emptying rituals are rapidly entering the Church of Rome.** At local Catholic retreat centers, nuns provide those who come with copies of *The Cloud of Unknowing*. It has become the basis for nearly all levels of deeper Catholic spiritual communing.

So-called “contemplative prayer,” which focuses on emptying the mind in order to meet with a spirit (said to represent Deity), is the new pattern for deeper worship, both in Catholicism and Protestantism.

The late **Pope Paul VI** met with members of the Trappist Monastic Order in the 1970s. Thomas Keating, of course, was there.

“The Pontiff declared that **unless the Church rediscovered the contemplative tradition, renewal couldn’t take place. He specifically called upon the monastics, because they lived the contemplative life, to help the laity and those in other religious orders to bring that dimension into their lives** as well.”—*Anne A. Simpson, “Resting in God,” Common Boundary magazine, September-October 1997, p. 25.*

Pope John Paul II also showed interest in the practice and encouraged its use.

“Pope John Paul has urged people to take to prayer, especially a contemplative type of prayer.”—*Robert Webber, Ancient-Future Faith, p. 135.*

It should be noticed that **Catholics are encouraged not to pray to God or Christ, but to just quietly empty the mind; so “God” can contact them.** In a 1988 *Apostolic Letter*, we are told:

“#27. Christian spirituality is familiar with the most sublime forms of mystical silence . . . superseded by an intense and ineffable union with God.

“#28. I mentioned in my *Apostolic Letter Novo Millennio Ineunte* that the West is now experiencing a renewed demand for meditation, which at times leads to a keen interest in aspects of other religions.

“#31. Listening and meditation are nourished by silence . . . A discovery of the importance of silence is one of the secrets of practicing contemplation and meditation.

“#1076. In this new age of the Church, Christ now lives and acts in and with his Church, in a new way appropriate to this new age.

“#33. The great mystical tradition of the Church of both East and West . . . shows how prayer can progress, as a genuine dialogue of love, to the point of rendering the person wholly possessed by the divine Beloved. But it leads to the ineffable joy experienced by the mystics [Desert Fathers] as ‘nuptial union.’ How can we forget here, among the many shining examples, the teachings of St. John of the Cross and St. Teresa of Avila?”—*John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, Vicesimus quintus*

Annus, December 4, 1988.

The same concepts were repeated fourteen years later in another *Apostolic Letter* of John Paul II, in which **he mentioned that Catholic organizations which are promoting silence as prayer are one of the Church's chief means of evangelizing the world!**

"Institutes of the contemplative life, by their prayers . . . have a very great importance in the conversion of souls . . . Worthy of special mention are the various projects for causing the contemplative life to take root . . . Religious institutes of the contemplative and of the active life have so far played, and still do play, **the main role in the evangelization of the world.**"—*John Paul II, Apostolic Letter, Rosarium Virginis Mariae, October 16, 2002.*

Compare that with the following Buddhist statement on meditation published in 1971:

"In realizing the nonexistence of the personal Ego, the mind must be kept in quiescence [stillness]. **On being enabled, by various methods, to put the mind in that state, all thoughts, ideas, and cognition cease, and the mind passeth from consciousness into a state of perfect tranquillity . . .** This state is called *Shiney* [Tranquil Rest]."—*Milarepa: Tibet's Great Yogi, p. 41.*

Or this one:

"The brain is stilled. The man at last lets go; he glides below it into the quiet feeling, **the quiet sense of his own identity with the self of other things—of the universe.** He glides past the feeling into the very identity itself **where a glorious all consciousness** leaves no room for separate self thoughts or emotions . . .

"I slide deep into the very recesses of my soul to

a place of utter repose. **I know, I know that this is Immortal Self, this is God, this is me. I am. I always was, I always will be.**”—*U.S. Andersen, Three Magic Words, pp. 315, 319.*

In marked contrast, we are told this:

“Some of the reasoning in the book *Living Temple* is unsound . . . This reasoning would lead astray the minds of those who are not thoroughly established on the foundation principles of present truth. **It introduces that which is nought but speculation in regard to the personality of God and where His presence is.** No one on this earth has a right to speculate on this question. The more [that] fanciful theories are discussed, the less men will know of God and of the truth that sanctifies the soul . . .

“Erroneous theories are presented in so pleasing a way that unless care is taken, many will be misled . . . **Those who entertain these sophistries will soon find themselves in a position where the enemy can talk with them, and lead them away from God . . .** The track of truth lies close beside the track of error, and both tracks may seem to be one to minds which are not worked by the Holy Spirit, and which, therefore, are not quick to discern the difference between truth and error.”—*1 Selected Messages, 201-202.*

The New Catholic Catechism, issued in the 1990s, clearly recommends contemplative prayer.

“**Entering into contemplative prayer is like entering into the Eucharistic liturgy [the mass].** We ‘gather up’ the heart, **recollect our whole being under the prompting of the Holy Spirit,** abide in the dwelling place of the Lord which we are, awaken our faith in order to enter into the presence of him

who awaits us.”—*The New Catholic Catechism*, #2711.

“Contemplation is a gaze of faith . . . **Thus it learns the ‘interior knowledge of our Lord.’**”—*Ibid.*, #2715.

“**Contemplative prayer is silence** . . . Words in this kind of prayer are not speeches . . . **In this silence**, unbearable to the ‘outer’ man, **the Father speaks to us** his incarnate Word.”—*Ibid.*, #2717.

The **Second Vatican Council** (October 1962–December 1965) validated contemplative prayer:

“[Vatican II] gave both religious and lay people a new sense of freedom and a desire for spiritual renewal . . . **Centering prayer and meditation groups following the teaching of John Main have helped introduce large numbers of Christians to a deeper life of prayer.**”—*Ibid.*

Can we be sure from the above that official Catholic sources definitely encourage mantra meditation? Yes, because of the mention of John Main.

John Main (1926–1982) was a Roman Catholic Benedictine monk and priest who **presented a way of Christian meditation which utilized a “prayer-phrase” (mantra)**. In 1975 Main began Christian meditation groups which met at Ealing Abbey, his monastery in West London, England, and, later, in Montreal, Canada. **These were the origins of the ecumenical network of Christian meditation groups which have become the World Community for Christian Meditation** (WCCM).

World Community for Christian Meditation is a Catholic organization:

“The *World Community for Christian Meditation* formed in 1991 as a means of continuing John

Main's legacy of spreading the gift of Christian meditation. Directed by Main's successor, Fr. Laurence Freeman, O.S.B, the *World Community* has its headquarters at the International Center in London and is served by a network of meditation centers throughout the world."—*WCCM information folder*.

The latest official revision of the *Catholic Catechism*, released in 1994, clearly states that "Contemplative prayer is silence" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, p. 652).

Catholic laymen should be concerned by a mystical prayer movement which uses Buddhist methods of self-hypnosis and is urged by Catholic monks, writers, leaders, Vatican II, and even two popes. But most do not know the facts revealed in this present report.

Entering any Roman Catholic bookstore, you will find that **a majority of Catholic books on "spirituality" teach the new Eastern mysticism**, although not identified by those words. "Mystical prayer" is the special theme of those books, and the use of mind-vacating mantras is the way it is to be achieved.

It should be mentioned that **it is not difficult for a dedicated Roman Catholic to make the transition to yoga brain-silencing with mantras; since they already do something similar. —Saying the rosary is a form of mantra repetition!** The 81 rosary phrases or sentences (53 of which are the "Hail Mary") are said on a rosary, one after another, so many times and so fast that, without thinking, the mind speaks them by rote, while partially blanking out.

Western yoga practitioners who have visited In-

dia for further “light” have found, to their astonishment,—that **both Catholics and Buddhists there practice repetitive prayer while counting beads!** In both cases, they chant those prayers over and over again while fingering the beads one after another! **So Buddhists use rosaries also!**

INTO MODERN JUDAISM

A Jewish practice from the Dark Ages has returned to modern Judaism. Called the “kabbalah,” it is a type of Jewish mysticism which produces strange effects on the mind. The rituals are remarkably similar to those of the Hindus and Buddhists. Very likely, many centuries ago a Jew learned the techniques from a traveler from India.

“Kabbalah, also spelled kabala or cabala (Hebrew, ‘receiving’), is an esoteric method, discipline and school of thought. Kabbalah is a set of esoteric teachings meant to explain the relationship between an eternally unchanging and mysterious *Ein Sof* (light without end) and the mortal and finite universe (his creation).”—*Rabbi Yehuda Ashlag, “Baal HaSulam.”*

Kabbalistic Jews practice secret rites which produce powerful experiences of apparent energies called *sephirot* that engulf their bodies. They refer to God as *Ein Sof* or “Limitless Light.”

An organization calling itself *Jewish Lights* specializes on publishing kabbalistic literature. Its leading spokesman is Rabbi Philip Berg, who has written numerous books on the subject. Another such author is Melina Ribner.

“Judaism offers a variety of meditation tech-

niques to increase God-awareness. Meditation is an important practice of the new age as well because **it transforms our consciousness in a quick and powerful way.** Over the years, I have witnessed the most miraculous transformations of my students through the practice of meditation.”—*Melinda Ribner, New Age Judaism: Ancient Wisdom for the Modern World, p. 49.*

While kabbalists freely speak of their connection to new-age concepts, **they never mention their origins in Buddhism, or how they are practicing the same rituals which modern Catholics and Protestants are increasingly involved in.**

“Judaism is undergoing an exciting renaissance today. The House of Israel is once again being rebuilt. **There is increasing vitality in all branches of Judaism . . . Religious organizations are slowly responding to the pressure put upon them to bring forth mystical teachings.** I have seen several orthodox Jewish organizations begin to offer classes in kabbalah when only last year they spoke out vehemently against the study of kabbalah. **Even rabbis in the Reform Movement of Judaism are teaching kabbalah.**”—*Ibid.*

Although these Jewish kabbalists do not realize it, they are worshipping the same demon spirits as are an increasing number of Catholics and Christians.

Others recognize the fact that the various religions are being drawn into the same pattern of contacting spirits:

“[This is] the classical experience of enlightenment as described by Buddhist monks, Hindu gurus, Christian mystics, Aboriginal shamans, Sufi sheiks, and Hebrew kabbalists.”—Michael J.

Gelb, The How to Think Like Leonardo da Vinci Workbook, p. 142.

ALSO IN OTHER RELIGIONS

Raised a Hindu in India and the son of a “holy man” who was worshiped as a god, Rabi Majaraj followed in his father’s footsteps and became a yogi at a young age; he, too, was worshiped as a god by his followers. After spending hours in yoga each day for many years, Rabi discovered that the Hindu deities he worshiped were trying to destroy him.

Turning to Christ as the only one who could save him, he was enabled to escape from the yoga demons. But, when he moved to the West, he made some discoveries. *Here is his astonishing report:*

“I observed with deep concern the rapid acceleration of a powerful but largely unrecognized Eastern influence upon the average Western mind. **This invasion by Eastern religions has subtly but heavily influenced almost every area of Western society.** Through the deliberate efforts of Hindu and Buddhist gurus such as Vivekananda, Autobindo, Shri Chinmoy (who lead meditations at the United Nations in New York), and the very influential Dali Lama, significant changes in Western thinking, beliefs, and lifestyles have been effected.

“Literally millions of people have accepted Eastern presuppositions, including karma, reincarnation; and millions more have become personally involved in countless Hindu-Buddhist sects such as the Hare Krishna Movement, the Self-Realization Fellowship of Yogananda, Mahariji’s Divine Light Mission, Nichiren Shoshu, and numerous related Mind Dynamics groups, such as Silva

Method.

“As a former Hindu who began to travel widely throughout the West, **I was astonished to observe that not only Rosicrucianism and Freemasonry have Hindu/Buddhist roots, but that almost every one of the established and respected Western sects, such as Christian Science, Science of Mind, Religious Science, and Unity is a syncretistic blend of Hinduism and Christian heresy. Even the American-born Mormon Church is founded upon basic Hindu concepts,** such as the belief in the pre-existence of the soul, a multiplicity of gods, and the teaching that Godhood is the ultimate goal for humanity.”—*robertcowham.com*.

Why are they all alike? Because they were all inspired by a common demonic source!

EARLIER CATHOLIC ORIGINS

The “emerging church” is the name for this new emphasis on mantra meditation as a means of mysticizing the mind so that it can contact the spirit world. In order to find out the origin of this “emerging,” we need to journey back a long distance into the past.

“To speak ‘emergent’ the church will need to use more than just words. **The good news is that we can find this emergence language in our own faith. But we will have to look back a long way.**”—*Dale Dirksen, “Old is New Again,” Passport magazine, Fall 2005, p. 6.*

It is triumphantly claimed that, if we can return to those earliest Christian mantra mystics, we can reclaim ancient Christianity—for all

we need to do is to emulate their example and do as they did!

“The early Fathers can bring us back to what is common and help us get behind our various traditions, not in a sense that we deny our own tradition, but that we give a priority to the common teaching of the church. This is where our unity lies.”—Robert Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith*, pp. 88-89.

One after another, **these speakers and writers declare that it will be in returning to the mystic praying of the ancient past—that we will be able to unite the churches today!**

***Now we want to find out who those earliest Christian mantra mystics were*—and decide if we want to live as they did!**

THE DESERT FATHERS

From the best information that we can obtain, **Eastern mysticism entered the Western world in the fourth century A.D. By that time, the Christian churches in Alexandria and Rome were eagerly absorbing every type of pagan concept, god, and ritual that they could locate.** It is a matter of historical fact that it was at that time—three centuries after Calvary—that **the Bible Sabbath was changed to Sunday** in the Christian church. But many other changes were made also.

At that same time, **in an attempt to become more holy, some men (called ascetics) journeyed out into the North African desert and became hermits.** How should they have spent their time, since they did not work for a living, but just sat around waiting for the devout to bring them food

and water, in order to show their holiness?

It was at that time that **they learned that there were also “holy men” in India who also did nothing**, while awaiting gifts of food from the faithful. — **But those holy men in India had devised ways to produce a type of self-hypnosis, during which time they would experience exotic, pleasurable sensations.**

“Those who have practiced Transcendental Meditation may be surprised to learn that **Christianity has its own time-honored form of mantra meditation . . . Reliance on a mantric centering device had a long history in the mystical canon of Christianity.**”—*Ronald S. Miller (Editor of New Age Journal), As Above, So Below, p. 89.*

Those hermits who lived in wilderness areas of the Middle East are today known as the “Desert Fathers.” They dwelt alone or in small isolated communities.

They had the un-Biblical idea that they could only be holy if they lived useless lives, accomplishing nothing and just sitting. **So they decided to try out the Hindu method of mantra brain-emptying. This is one activity which they seemed marvelously successful doing;** for, when they were unconscious of everything around them, they would experience a variety of strange mental and physical sensations—which convinced them that, while doing this, they were very holy!

“The meditation practices and rules for living of these earliest Christian monks bear strong similarity to those of their Hindu and Buddhist renunciate brethren several kingdoms to the East . . . the meditative techniques they adopted for find-

ing their God suggest a borrowing from the East.”—
Daniel Goleman, The Meditative Mind, p. 53.

Alexandria was not far away; and, since A.D. 200, it had been the center of Gnostic and Platonic speculations which the Christian seminary there had brought into Christianity. The Desert Fathers were also probably influenced by those errors.

(It was at Alexandria, where “modernizing Christians” first began the sign of the cross before they did any action, and where—long after the Bible ended—the seventh-day Sabbath was first changed to Sunday, the worship day of Mithra the Sun god.)

The Desert Fathers decided that if the Hindus could contact their gods through repetitive mantras, they should be able to contact the Christian God through the same avenue. Soon they became as proficient in contacting spirits as the gurus in India.

But, of course, just as today, the Desert Fathers also encountered terrifying experiences from the demons which entered them.

“Christian literature makes reference to many episodes that parallel the experiences of those going a yogic way. Saint Anthony, one of the first desert mystics, frequently encountered strange and sometimes terrifying psychophysical forces while at prayer.”—*William Jager, Contemplation: A Christian Path, p. 72.*

IN LATER CENTURIES

The historical stream of mysticism passed down through the centuries in Catholicism. Such figures as Meister Eckhart, Teresa of Avila, John of

the Cross, Julian of Norwich, and Ignatius Loyola are significant.

Here is a list of the 17 most important Catholic mystics of earlier times:

- Hildegard of Bingen (1098-1179)
- Saint Anthony (1195-1231)
- St. Catherine of Siena (1347-1380)
- Meister Eckhart (1260-1327)
- Richard Rolle (1300-1345)
- Author of *Cloud of Unknowing* (14th century)
- Julian of Norwich (1342-1423)
- St. Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556)
- St. Teresa of Avila (1515-1582)
- Balthazar Alvarez (1533-1580)
- St. John of the Cross (1542-1591)
- Benedetta Carlini (1591-1661)
- Maria Domitilla Galluzzi (1595-1671)
- William Law (1686-1761)
- Evelyn Underhill (1875-1941)
- Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955)
- Thomas Merton (1915-1968)

One of the best-known writings on the subject at the time was the classic late-14th century writing, *The Cloud of Unknowing*. Its author is unknown, but it succinctly taught the Buddhist principles of meditation.

“Take just a little word, of one syllable rather than of two . . . With this word you are to strike down every kind of thought under the cloud of forgetting.”—*Cloud of Unknowing*, quoted in Ken Kaisch, *Finding God: A Handbook of Christian Meditation*, p. 223.

The concept here is simple enough: In order to

come to God and know Him, a person must totally turn off his mind! **Just let it lay there, totally receptive to whatever might enter. Then, surprise, something does enter!** Because of the person's willingness to render himself a robot, God does not protect him from the devil.

IGNATIUS LOYOLA

“Spiritual direction as practiced today—especially in the Roman Catholic Church—owes its greatest debt to the founder of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits), Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556).”—Chris Armstrong and Stephen Gertz, “Got your ‘Spiritual Director’ Yet?” *Christianity Today* (April 2003).

Ignacio de Loyola (1491-1556), while recuperating from wounds in a battle of 1521, read books on the fabled lives of the saints. He received visions in broad daylight in the hospital, and determined to be a soldier fighting for the pope. He had an attitude that the spirits could use.

[These repetitive visions appeared as] “a form in the air near him and this form gave him much consolation because it was exceedingly beautiful . . . **it somehow seemed to have the shape of a serpent** and had many things that shone like eyes, but were not eyes. **He received much delight and consolation from gazing upon this object** . . . but when the object vanished he became disconsolate.”—*Jesuits, A Multibiography* by Jean Lacouture, p. 18.

He then traveled to the village of Manresa, in Catalonia, and spent several months in a cave near the town, where he practiced rigorous asceticism and had “spiritual meditations” seven hours a day. A spirit in the form of a person would visit

him in the cave; and, over a period of time, this spirit dictated the book, *Spiritual Exercises*, to Ignatius.

The information in this book is extremely unusual; it requires that, in order to “become spiritual,” **everyone reading it must render absolute, total obedience to his superior** in the Jesuit Order. “He must be as a staff in his hand.”

After the Society was formed, the *Exercises* became the central component of the Jesuit novitiate training program, which usually took place during the first year of a two-year novitiate program (*2000 Years of Prayer by Michael Counsell, p. 203*). The *Spiritual Exercises* were formally approved in 1548 by Pope Paul III.

At the present time, more and more laypeople and non-Catholics are becoming both retreatants and directors of the *Exercises*. They are usually undertaken with the help of a trained spiritual guide.

In 1523, Ignatius and his companions were occupied in the University of Alcalá with the task of making disciples of three women called as witnesses by the Inquisition under the direction of magistrate Alonso Mejias. But the administrators of the Inquisition became suspicious. **These female disciples (Doña Leo, Doña Maria, and Doña Beatri) were so hysterically zealous that “one fell senseless,** another sometimes rolled about on the ground, and another had been seen in the grip of convulsions or shuddering and sweating in anguish. **These suspicious activities had taken place while Ignatius and his companions were**

regularly preaching in public. As a result, Ignatius was briefly placed in custody, but later was released (*Jesuits, A Multibiography by Jean Lacouture, pp. 27-29*). These people would fall to the ground while he was speaking in public; this would be due to his own very close and repeated contacts with the spirit world.

“Over the years, Ignatius became expert in the art of spiritual direction. He collected his insights, prayers, and suggestions in his book, the *Spiritual Exercises*, one of the most influential books on the spiritual life ever written. With a small group of friends, Ignatius Loyola founded the *Society of Jesus*, or the Jesuits. Ignatius conceived the Jesuits as ‘contemplatives in action.’ ”—*Ignatian-spirituality.com*.

ITS LEADING ADVOCATES

These are the men that are reshaping modern Christianity. They are highly paid speakers at Protestant and Catholic meetings, colleges, seminars, and retreats. Their books are eagerly bought, and are required reading in both Protestant and Catholic schools and seminaries!

Yet you are going to learn below that they do not really believe in Jesus Christ! **Their only message is a totally selfish one. It is this: Go alone by yourself, blank out your mind, and something will happen which will give you emotional exhilaration.** They say nothing about Christ, except to compare Him as of far less importance than Bud-

dhist rituals or yogi gurus.

THOMAS MERTON

Thomas Merton (1915-1968) got the meditative prayer movement really started in the 20th century. He took it out of its monastic setting—and, in his books, publicized it widely. Catholics embraced it wholeheartedly and, gradually, so did a growing number of Protestants—until, at the present time, the movement is deluging the Western world.

Thomas Merton was an Anglo-American Catholic writer and mystic. A Trappist monk of the Abbey of Gethsemani, Kentucky (he lived there from 1941 until his death in 1968), **he believed in bringing all the denominations together.** The extent to which he actually accomplished this is remarkable. In 1949, he was ordained to the priesthood and given the name Father Louis.

Merton wrote more than 70 books, mostly on spirituality, social justice and a quiet pacifism, as well as scores of essays and reviews, including his best-selling autobiography, *The Seven Storey Mountain* (1948), which sent scores of disillusioned World War II veterans, students, and even teenagers flocking to monasteries across the U.S.

But what was he really teaching?

“When one enters the deeper layers of contemplative prayer one experiences . . . the profound mystical silence . . . an absence of thought.”—*Thomas Merton, quoted in William Johnston, Letters to Contemplatives, p. 13.*

“It is a glorious destiny to be a member of the human race . . . Now I realize what we all are . . . **If only they [the people] could all see themselves**

as they really are . . . I suppose the big problem would be that we would fall down and worship each other . . . At the center of our being is a point of nothingness which is untouched by sin and by illusions, a point of pure truth . . . **This little point . . . is the pure glory of God in us. It is in everybody.**—*Thomas Merton, Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander, pp. 157-158.*

We have here an occult definition of what is variously called “the Higher Self,” “inward divinity,” or “point of pure glory.” —But it is actually a spirit which a man encounters when he empties his brain through mantra or breathing meditation. **This demon puts these strange theories into the person’s mind when he enters it.** He then tells the person that he, the invading spirit, is actually a divinity or fullness of god—that has always been within the man himself.

Merton not only was deeply involved with Buddhist and Hindu yogis, he also thought highly of the beliefs and practices of Sufis.

It should be mentioned here that **Sufis are the mystics of Islam. They chant the name of Allah as their primary mantra. This leads them into a meditative trance**—and they imagine that they see Allah in everything. **A prominent Catholic audio-tape company sells cassettes which Merton made on the wonderful help to be found in Sufism.**

“**Merton loved and shared a deep spiritual kinship with the Sufis,** the spiritual teachers and mystics of Islam. Here he shares their profound spirituality.”—*Credence Cassettes magazine, Winter/Lent, 1998, p. 24.*

In a letter to a Sufi Master, Merton wrote, “My

prayer tends very much to what you call fana" (Merton, quoted in M. Basil Pennington, *Thomas Merton, My Brother*, p. 115 [quoting from Merton's book, *The Hidden Ground of Love*]).

What is "fana"?

"Fana: The act of merging with the Divine Oneness."—*The Dictionary of Mysticism and the Occult*, p. 85.

Merton was well acquainted with the doctrinal beliefs of Muslims, Hindus, and Buddhists; for he had spent time in the Orient studying their religions and sitting at the feet of their Masters.

Yet, ignoring all doctrinal differences, Merton believed the fana would be able to unite Islam with Christianity. He was ignoring a lot! As do Buddhists and Hindus, Muslims refuse to accept the inspiration of the Bible, the divinity of Christ, or His death on Calvary to save mankind.

"I'm deeply impregnated with Sufism . . . Asia, Zen, Islam, etc., all these things come together in my life. It would be madness for me to attempt to create a monastic life for myself by excluding all these. I would be less a monk."—Merton, quoted in Rob Baker and Gray Henry, Editors, *Merton and Sufism*, pp. 69, 41.

Among others, the following Bible teaching is rejected by Islam and other Eastern religions:

"For there is . . . one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all."—*1 Timothy 2:5-6*.

"I see no contradiction between Buddhism and Christianity . . . I intend to become as good a Buddhist as I can."—Merton, quoted in David Steindl-Rast, *Recollection of Thomas Merton's Last Days*

in the West," *Monastic Studies*, 7:10, 1969. (Merton died in 1968.)

At an interfaith conference in Thailand, Merton said this:

"I believe that by openness to Buddhism, to Hinduism, and to these great Asian [mystical] traditions, we stand a wonderful chance of learning more about the potentiality of our own Christian traditions."—William Shannon, *Silent Lamp, The Thomas Merton Story*, p. 276.

Merton was eager to unite the world religions into one great faith.

"Thomas Merton predicted that the 21st century would belong to two religions: Christianity and Zen. Today, these great traditions as well as others are meeting one another in a spirit of humble inquiry. **Perhaps it is just this coming together of our world traditions that will provide the spiritual impetus needed to usher in a new age of the Spirit.**"—Richard Chilson, *Full Christianity*, p. 136.

Whatever their purposes may be, Catholic leaders were told to heavily promote the work and teachings of Thomas Merton.

HENRINOUWEN

Nouwen (1932-1996) was second only to Merton as an earlier 20th century Catholic advocate of mystical union with the spirits through meditative mantras. He was a Dutch-born Catholic priest and writer who authored 40 books about spirituality. One of his biographers said that, **in a 1994 survey of 3,400 U.S. Protestant church leaders, Nouwen ranked second only to Billy Graham in influence among them** (*Michael Ford,*

Wounded Prophet: A Portrait of Henri J.M. Nouwen, p. 35). The results of a *Christian Century* magazine survey, conducted in 2003, indicate that **Nouwen's work was a first choice of authors for Catholic and mainline Protestant clergy.**

Nouwen believed that God is approached by all religions equally; and, whatever path a person might take, he could find God and salvation apart from the Bible.

"Today I personally believe that while Jesus came to open the door to God's house, all human beings can walk through that door, whether they know about Jesus or not. Today **I see it as my call to help every person claim his or her own way to God.**"—*Henri Nouwen, Sabbatical Journey*, p. 51.

Why is it that all these people who practice mantra meditation—eventually see alike in thinking that all religions are equal in God's eyes and can equally approach Him in their own religions? The answer is obvious: The spirits that invade their minds during mental vacuity—tell them this!

Nouwen used the same standard procedure (repeating a mantra) as all the other mystics in contacting the spirit world.

"**The quiet repetition of a single word** can help us to descend with the mind into the heart . . . This way of simple prayer . . . opens us to God's active presence."—*Henri Nouwen, The Way of the Heart*, p. 81.

What is basically wrong with that description of "prayer"? It is not prayer! Prayer is talking directly to God, not ignoring Him and instead repeating a word over and over again!

“The God who dwells in our inner sanctuary is also **the God who dwells in the inner sanctuary of each human being.**”—*Henri Nouwen, Here and Now, p. 22.*

Nouwen wrote:

“Today I personally believe that **while Jesus came to open the door to God’s house, all human beings can walk through that door, whether they know about Jesus or not.** Today I see it as my call to help every person claim his or her own way to God.”—*Henri Nouwen, Sabbatical Journey, p. 51.*

In a foreword to a book that mixes Christianity with Hindu spirituality, Nouwen wrote this:

“**The author shows a wonderful openness to the gifts of Buddhism, Hinduism, and Muslim religion. He discovers their great wisdom for the spiritual life of the Christian . . .** Ryan [the author] went to India to learn from spiritual traditions other than his own. **He brought home many treasures and offers them to us** in the book.”—*Nouwen, quoted in Thomas Ryan, Disciplines for Christian Living, pp. 2-3.*

In another book of Eastern mysticism, Nouwen made this statement:

“Thomas Merton was perhaps the greatest popularizer of interspirituality. **He opened the door for Christians to explore other traditions, notably Taoism (Chinese witchcraft), Hinduism and Buddhism.**”—*Henri Nouwen, quoted in Wayne Teasdale, Mystic Heart: Discovering a Universal Spirituality in the World’s Religions.*

KEATING AND PENNINGTON

Thomas Keating and Basil Pennington were two Catholic monks who were also important leaders in introducing mysticism to the West. In

their book, *Finding Grace at the Center*, they tell us to freely pluck and eat from the tree—which you and I know to be forbidden:

“We should not hesitate to take the fruit of the age-old wisdom of the East and ‘capture’ it for Christ. Indeed, those of us who are in ministry should make the necessary effort to acquaint ourselves with as many of these Eastern techniques as possible.

“Many Christians who take their prayer life seriously have been greatly helped by Yoga, Zen, TM [transcendental meditation], and similar practices.”—M. Basil Pennington, Thomas Keating, Thomas E. Clarke, *Finding God at the Center*, pp. 5-6.

THOMAS KEATING

Thomas Keating (1923-) is a Trappist monk (Order of Cistercians of the Strict Observance) and priest. He began writing on contemplative prayer at St. Joseph’s Abbey, in Spencer, Massachusetts, during 1975.

Keating has traveled around the Western world, holding meetings and teaching “centering prayer” (saying a mantra until the mind empties). He declares, “God’s first language is silence” (*Thomas Keating, Intimacy with God*, p. 153). **In 1991 alone, he taught 31,000 people how to use mantras “to listen to God”** (*Kenneth L. Woodward, “Talking to God,” Newsweek, January 6, 1992*). **Often hundreds of people in a single seminar will be taught how to “center.”**

“Twice a day for 20 minutes, practitioners find a quiet place to sit with their eyes closed and surrender their minds to God. **In more than a dozen**

books and in speeches and retreats that have attracted tens of thousands, Keating has spread the word to a world of hungry people, looking for a deeper relationship with God.”—*Jerry Alder, “In Search of the Spiritual,” Newsweek, August-September 2005, p. 48.*

—**Yes, the people are hungry! They need Jesus! They need old-fashioned Bible religion. They need salvation through the blood of Christ, to be strengthened to put away their sins** and live clean, godly lives in obedience to God’s moral standard: the Ten Commandments.

BASIL PENNINGTON

Dom M. Basil Pennington (1931–2005) was a Trappist monk and priest. He was a leading Roman Catholic spiritual writer, speaker, teacher, and director. He obtained a degree in Canon Law at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. Pennington became internationally known as one of the major proponents of the Centering Prayer movement begun at St. Joseph’s Abbey (with Keating) in Spencer, Massachusetts, during the 1970s.

Pennington shares the concept that all the religions have but one God, the true God.

“It is my sense, from **having meditated with persons from many different [non] Christian traditions**, that in the silence we experience a deep unity. **When we go beyond the portals of the rational mind into the experience, there is only one God to be experienced.**”—*Basil Pennington, Centered Living, p. 192.*

“**The Spirit enlightened him** [Thomas Merton] in the true synthesis [unity] of all and in the harmony of that huge chorus of living beings. In the

midst of it **he lived out a vision of a new world, where all divisions have fallen away and the divine goodness is perceived and enjoyed as present in all and through all.**—*Basil Pennington, Thomas Merton: My Brother, pp. 199-200.*

According to comments he made to his close friend, Tilden Edwards, **Thomas Keating believes that Eastern gurus provide better spiritual guidance than do Western books and ministers** (*Edwards, Spiritual Friend: Reclaiming the Gift of Spiritual Direction, p. 28*).

TILDEN EDWARDS

Tilden Edwards is of prominent importance; for he has founded one of the two largest organizations promoting spiritual formation, and been a prolific speaker and writer recommending it.

His Shalem Institute, located near Washington, D.C., has trained thousands (!) of spiritual directors since 1972.

Edwards has tried to bridge the abyss between Christianity and the non-Christian religions.

“The more popular Eastern impact in the West through transcendental meditation, Hatha Yoga, the martial arts, and through many available courses on Eastern religions in universities has aided a recent rediscovery of Christian mystical tradition.”—*Tilden Edwards, Spiritual Friend, p. 19.*

Hatha Yoga (also called Hatha Vidya) is a system of yoga described by Yogi Swatmarama, a Hindu sage of 15th century India, and compiler of the *Hatha Yoga Pradipika*. The Sanskrit term, “hatha,” refers to the use of persistence or force. **It is defined as a kind of forced Yoga meditation—in which the mind is forced to withdraw from ex-**

ternal objects or thought—until it becomes totally mindless. It is at times performed with *Hatha-pradipika*, which consists of much self-torture, such as standing on one leg, holding up the arms, inhaling smoke with the head inverted, etc. (*Sanskrit-English Dictionary*, by M. Monier-Williams).

Tilden Edwards, who is one of the five most important leaders in the Western yoga movement, says **he has, for years, believed that Christ and Buddha are equal in importance and how they can help us!** He is a regular speaker at the various Protestant denominations.

“For many years, I have kept in my office an ink drawing of two smiling figures with their arms around each other: Jesus Christ and Gautama Buddha, with the caption: **‘Jesus and Buddha must be very good friends.’ They are not the same, but they are friends, not enemies, and they are not indifferent to one another. From the very beginning of Shalem, I have been moved to affirm that statement.** In my recently revised book, *Living Simply through the Day*, I tell the story of my experience with a Tibetan Buddhist lama in 1973 and how my time with him helped me understand Christian contemplative tradition in a more experiential way.”—Tilden Edwards, *shalem.org*.

Edwards makes no effort to hide his view, that all the religions of mankind worship the same true God. At a workshop, entitled *Buddhist Contributions to Christian Living*, he said that the Buddhists have already found how to do that.

“Buddhist traditions have developed very practical ways that many Christians have found helpful . . . of offering participants new perspectives and possibilities for living more fully in the radi-

ant gracious Presence through the day.”—Tilden Edwards, “*The Center for Spiritual Development*,” *Trinity Episcopal Cathedral, Fall 2004-Spring 2005*, p. 4.

EDWARDS' SHALEM INSTITUTE

Shalem (*sha-lam*) is a Hebrew word which the Institute says “speaks of wholeness—to be complete, full, sound” (*Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation, General Program Brochure, 1991-1992*). As one of their mystics (Richard Rohr) describes it, **“Contemplative Awareness is learning to see as the Mystics see.”**

“Tilden H. Edwards, an Episcopal priest, is Shalem’s Founder and Senior Fellow. He served as Shalem’s Executive Director from 1979 until 2000 and continues to be involved in Shalem’s *Clergy Spiritual Life and Leadership Program*, the *Spiritual Guidance Program*, and leading *Contemplative Groups* and *Retreats Program*.”—*Shalem.org*.

Founded in 1979 near Washington, D.C., **by Tilden Edwards, the Shalem Institute has provided special instructions to many of our national leaders.**

The Shalem Institute advises you not to counsel or pray with a loved one or your pastor. Instead, go find a Catholic priest or monk!

“To find a spiritual director:

“1. Pray about it. Seek Divine guidance. Trust that God will lead you to the person who is right for you. **See if anyone is available at a local monastery or convent. Often monks and nuns have been trained** in the art of direction, and certainly such people are familiar with the life of prayer . . .

“4. If you still have not located a director, **try**

contacting an organization which trains spiritual directors. The Shalem Institute in Bethesda, MD; the Stillpoint School in Nashville, TN; and the Institute for Pastoral Studies in Atlanta, GA, all have training programs for spiritual directors. **Similar programs exist in virtually every major city in the United States.** Talk to your pastor to learn if there is a school for spiritual directors near you. Often such groups will be happy to make referrals, matching you with one of their current or former students.

“Do not seek spiritual direction from a spouse, family member, close friend, or pastor. You are too close to persons in these categories.”—*Shalem Institute Advertisement.*

Notice that they are trying to separate you from your usual Christian friends. **Dare any genuine Christian follow the above advice?** Yet the *Shalem Institute* is a resource for training Protestant ministers, including our own.

Among the courses offered by Shalem Institute is one that is titled “*Pure Contemplative Presence*,” taught by one of Vaswig’s professors, Gerald May. The course description states:

“Insight and support for our presence together will be drawn from Christian contemplative and Tibetan Buddhist Dzogs-chen (Mahamudra) traditions.”—*Shalem Institute.*

On pages 152-153 of his book, *Spiritual Friend*, Edwards recommends the **practices which Ignatius Loyola taught** in his writings.

According to Edwards, **we will find the desired release into the Infinite One if we submit our bodies and minds more directly to practices**

of the Eastern religions:

“By openness to Buddhism, to Hinduism, and to these great Asian traditions, we stand a wonderful chance of learning more about the potentiality of our own traditions, because they have gone, from the natural point of view, so much deeper into this than we have.

“The combination of the natural techniques and the graces of the other things that have been manifested in Asia and the Christian liberty of the gospel should bring us all at last to that full and transcendent liberty which is beyond mere cultural difference and mere externals—and more this or that.”—*Spiritual Friend: Reclaiming the Gift of Spiritual Direction*, p. 165.

GERALD MAY

Mention should be made here of **the co-founder of the Shalem Institute: Gerald May**. In the front of one of his books, he states that his concepts “arises from the scriptures of the world’s great religions” (*Gerald May, Simply Sane*). He then thanks two Tibetan Buddhist lamas (holy men) and a Zen Master for their “particular impact” on him (*ibid.*).

“Our core . . . one’s own center . . . is where we realize our essential unity with one another and with all God’s creation.”—*Gerald May, Addiction and Grace*, p. 102.

May often speaks of the “Cosmic Presence” which is everywhere (*Gerald May, The Awakened Heart*, p. 179). The following statement clarifies his meaning:

“It is revealed in the Hindu greetings *jai bhagwan* and *namaste* [which means] that **reverence of the divinity both resides within and embraces us**

all.”—*Gerald May*.

May first began studying Zen Buddhism back in the 1970s. Tragically, instead of studying the Bible, he turned to Buddhist priests for guidance.

It is an undeniable fact that **anyone who seeks spiritual guidance from a Buddhist, Hindu, or one of their Western followers,—will experience a profound change in his attitudes and concepts.** Unless he repents and returns to the true God, he will lose out on heaven.

RICHARD FOSTER

At the present time, **one of the most influential Evangelical Christian advocates for spiritual formation and contemplative mantra prayer is Richard Foster** (a professed Quaker). **His most important book is *Celebration of Discipline***, which has sold over 2 million copies, is listed as #11 on *Christianity Today's* “Top 50 Books that have Shaped Evangelism” (*Christianity Today*, October 2006). **It is required reading in many Protestant and Catholic colleges and seminaries**, and is highly recommended even by our own denomination.

In his book, *Devotional Classics*, Foster compiled the writings of 52 people, at least half of whom are deep in mysticism. In his later book, *Spiritual Classics*, which includes more excerpts from the writings of mystics, **Foster said that even “Zen masters from Asia” recognized Thomas Merton as an authority on meditative prayer** (*Richard Foster and Emilie Griffin, Spiritual Classics*, p. 17). And Foster added that Merton commendably wanted to bring that Eastern lore to everyone in the West

(*ibid.*).

“When I first began writing in the field in the late 70s and early 80s the term ‘Spiritual Formation’ was hardly known, except for highly specialized references in relation to the Catholic orders. Today it is a rare person who has not heard the term. **Seminary courses in Spiritual Formation proliferate like baby rabbits. Huge numbers are seeking to become certified as Spiritual Directors** to answer the cry of multiplied thousands for spiritual direction.”—Richard Foster, *Spiritual Formation, a Pastoral Letter*, quoted in *Renovaré.org*.

The following quotations will help you better understand the beliefs and objectives of Richard Foster:

“We must be willing to go down into the recreating silences, into the inner world of contemplation. In their writings, all of the masters of meditation strive to awaken us to the fact that the universe is much larger than we know, that there are vast unexplored inner regions that are just as real as the physical world we know so well.”—Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, p. 13.

Foster has only the highest praise for the writings of Thomas Merton.

“Thomas Merton has perhaps done more than any other twentieth-century figure to make the life of prayer widely known and understood . . . **His interest in contemplation led him to investigate prayer forms in Eastern religion** . . . He is a gifted teacher.”—*Renovaré, Richard J. Foster and Emilie Griffin, Spiritual Classics*, p. 17.

You may recall that the following statement by Merton was earlier quoted:

“If only they [the people] could all see themselves as they really are . . . I suppose the big problem would be that **we would fall down and worship each other** . . . At the center of our being is a point of nothingness which is untouched by sin and by illusions, a point of pure truth . . . **This little point . . . is the pure glory of God in us. It is in everybody.**”—*Thomas Merton, Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander, pp. 157-158.*

When Richard Foster speaks of the silence, he does not mean external silence. He means ways to silence the thinking mind. In his book, *Prayer: Finding the Heart's True Home*, Foster recommends the practice of breath prayer, which is picking a single word or short phrase and repeating it in conjunction with the breath. This is classic contemplative mysticism.

In the original 1978 edition of *Celebration of Discipline*, he makes his objective clear when he states, “**Christian meditation is an attempt to empty the mind in order to fill it.**” He explains that, when you have ceased your thinking processes,—something will enter the mind and fill it, without you having to do it.

Albert James Dager, of *Media Spotlight*, writes of the mystical practices that Richard Foster teaches and indulges himself in:

“Unfortunately, all these exercises serve to do is open the person up to demonic influences that assuage his or her conscience with a feeling of euphoria and even ‘love’ emanating from the presence that has invaded their consciousness. This euphoria is then believed to validate that the person is on the right spiritual path. It may result in visions, out-of body experiences, stigmata, levi-

tation, even healings and other apparent miracles. Like John Wimber of Vineyard International Ministries, it is out of the religious traditions of Quakerism that **Foster has come with the message that today's church is missing out on some wonderful spiritual experiences that can only be found by studying and practicing the meditative and contemplative lifestyle.**"

Foster's book, *Celebration of Discipline: The Path to Spiritual Growth*, is a book which calls for deeper spirituality. But Richard Foster's teachings are filled with Buddhism, Yoga, TM, the exercises of Ignatius of Loyola, Eastern religion, and extremely spiritually destructive practices.

FOSTER'S RENOVARE

Renovaré is in the middle of the Spiritual Formation Movement. Pronounced, *ren-o-var-ay*, it was founded by **Richard J. Foster**, who is president of the organization, along with co-director **William L. Vaswig**, a former Lutheran pastor.

In order to achieve its objectives, the ancient rituals of the Eastern religions are practiced. It is not only based on spiritualistic and Eastern religions, but is solidly encouraged by both Protestant and Catholic leaders and their local churches.

Irish Jesuit William Johnston, as does Renovaré, ascribes this "contemplative prayer" to the mystics of "early Christianity": Being a mystical movement, Renovaré's appeal is to Charismatics, Catholics, and Protestants.

Renovaré's various spiritual formation groups are patterned after those found at Catholic spiri-

tual renewal centers, which blend ancient rituals with Christianity and produce a hybrid form of spiritual enlightenment.

Borrowing the pattern of spiritual retreat centers from Shalem and the ancient mystics, **Renovaré has developed a strategy for “church renewal” by bringing the meditative and contemplative life into as many churches as possible through spiritual formation groups. These gatherings are scheduled weekly; they are held in churches and private homes, being similar to group therapy sessions.**

JOHN MAIN

In addition to Nouwen, Merton, and Ignatius of Loyola, **Foster, the leading advocate of spiritual formation in the West, heartily recommends John Main, a Benedictine monk who was known for “the way of the mantra”** (*Paul Harris, Life of Dom John Main, Spirituality Today, Winter 1988*). As part of his appreciation for John Main, Foster mentions that he “understood well the value of both silence and solitude and **he rediscovered meditation from the Far East . . .** believing that silence is the path into the reality of the universe.”

“Listen to the mantra as you say it, gently but continuously . . . If thoughts or images come these are distractions at the time of meditation, so return simply to saying your word. Simply ignore it and **the way to ignore it is to say your mantra. Return with fidelity to meditation each morning and evening for between twenty and thirty minutes.**”—*John Main quoted in Paul Harris, Life of Dom John Main, Spirituality Today, Winter 1988.*

Genuine prayer is talking to the God of

heaven. It is not trying to stop thinking, so a demon can enter your mind! It is not the true God who comes when mantra mind-emptying is achieved.

LEONARD SWEET

Leonard I. Sweet is a United Methodist minister at Drew Theological School in Madison, New Jersey. **He is regularly voted one of the most influential Christian leaders in America.** Sweet is founder and President of *SpiritVenture Ministries*, which seeks to penetrate religious mysticism.

“Mysticism, once cast to the sidelines of the Christian tradition, is now situated in post-modernist culture near the center . . . Our empty pews are shouting to us, because we give the people neither an energy-fire experience of Christ nor the Christ of an energy-fire experience. We may help them apprehend reality through the [Bible] rudiments of mystical speculations, but not **the rapture of flow experiences** [through mantra unconsciousness].”—*Leonard Sweet, Quantum Spirituality, p. 76.*

Regarding Sweet’s pagan theories, Bob Buford says this:

“I think of Len Sweet as the icebreaker for the 21st century church—breaking a path through frozen ideas [from the Bible] and methods [holding Bible studies] to **the new realities that are shaping the world to come.**”—*Bob Buford.*

“New Light embodiment means to be ‘in connection’ and ‘information’ with other faiths . . . One can be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ without denying the flickers of **the sacred in followers of Yahweh, or Kali, or Krishna.**”—*Leonard Sweet. Quantum Spirituality, p. 130.*

Kali is Shiva’s consort, the goddess of time and

change. She is the foremost among the ten fierce Tantric sex goddesses (*Encyclopedia International*, p. 95).

Krishna is worshiped as the Supreme Being. Since the 1960s, due to the *International Society for Krishna Consciousness*, the worship of Krishna has spread in the West (*Charles Selengut*, "Charisma and Religious Innovation. *ISKCON Communications Journal*, Issue 4).

Sweet calls **Pierre Teilhard de Chardin** (the late pantheist, who was known as "the father of the New Age Movement") the "twentieth-century Christianity's major voice."

"God and the universe are identical. The Being of God includes and penetrates the whole universe."—*Leonard Sweet, Quantum Spirituality.*

"You have within you the powers of goodness resident in the great spiritual leaders like Moses, Jesus, Muhammed, Lao Tzu."—*Leonard Sweet, Quantum Spirituality.*

MATTHEW FOX

Formerly a member of the Dominican order within the Catholic Church, Fox is now an Episcopal priest and long-time promoter of new-age spirituality. He wrote the book, *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*.

"I foresee a renaissance, 'a rebirth based on a spiritual initiative' . . . **This new birth will cut through all cultures and all religions and indeed will draw forth the wisdom common to all vital mystical traditions in a global religious awakening** I call 'deep ecumenism.'"—*Matthew Fox, The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, p. 5.

In that book, Fox teaches that the "Cosmic

Christ” is not the historical person, Jesus Christ, described in the Bible. Instead, **this universal “Christ” is said to be a spirit which resides in all humanity. According to Fox, the Christ of the Bible is only one of many such prophets, such as Gandhi, Moses, and Buddha** (*ibid.*, pp. 234-235).

“Divinity is found in all creatures . . . The Cosmic Christ is the ‘I am’ in every creature.”—Matthew Fox, *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, p. 154.

Fox devoutly reveres medieval Catholic visionaries, such as Hildegard of Bingen, Thomas Aquinas, Saint Francis of Assisi, Julian of Norwich, Meister Eckhart and Nicholas of Cusa. **He predicts that the modern explosion of mysticism into the Western world will bring all the religions together.**

“Without mysticism there will be no ‘deep ecumenism,’ no unleashing of the power of wisdom from all the world’s religious traditions . . . The world needs spiritual rituals to awaken its better selves.”—*Ibid.*, p. 65.

Fox’s teachings were considered more accepting of homosexuality than Catholic Church orthodoxy permitted; he also suggested that God is feminine. So when he was eventually forbidden to speak to Catholic audiences, he left Catholicism.

Fox has written 30 books that have sold millions of copies; and, by the mid 1990s, he had attracted a “huge and diverse following” (*Toledo Blade*, March 28, 1993).

He continues to this day to be a leading promoter of mantra meditation as a means of attaining greater light.

MORTON KELSEY

Kelsey is another prominent mystic, promoting contemplative yoga prayer. Notice that everyone who does this—gets the same message imprinted on their mind: “There is no sin, and you are god.”

“You can find most of the new-age practices in the depth of Christianity . . . **I believe that the Holy One lives in every soul.**”—*Morton Kelsey, cited in Charles Simpkinson, “In the Spirit of the Early Christians,” Common Boundary magazine, January-February 1992.*

Kelsey has repeatedly urged the Christian churches to teach these mystic practices of the East in their seminaries and local churches (*Kelsey, New Age Spirituality, pp. 56-58*).

MARTIN BUBER

Buber was an early 20th-century pioneer in spiritual formation. Here is an example of his thinking:

“**There is no God apart from the world, nor a world apart from God . . . In the highest mystical ecstasy . . . I become God.**”—*Martin Buber, Ecstatic Confessions: The Heart of Mysticism, p. xv.*

TONY CAMPOLO

Campolo is a sought-after speaker in Christian colleges and universities, including our own, because he says such unusual things.

“A theology of mysticism provides some hope for common ground between Christianity and Is-

lam. Both religions have within their histories examples of ecstatic union with God.—Tony Campolo, *Speaking My Mind*, pp. 149-150.

“I learned about this way of having a born-again experience from reading the Catholic mystics, especially *The Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola* . . . Like most Catholic mystics, he developed an intense desire to experience a ‘oneness’ with God.”—Tony Campolo, *Letters to a Young Evangelical*, p. 30.

As you may know, Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556) started the Jesuit organization for the specific objective of destroying Protestantism and its followers. As a result, millions died in the following one hundred years.

It should not be surprising that Campolo got started in spiritual formation by reading Catholic mystics, especially Loyola.

“Spiritual direction as practiced today—especially in the Roman Catholic Church—owes its greatest debt to the founder of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits), Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556).”—Chris Armstrong and Stephen Gertz, “Got your ‘Spiritual Director’ Yet?” *Christianity Today* (April 2003).

Campolo tells us that we need to return to the Catholic rituals that the 16th-century Reformation left. He highly regards the mantra solitudes of Catholic monks.

“After the Reformation, we Protestants left behind much that was troubling about Roman Catholicism. I am convinced that we left too much behind. **The methods of praying employed by the likes of Ignatius have become precious to me. With the**

help of some Catholic saints, my prayer life has deepened.”—Tony Campolo, *Letters to a Young Evangelical*, p. 31.

After repeating a mantra each morning for about 20 minutes, Campolo achieves the “thin place.”

“By driving back all other concerns, I am able to create what the ancient Celtic Christians called ‘the thin place.’ The thin place is that spiritual condition wherein **the separation between the self and God becomes so thin that God is able to break through and envelop the soul.**”—Campolo, *ibid.*, p. 26.

BRIAN McLAREN

Time Magazine names McLaren as **one of 25 most influential Evangelical leaders of our day** (February 7, 2005). Here are two comments by McLaren:

“Many Christian leaders started searching for a new approach under the banner of ‘spiritual formation.’ This new search has led many of them back to Catholic contemplative practices and medieval monastic disciplines.”—Brian McLaren, *The Interview*.

According to McLaren, he has learned from the spirits, during his mantra meditations, that **basic Christianity is not the foundation of an experience with God.**

“The Cross isn’t the center then, the Cross is almost a distraction and false advertising for God.”—Brian McLaren, *ibid.*

Harry Emerson Fosdick (1878-1969), a famous liberal preacher in the 1950s, openly declared that salvation through Christ was unnecessary and Christ’s substitutionary atonement is a terrible thing.

In October 2006, Riverside Church in New York City held the fifth *Fosdick Convention* in his honor. Both Tony Campolo and Brian McLaren—two leading advocates of contemplative mantra praying—were speakers and praised the teachings of Fosdick.

BRENNON MANNING

Brennon Manning—Upon graduation from a Catholic seminary in 1963, Manning was ordained to the Franciscan priesthood. Among other travels, after spending six months in a remote cave somewhere in the Zaragoza Desert, Manning returned, in the 1970s, to the U.S. and began writing and lecturing in a desperate effort to stop his ongoing alcoholism. Although a powerful speaker at various gatherings (including our own colleges), his message is like that of the others:

First, **we must stop thinking like Christians.** Next, **we must stop thinking about God when we pray!** Third, **we must idolize a “sacred word”!** Then, fourth, **as a result, we become spiritual!** A spirit enters our mind and we imagine that we are emotionally happy.

Here are these four steps, as he gives them:

“Contemplative spirituality tends to emphasize the need for a change in consciousness . . . We must come to see reality differently.”—*Ibid.*, *The Signature of Jesus*, p. 216.

“The first step in faith is to stop thinking about God at the time of prayer.”—*Ibid.*, p. 212.

“Choose a single, sacred word . . . repeat the sacred word inwardly, slowly, and often.”—*Ibid.* p. 218.

“Enter into the great silence of God. Alone in

that silence, the noise within will subside and **the Voice of Love will be heard.**—*Ibid.*, p. 215.

SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS INTERNATIONAL

Spiritual Directors International—The term, “Spiritual Direction,” has been popularized by Catholic mystics for centuries; and today it is promoted by ***Spiritual Directors International*** (SDI), **a Roman Catholic organization which is solidly approved by Pope Benedict XVI.**

“Addressing members of the Pontifical Theological Faculty Teresianum 75 years after its foundation by the *Order of Discalced Carmelites*, Pope Benedict XVI **recommends the practice of spiritual direction to every Christian.**”—*sdi-world.org*.

“*Discalced*: A term applied to those religious congregations of men and women, the members of which go entirely unshod or wear sandals, with or without other covering for the feet.”—*Catholic Encyclopedia*.

“As she has never failed to do, again today the Church continues to recommend the practice of spiritual direction, not only to all those who wish to follow the Lord up close, but to every Christian who wishes to live responsibly his baptism, that is, the new life in Christ.”—*Pope Benedict XVI, Vatican Radio, May 21, 2011.*

In addition, **SDI is working in close cooperation with all the other major spiritual formation organizations, and is networking with “spiritual guides” (as well as training them) in nearly all the Protestant churches! SDA is truly a Catholic penetration success story!**

SDI says it is an “interspiritual learning community **committed to advancing spiritual direc-**

tion around the world” with a membership that **“consists of people from many nations and many faiths.”**

On its website (sdiworld.org), **SDI refers to its involvement in Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist, and Taoist Eastern Philosophy** spiritual directions and directors.

With this in mind, it provides an all-encompassing definition of its work, that would be satisfactory to every type of religion:

“Spiritual direction is the process of accompanying people on a spiritual journey. Spiritual direction exists in a context **that emphasizes growing closer to God (or the sacred, the holy, or a higher power).**”—*sdiworld.org*.

According to SDI, spiritual direction is **“the contemplative practice of helping another person or group to awaken to the mystery called god in all of life”** by teaching him how to enter mantra mind-silencing.

“Spiritual direction is **the contemplative practice of helping another person or group to awaken to the mystery called God in all of life**, and to respond to that discovery in a growing relationship of freedom and commitment.”—*James Keegan, S.J. (Jesuit), Roman Catholic, USA, on behalf of the 2005 Coordinating Council of Spiritual Directors International.*

SPIRITUAL DIRECTORS AND DIRECTION

“Spiritual Direction” is said to occur when **“spiritual directors”** (“spiritual guides”) teach other Christians (“disciples”) how to **“deepen their spirituality”** by using new-age/Buddhist methods of contacting the spirits. This is called

“discipling.”

—But this effectively turns the attention of Christians from Christ and the Inspired Writings, and obedience to them, to reliance upon men and women guides! This, of course, is in accordance with Catholic doctrine, which teaches that church members should obey the priest, instead of the Bible.

WordPress, a major Protestant publisher, describes spiritual direction (discipling) in these words:

“Spiritual direction occurs when **one individual (normally identified as a spiritual director) accompanies another person (the spiritual director) in their journey toward being transformed into the image of Christ.** Although it is an ancient practice of the church, it has been largely ignored (until recent years) by many in ‘Evangelical’ churches.”—*ruach.wordpress.com*.

A Roman Catholic website says it very clearly! —The objective of discipling is to bring the follower to confess his sins to a fellow man.

“In the technical sense of the term, **spiritual direction is that function of the sacred ministry by which the Church guides the faithful** to the attainment of eternal happiness . . . In one way, **the Church requires all her adult members to submit to such private direction, namely, in the Sacrament of Penance. For she entrusts to her priests in the confessional, not only the part of judge to absolve or retain the sins presently confessed, but also the part of a director of consciences.** The penitent, on his part, must submit to this guidance. He must also, in cases of serious doubt regarding the lawfulness of his action, ask the advice of his director.”—*newadvent.org*.

“The best spiritual directors are highly skilled at ‘noticing,’ listening, and attending to the key interior movements in a person’s prayer. However this is not just a mystical thing. Because prayer covers all the major areas of one’s life, so does spiritual direction . . . Essentially **the spiritual director discerns what Ignatius [Loyola] called the ‘movement of spirits,’ whether good or evil, in the other.**”—*aibi.gospelcom.net*.

“When life begins to feel unbalanced, and your joy and enthusiasm are drained by an emotional fatigue you cannot name—*it’s time to take action!* **A spiritual director is willing to walk alongside of you, to help you see where you are called to be in this time of your life . . . Spiritual direction is a way of leading us to see and be attentive to the real Director—the Spirit hidden in the depths of our being . . .** A Spiritual director listens for the movement of the Divine within you and encourages you in how to work with the Spirit.”—*peacejourney.org (Catholic)*.

OPRAH WINFREY

Oprah has a following which numbers in the tens of millions of women. After reading a book entitled *Discover the Power Within You* by Unity minister Eric Butterworth, she fully adopted its teachings as her own.

“This book changed my perspective on life and religion. Eric Butterworth teaches that **God isn’t ‘up there.’ He exists inside each one of us, and it’s up to us to seek the divine within.**”—*Oprah Winfrey, cited in Eric Butterworth, Discover the Power Within You, front cover.*

Oprah regularly uses yoga, to obtain guidance.

“I center myself each morning by trying to

touch the God light I believe is in all of us. Some people call it prayer, and some call it meditation. I call it centering up.”—*Oprah Winfrey, quoted in The Examiner, July 14, 1987, p. 29.*

On her talk show, **Oprah has interviewed and made famous many new-age authors**, such as Marianne Williamson, Sarah Ban Breathnach, Lyanla Vanzant, and Cheryl Richardson. One such author, Gary Zukav, has appeared on her show repeatedly. As a result, his book, *Seal of the Soul*, went to the top of the *New York Times* best-seller list for an astounding two years!

In early 2007, the new age received a powerful boost, when Oprah devoted two entire shows, her book, and DVD called *The Secret* to Rhonda Byrne. The premise of this book is based on a new-age concept, called *the Law of Attraction*,—that whatever you think, you make happen. **The underlying concept is that you are something of a little god, able to do anything by yourself in the material world.** Here are a couple of quotations from the book which clearly reveals its message:

“You are God in a physical body . . . You are all power . . . You are all intelligence . . . You are the Creator.”—*Rhonda Byrne, The Secret, p. 164.*

“No matter who you thought you were, now you know the Truth of Who You Really Are. **You are the master of the universe. You are the heir to the kingdom. You are the perfection of Life.** And now you know *The Secret.*”—*Ibid., p. 183.*

Rhonda Byrne is an Australian woman who expressed astounding certainty about her ideas—and then she told how she could be so certain: **She says she received her concepts from “Abraham,” and**

explains that he is of a large number of spirit guides who collectively go by that name.

Byrne's book, *The Secret*, was published in 2006,—but **after she appeared on Oprah's talk show, the praise showered upon her in those two appearances, caused sales of the book to explode.** By the end of the decade, 3.75 million copies had been sold

Celeste Graham is another person warmly endorsed by Oprah Winfrey; she is well-known in the recording industry and exults in her contacts with her divine self.

“God-conscious awareness, or awakening to our divinity, is the ultimate freedom. It opens doors to experiences that are beyond our imagination. **It elevates man to his highest estate,** frees him from the limitations of the physical, and lifts him up to the divine. It is the purpose of life, the ultimate reality.”—*Celeste Graham, The Layman's Guide to Enlightenment, p. 55.*

Surely, we are nearing the end of time!

“Before the final visitation of God's judgments upon the earth there will be among the people of the Lord such a revival of primitive godliness as has not been witnessed since apostolic times. The Spirit and power of God will be poured out upon His children. **At that time many will separate themselves from those churches in which the love of this world has supplanted love for God and His Word.** Many, both of ministers and people, will gladly accept those great truths which God has caused to be proclaimed at this time to prepare a people for the Lord's second coming.

“The enemy of souls desires to hinder this

work; and before the time for such a movement shall come, he will endeavor to prevent it by introducing a counterfeit. In those churches which he can bring under his deceptive power, he will make it appear that God's special blessing is poured out; there will be manifest what is thought to be great religious interest. **Multitudes will exult that God is working marvelously for them, when the work is that of another spirit.** Under a religious guise, Satan will seek to extend his influence over the Christian world."—*Great Controversy*, 464.

YOUTH SPECIALTIES

For nearly 40 years *Youth Specialties*, from just about every denomination and youth-serving organization all around the world, has worked alongside Christian youth workers. It also sponsors the well-attended *National Pastor's Convention*.

"Each year we serve more than 100,000 youth workers worldwide through our training seminars and conventions, resources, and here on the Internet.

"*Youth Specialties* started *Youthworker Journal* (now published through Shalem) and *Journal of Student Ministries*. *Youth Specialties* started a one-day training seminar. The *National Resource Seminar* became the CORE, and the CORE became *Youth Specialties One Day*, which continues to travel to nearly 100 cities every spring, bringing affordable and valuable training to youth ministry teams across the U.S."—*Official Youth Specialties announcement*.

Unfortunately, ***Youth Specialties* also promotes and teaches contemplative mantra, breath prayer, and the silence.**

One of its books, *The Sacred Way*, by Tony Jones, has full chapters encouraging the readers to use **Labyrinths, centering prayer, icons, stations of the cross, the sign of the cross, and the Jesus Prayer.**

Youth Specialties recommends a book by Maggie & Duffy Robbins, *Enjoy the Silence*. But Maggie was trained at the pro-Eastern meditation school, *Kairos School of Spiritual Formation*.

A supplemental reading list for *Kairos School* includes the following authors: David Steindl-Rast, **Thomas Keating, and Morton Kelsey**; all these men teach mantra and other Eastern rituals.

Youth Specialties President, Mark Oestreicher, made these comments, in answer to complaints:

“Sure, yoga, I suppose, could focus on Hindu or Buddhist gods or something—but it can also focus on Christ. We received a couple stomping-mad complaints about the yoga at the *National Pastor’s Convention* . . . I’m sorry, this just sounds like heresy to me. If we don’t believe Hindi gods actually exist, then why are we concerned about them entering our bodies? . . .

“Christianity IS an Eastern religion. It has all its roots in the East! It’s a bit baffling to me that **people lose sight of this, and insist on creating a false separation between Eastern religions and (apparently) Western Christianity** . . .

“[On saying words over and over again:] **It’s not like we would suggest someone grab any word and chant it over and over again.** Only special ones should be used.”—*Mark Oestreicher, A response to the charge that Youth Specialties is embracing Eastern religion.*

“Allah is not another God . . . We worship the

same God . . . The same God! The very same God we worship in Christ is the God which the Jews and the Muslims worship."—*Peter Kreeft, Ecumenical Jihad, pp. 30, 160.*

Chapter Two

The "Purpose Driven" Invasion

DEVASTATION OF THIS TERRIBLE MENACE

INTRODUCTION

THE TWO MOST INFLUENTIAL CHURCHES

Two of the largest and most influential Protestant churches in America are Rick Warren's Saddleback Church in southern California, and Willow Creek in northern Illinois. Both churches praise spiritual formation and mantra meditation.

Two churches are seen as models for this movement: **Willow Creek Community Church** (near Chicago), pastored by **Bill Hybels**, and **Saddleback**

Valley Community Church (south of Los Angeles), pastored by Rick Warren. The wide extent of their influence is stunning. Willow Creek has formed its own association of churches, with 9,500 members. **Last year, 100,000 church leaders attended at least one Willow Creek leadership conference. More than 250,000 pastors and church leaders from over 125 countries have attended Rick Warren's Purpose Driven Church seminars.** More than 60,000 pastors subscribe to his weekly email newsletter.

Consider this fact: **Over 400,000 pastors from 162 countries have been trained under Rick Warren's church growth seminar material alone.** (Warren calls his philosophy a "stealth movement flying beneath the radar that's changing literally thousands of churches around the world.") His book, *The Purpose Driven Church*, which espouses this new philosophy, has sold over one million copies in 20 languages and is a standard required-reading textbook in hundreds of Bible Colleges.

"People in these changed churches are getting into spirituality, not religion . . . Behind this shift is the search for an experiential faith, a religion of the heart, not the head. It's a religious expression that downplays doctrine and dogma, and revels in direct experience of the divine—whether it's called the 'Holy Spirit' or 'cosmic consciousness' or the 'true self.' It is practical and personal, **more about stress reduction than salvation, more therapeutic than theological. It's about feeling good, not being good.** It's as much about the body as the soul . . . Some marketing gurus have

begun calling it ‘**the experience industry.**’ ”—*American Demographics*, a professional and secular marketing journal, quoted in Gary Gilley, *This Little Church Went to Market*, pp. 20-21.

Although numbers seem to rule in this seeker-friendly mania (**an amazing 841 churches in this country have reached the “mega” category**, with 2,000 to 25,000 weekend attendees), **few have realized that the sizeable increase in church attendance is not due to the influx of the unchurched.** During the last 70 years, **the percentage of this country’s population attending church has been relatively constant at about 43 percent.** A spike of 49 percent in 1991 (years prior to today’s initial seeker-sensitive enthusiasm) gradually declined, returning to 42 percent in 2002 (*barna.org*). Where then do these megachurches **get their members?** **The new add-ons are almost entirely from transfers-in from other, nearby Christian churches; that is, from smaller churches that decided that they were not interested in, or could not afford, the worldly attractions** that the megachurches were able to offer.

Both Saddleback and Willow Creek have done careful market research, with the help of secular experts in the field. **Their findings have convinced them that the churches are too boring, and need to become full of exciting little features—in order to attract more members.**

Judging by numbers alone, the new model has certainly proved a success. Prominent “church growth” pastors like Robert Schuller (Crystal Cathedral, Los Angeles, California), Rick Warren

(Saddleback Church, California), Bill Hybels (Willow Creek Church, near Chicago) and Joel Osteen (Lakewood Church, Houston) attract thousands to their churches each Sunday.

Although a majority of this “growth” occurs by transfer rather than “conversion,” multitudes of other churches have adopted this model and have seen their congregations increase dramatically. Small wonder anyone questioning the movement is told, “Never criticize what God is blessing.” But mere worldly success is not, by itself, an indication of the blessing of God. Those who are willing to sell themselves and their church to worldly popularity will always have a measure of success—but at what an eternal cost to their souls!

FOLLOWING A BUSINESS PLAN

A major problem with the church growth movement is its love affair with the business world. Warren works closely with marketing agencies like CMS in Covina, California, a company that helps giants like Isuzu Motors and Quaker Oats “grow their businesses.”

Warren carefully follows the advice of secular business guru Peter Drucker, with whom he has engaged in a biannual consultation for 20 years. The focus of Drucker’s recent consulting has been to **teach churches and charities to behave more like corporations**, and Warren has adapted many of his ideas (*Forbes Magazine*, April 5, 2004, p. 110). For instance, the *Drucker Foundation* has a “*Self-Assessment Tool*” for business leaders. Warren has a “*Health Assessment Tool*” for readers of his *Purpose Driven Life*.

“Marketing Masters. **How Evangelical churches employ a panoply of business techniques to pull in new members** . . . Evangelical entrepreneurs are transforming their branch of Protestantism into the fastest-growing and most influential religious cohort in the U.S. Using tools ranging from focus groups to brand management, **they’re borrowing from business to boost their market share of American churchgoers.**”—*Business Week*, May 23, 2005, p. 2.

“Willow Creek founder Bill Hybels . . . hired Stanford MBA Greg Hawkins, a former McKinsey & Co. consultant, to handle the church’s day-to-day management. Willow Creek’s methods have even been analyzed in a Harvard Business School case study.”—*Business Week*, May 23, 2005, p. 55.

Anyone familiar with the ideas promoted in business books will easily spot their cloned ‘Christian’ versions all through Warren’s writings.

Forbes Magazine publisher, Rich Karlgaard said of *The Purpose Driven Church*, “**This is one of the greatest entrepreneurial books I’ve ever read,** and if you merely substitute the word, ‘business,’ for ‘church,’ it’s just a terrific guide that can be taken to a secular and business audience” (*CBS News*, March 22, 2005).

Bob Buford, founder of the *Leadership Network* in Dallas, Texas, has spent over 20 years integrating Drucker’s business ideas into churches. Another friend of Warren and Hybels, Buford calls himself “the legs for his [Drucker’s] brain” (*Jack Beatty*, *World According to Peter Drucker*, p. 186),

The stated goal of seeker-friendly churches

is reaching the lost. But the methods used are those of the secular marketing industry.

Basic marketing has to do with profiling consumers, ascertaining what their “felt needs” are, and then fashioning one’s product (or its image) to appeal to the targeted customer’s desires. The hoped-for result is that the consumer buys or “buys into” the product. **Evangelical church growth leaders claim that the marketing approach can be applied successfully—without compromising the gospel. But we are discovering that this is not so.**

First of all, **the gospel—and, more significantly, the person of Jesus Christ—do not fit into any marketing strategy.** They are not “products” to be “sold.” They cannot be refashioned or image-adjusted to appeal to the felt needs of our consumer-happy culture. Any attempt to do so compromises to some degree the truth of who Christ is and what He has done for us.

For example, **if the lost are considered consumers and a basic marketing rule says that the customer must reign supreme, then whatever may be offensive to the lost must be discarded, revamped, or downplayed.**

Scripture tells us clearly that the message of the Cross is “foolishness to them that are perishing” and that Christ Himself is a “rock of offense” (1 Cor. 1:18; 1 Peter 2:8). **Some seeker-friendly churches, therefore, seek to avoid this “negative aspect” by making the temporal benefits of becoming a Christian their chief selling point.** Although that appeals to our gratification-oriented generation, it is neither the

gospel nor the goal of a believer's life in Christ.

Men and women must realize that they are sinners and that they must come to Christ. They must repent and turn away from their sins, and in the enabling strength of Jesus—they must obey the moral law of God.

Secondly, **if you want to attract the lost on the basis of what might interest them, for the most part you will be appealing to and accommodating their flesh.** Wittingly or unwittingly, that seems to be the standard operating procedure of seeker-friendly churches. **They mimic what's popular in our culture: top-forty and performance-style music, theatrical productions, stimulating multi-media presentations, and thirty-minutes-or-less positive messages.** The latter, more often than not, are topical, therapeutic, and centered in self-fulfillment: how the Lord can meet one's needs and help solve one's problems.

KEYED TO CHANGING EVERYTHING

The new packaging is all about replacement. Remove what was earlier in the local church; cast it out, throw it away;—and bring in all kinds of new things!

A stage with a moveable Perspex lectern replaces the old wooden pulpit. **Take out the hymnbooks and only use projected words** on overhead screens.

A rock band replaces the organ. A casually dressed and jovial audience replaces the reverent congregation. A charming minister in a t-shirt and jeans replaces the suited 'preacher.' **Fun replaces holiness as the tone of the service.**

Loud music, sidesplitting drama, multime-

dia presentations and a humorous “talk” replace hymn singing and preaching. But they confidently assure the audience that the message remains the same.

Warren even claims that God enjoys rock music (*Rick Warren, Purpose Driven Church, p. 240*). “I reject the idea that music styles can be judged as either ‘good’ or ‘bad’ . . . no particular style of music is ‘sacred’ . . . **There is no such thing as ‘Christian music,’** only Christian lyrics” (*ibid.*, p. 281).

Yet just as clearly as a march tune fits a military scene, jazz fits a nightclub scene and rock fits a festival scene; so **there is a certain kind of sound that suits a prayer meeting—and it is not the rock, rap, and jazz sound that the Purpose Driven Church has borrowed from the world.** Music that has a corrupt origin; employs sensual rhythms; and is accompanied by a fleshly, breathy style of singing, with singers who scoop and slide from one note to another, is utterly unsuitable for the spiritual praise of God (Eph. 5:19). Also see *K. Smith’s book, Music and Morals.*

Doctrine has been trivialized into “God loves you, and you should love yourself.” Solid Biblical (expositional) preaching has been abandoned.

The result is seen as a multitude of shallow members from area churches, and false converts, rush into the church. A former Willow Creek counselor admitted “Willow Creek is a mile wide and one-half inch deep.”

Those who were there when all this got started, and grieve to see their churches adopt this model, have been marginalized; and, if they

keep objecting,—they are pushed out.

Not separation from sin, but salvation in sin is the message. **Worldliness, entertainment, and false doctrine soothes the members.** These new churches become deeply compromised. Far more than us, it is Christ and the Holy Spirit and the angels who are grieved.

Speaking of his church members, an unconcerned Warren states, "Are there unrepentant pagans mixed into Saddleback's crowd of 10,000? Without a doubt . . . That's okay. Jesus said . . . Don't worry about the tares" (*Warren, Purpose Driven Church, p. 237*).

EARLY BEGINNINGS

THE CHURCH GROWTH MOVEMENT

Here are the origins of the Church Growth Movement:

The father of the church growth movement was the relatively unknown missionary Donald McGavran, whose writings had a "dramatic impact" on Rick Warren. The day, in 1974, when Warren first read an article on church growth by McGavran was the day he decided to "invest the rest of his life" discovering the principles of "church growth." **McGavran's best known student and successor at the Fuller School of World Mission in California was C. Peter Wagner**, a founding member of the Lausanne Committee on World Evangelization.

(It should be mentioned that **Wagner and his fellow Fuller professor, Charles Kraft, speak of "authoritative prayer."** Instead of praying "Not my

will but Thine be done,” **their kind of prayer commands God to do certain things.** They also command the devil to do certain things. For example: Richard Roberts, on TV with his second wife, *commands* the Word of God to go out and heal all illness and financial lack in everyone watching. Of course, none of this happens.)

Wagner, a close friend of the late John Wimber (Vineyard), calls himself an apostle and is one of the world’s leading promoters of charismatic “signs and wonders.” The Vineyard churches soon led to the “Toronto Pentecostal Blessing”—with its wildness and satanic manifestations. From Fuller Seminary the church growth philosophy spread worldwide.

Peter Wagner eventually carried the message to church leaders in many denominations. I know of one major meeting he held with our church leaders in Atlanta in the late 1980s. Not long after that, “Celebration church” services started all over the North American Division! Everything was geared to entertainment, and many faithful believers left our denomination and began worshipping separately in little companies.

SCHULLER’S CRYSTAL CATHEDRAL

The first “megachurch” in America is said to have started in what eventually became Schuller’s Crystal Cathedral.

In 1955, Robert Schuller began church services in a drive-in theater in Garden Grove, California. For years, his *Hour of Power* has been televised all over the world.

He was the first pastor to "make it big," using modern church growth techniques. "An indisputed fact is that I am the founder, really, of the church growth movement in this country . . . I advocated and launched what has become known as the marketing approach in Christianity" (*Shuller, quoted in G.A. Pritchard, Willow Creek Seeker Services, p. 51*). How did he do it? "The secret of winning unchurched people into the church is really quite simple. **Find out what would impress the nonchurched in your community [then give it to them]**" (*ibid.*). Yet Schuller is a false teacher of huge proportions. **An unashamed universalist, he rejects Jesus as the only way to heaven.** He states that making people aware of their lost and sinful condition is the very worst thing a preacher can do. **As for the new birth, to Schuller it simply means changing from a negative to a positive self-image.**

From his book, *Self-Esteem: The New Reformation*, here is Schuller's theology:

"A person is in hell when he has lost his self-esteem" (*p. 15*). **"Self-esteem or 'pride in being a human being' is the single greatest need"** (*p. 19*). It is "shallow and insulting to the human being" to say that sin is "rebellion against God" (*p. 65*). **To be born again means to be changed "from inferiority to self-esteem"** (*p. 68*). Any theology that assaults or offends the self-esteem of persons is heretically failing to be truly Christian (*pp. 135-136*). The great error of classical theology is not starting with the value of the person, but treating them as "unworthy sinners" (*p. 180*).

Robert Schuller on Transcendental Medita-

tion, yoga, and mantras:

“It is important to remember that **meditation in any form is the harnessing, by human means, of God’s divine laws** . . . We are endowed with a great many powers and forces that we do not yet fully understand. **A variety of approaches to meditation . . . is employed by many different religions** as well as by various nonreligious mind-control systems. **In all forms . . . TM, Zen Buddhism, or Yoga . . . the meditator endeavors to overcome the conscious mind** . . .

“The most effective mantras employ the ‘M’ sound. You can get the feel of it by repeating the words, ‘I am, I am,’ many times over . . . **Transcendental Meditation or TM . . . is not a religion nor is it necessarily anti-Christian.**”—Robert Schuller, *Peace of Mind through Possibility Thinking*, pp. 131-132.

Both Schuller and his disciple, Rick Warren, believe in some type of pantheism:

“**God is alive, and He is in every single human being!**”—Schuller, *Hour of Power*, November 9, 2003.

“The Bible says, **‘He rules everything and is everywhere and is in everything!’** ”—Warren, *Purpose Driven Life*, p. 88.

The craving for “self-esteem” was the focus of nearly all of Schuller’s messages. This is how Schuller explained the reason why Christ died on the cross:

“Jesus knew His worth, his success fed his self-esteem . . . **He suffered the cross to sanctify his self-esteem** . . . *And the cross will sanctify the ego trip.*”—Robert Schuller, *Living Positively One Day at a Time*, p. 201 (*italics his*).

Schuller abhorred the idea that mankind might have sins that need to be repented of:

"I don't think anything has been done in the name of Christ and under the banner of Christianity that has proven more destructive to human personality and hence, counterproductive to the evangelism enterprise than the often crude, uncouth, and unchristian strategy of attempting to make people aware of their lost and sinful condition."—Schuller, quoted in *Christianity Today*, October 5, 1984.

"The most serious sin is the one that causes me to say, 'I am unworthy' . . . The fact is, the church will never succeed until it satisfies the human being's hunger for self-value."—Schuller, quoted in *Cathy Burns, Billy Graham and His Friends*, p. 114.

"Concentrate on the positive. If you accept Jesus Christ as your Saviour . . . you'll never have to worry about the devil."—Robert Schuller, *Discover Your Possibilities*, p. 61.

As for the prayer Jesus taught us to pray, Schuller blasphemously declares:

"And we can pray, 'Our Father in heaven, honorable is our name!' So the foundation is laid for us to feel good about ourselves!"—Schuller, *Self-Esteem, The New Reformation*, p. 69.

Schuller feels at home with every religion. When, in 1987, the pope visited Los Angeles, Schuller said:

"It's time for Protestants to go to the shepherd [the pope] and say, 'What do we have to do to come home?'"—Schuller, quoted in *Omega Letter*, March 1998, p. 15.

Schuller's landmark 1975 book, *Your Church Has Real Possibilities*, impressed Warren and

Hybels who both visited Schuller to learn more. Hybels called his first meeting with Schuller a “divine encounter” (*Lynne & Bill Hybels, Rediscovering Church, p. 69*). **Kay Warren, Rick’s wife, said that Schuller had a “profound influence” on Rick**, who was “captivated by his positive appeal to unbelievers” (*Tim Stafford, A Regular Purpose Driven Guy, Christianity Today, November 18, 2002*). Warren has since shared the platform at several of Schuller’s leadership conferences. An endorsement by Schuller appears at the beginning of Warren’s book, *The Purpose Driven Church*: “I’m praying that every pastor will read this book . . . Rick Warren is the one all of us should listen to and learn from.” Today Warren, Hybels, and Schuller all operate their churches on the same market-driven principles.

Each year, Schuller trained hundreds of ministers on how to grow a church, sometimes joining Rick Warren and Bill Hybels. But then came the end to the Schuller Empire:

News note:

“Bankrupt megachurch *Crystal Cathedral* in Garden Grove, Calif. is changing faith traditions. The *Roman Catholic Dioceses of Orange* [county] is purchasing the church’s 40-acre property with its towering glass building for \$57.5 million in a deal approved by a bankruptcy court judge Thursday.

“The megachurch, founded by television evangelist Robert H. Schuller in 1995, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in October last year to restructure its staggering debt.

“The founder’s son, Robert A. Schuller, took over

the church [on January 22, 2006] until he was forced out, in part, by family members who reportedly disagreed with Schuller’s leadership. The younger Schuller had the highest salary at the church when it went bankrupt at \$196,478, the *Orange County Register* reported.”—*Orange County Register*, November 18, 2011.

Four months earlier, it was reported that the founder, Robert H. Schuller, had been ousted from the board of the Crystal Cathedral (*Orange County Register*, July 3, 2011). At the time of the report the church had not officially admitted that fact; but, when Schuller was contacted, he confirmed that the news was true.

Rick Warren based his entire ministry on the beliefs and methods used by Schuller.

“A young Rick Warren had read Robert Schuller’s book, *Your Church Has Real Possibilities*. While still in seminary he and his wife drove all the way from Texas to California to attend Schuller’s *Institute for Successful Church Leadership*. As a new pastor and a ‘graduate’ of the Schuller Institute, he started his church within a half-hour of the Crystal Cathedral. **Schuller’s influence on the young pastor was pervasive and ‘profound.’ Schuller had recently boasted that Rick Warren had come to his Institute ‘time after time’** (*Schuller, Hour of Power*, April 4, 2004).”—Warren Smith, *Deceived on Purpose*, p. 142.

Gilbert Thurston, a former *40 Days of Purpose Field Representative*, wrote, “There is no question that Robert Schuller has been an influence on Rick through the years.”

SADDLEBACK AND WARREN

SADDLEBACK CHURCH AND RICK WARREN

Next, we turn our attention to Saddleback Church in southern California, and the beliefs and objectives of its pastor, Rick Warren.

Because massive numbers of churches have changed into copycats of Warren's Saddleback Church, we want to learn more about it. What does it teach? What does it do to churches that begin using its methods?

The February 7, 2005, issue of *Time Magazine* had a cover article on "*The 25 Most Influential Evangelicals in America.*" Number one on the list is **Rick Warren**, founding pastor of *Saddleback Community Church*. When 600 senior pastors were asked to name the one they thought had the greatest influence on church affairs in America, Warren's name came in second only to Billy Graham.

Rick Warren's Purpose Driven Movement has, in a relatively short period of time, become what *Time Magazine* has referred to as a "Purpose Driven empire" (*Time Magazine*, March 10, 2009).

Saddleback Church is a Christian megachurch located in Lake Forest, California, situated in southern Orange County, affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention. The church was founded in 1980 by pastor Rick Warren. **Weekly church attendance averages nearly 20,000, currently making it the eighth-largest church in the United States.**

Here is a statement from "*Saddleback*

Church Beliefs”:

“If I accept Jesus Christ, is my salvation forever? Definitely! Your salvation is through the most trustworthy being in the universe—Jesus Christ! **You didn’t do anything to earn your salvation, and you can’t do anything to lose it.** Your salvation is maintained by God’s trustworthiness and love, not by what you do.”—Rick Warren, *Saddleback Church Beliefs*.

“Saddleback is unapologetically a contemporary music church. **We’ve often been referred to in the press as ‘the flock that likes to rock.’** ”—Rick Warren, *Purpose Driven Church*, p. 285.

Rick Warren fully endorses spiritual formation, as well as leading authors who write on the subject:

“From time to time God has raised up a **para-church movement to reemphasize a neglected purpose of the church: . . . [This is] the Discipleship, Spiritual Formation Movement.** A reemphasis on developing believers to full maturity has been the focus . . . of authors such as . . . **Richard Foster** and Dallas Willard, who have underscored the importance of building up Christians and establishing personal spiritual disciplines . . . **This movement has a valid message for the church** . . . It has given the body a wake-up call.”—Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Church*, p. 126.

“**I happen to know people who are followers of Christ in other religions.**”—“Discussion: Religion and Leadership,” with David Gergen and Rick Warren, *Aspen Ideas Festival*, Aspen Institute, July 6, 2005.

“The Bible says, **‘He rules everything and is everywhere and is in everything!’** ”—Warren, *Pur-*

pose Driven Life, p. 88.

“When the disciples wanted to talk about prophecy, Jesus quickly switched the conversation to evangelism. He wanted them to concentrate on their mission in the world. He said in essence, ‘The details of my return are none of your business. What is your business is the mission I’ve given you. Focus on that! . . . If you want Jesus to come back sooner, focus on fulfilling your mission, not figuring out prophecy.’ ”—Warren, *Purpose Driven Life*, pp. 285-286.

For his 1993 doctoral degree, under Peter Wagner, at Fuller Theological Seminary, Rick Warren wrote that providing what the audience wants is more important than Bible doctrine, and added this:

“We must establish new churches to reach this new generation of Americans. It will require new churches that understand the Baby Boom mindset and are intentionally designed to meet their needs, tastes, and interests.”—Rick Warren, *New Churches for a New Generation*.

In Rick Warren’s book, *The Purpose-Driven Life*, on *Day Eleven*, he encourages people to practice “breath prayers” by repeating words and phrases over and over in a mantra-style prayer. This so-called “prayer” is identical to that found in Hindu yoga and Zen Buddhism.

In a closing prayer at one of his seeker-sensitive church growth seminars, Warren declared, **“Thank you that there is a movement, a stealth movement, that’s flying beneath the radar, that’s changing literally hundreds, even thousands of churches around the world.”**—*Hometown.aol.com*.

Warren was a key speaker at Yonggi Cho's church growth conference in 1997. Cho is known to mix a variety of occult concepts and practices, including yoga, with Christian teaching.

Cho says that, **if Buddhists and Yoga practitioners can accomplish their objectives through fourth dimensional powers, then Christians should be able to accomplish much more by using the same means** (*Paul Yonggi Cho, The Fourth Dimension, Vol. 1, 1979, pp. 37, 41*).

Warren has no fear that he might be dabbling in spiritualism; for he is not worried about the devil. "It helps to know that Satan is entirely predictable" (*Warren, Purpose Driven Life, p. 203*).

On January 15, 2011, Rick Warren's Saddleback Church, in Orange County, California, announced that it was including yoga, Reiki, and similar practices into the church's fitness program. He calls it their new "Health and Wellness Plan."

Here is the latest: a February 2012 news clip:

"Rick Warren, pastor of Saddleback Church in Lake Forest and one of America's most influential Christian leaders, has embarked on an effort to **heal divisions between Evangelical Christians and Muslims by partnering with Southern California mosques and proposing a set of theological principles that includes acknowledging that Christians and Muslims worship the same God.**"—*Jim Hinch, "Rick Warren builds bridge to Muslims." Orange County Register, February 23, 2012.*

REPORTS ON SADDLEBACK METHODS OF CHURCH TAKEOVER

Much of the information, just below, is from a tract published a number of years ago which has been widely circulated to warn Christians to not change their local congregation into a “purpose driven church” in the Rick Warren style.

Carefully notice the methods, described below, which are used to eliminate everyone who disagrees with leadership.

I am sure that you are aware that our own denomination has sent hundreds of our pastors and leaders to Rick Warren’s Saddleback Church for training. So be on guard, when pastors trained there return to your local congregation, determined to ram their ideas through!

Here is this tract reprint, written by a Baptist:

FIRST REPORT - BY A BAPTIST

In the past ten years a large percentage of churches in America, and in other countries, have changed from a traditional New Testament church model to a contemporary purpose driven model, most with sorrowful results.

Contrary to Purpose Driven Church proponents, millions have been leaving their churches after the change occurred.

It is important that every church member know if their church is targeted for a Purpose Driven Church takeover.

Initially, a small clique of church staff, possi-

bly including the pastor or a new pastor, plans the change without telling the rest of the church membership.

Church Transitions, an associate of Saddleback Church in California, **trains the clique** initiating the change in eight published steps. **The church membership is not to be informed of the transition until the fourth step.** After the sixth step in the process of change, if there are some in the church who voice concerns, the following is suggested:

1. Identify those who are resisting the changes.
2. Assess the effectiveness of their opposition.
3. Befriend those who are undecided about the changes.
4. Marginalize more persistent resisters.
5. Vilify those who stay and fight.
6. Establish new rules that will silence all resistance.

This means **the church membership is not told until it is too late to make a difference.** In other words the members either accept the changes or leave the church which they may have served and given [the funds] to build.

Rick Warren, author of *The Purpose Driven Church* and *The Purpose Driven Life*, has stated: **"When you reveal the vision to the church, the old pillars are going to leave. But let them leave . . . they only hold things up."**

Warren is right in one way. It is the senior members of the church who do indeed hold a church up and keep it from falling into apostasy. While some PDC [Purpose Driven Church] initiators may not implement the full PDC format, generally **these are**

the signs indicating that your church may be targeted for a Purpose Driven Church format:

1. **Change in music** to a contemporary rock style.

2. **Removal of hymnbooks**; eliminating the **choir**.

3. Replacement of organ and piano with **heavy metal instruments**.

4. **Repetitive singing of praise lyrics**.

5. Dressing down to **casual attire**.

6. **Elimination of business meetings**, church committees, council of elders, board of deacons, etc.

7. **The pastor, or a new leader with a few assistants, usually four, takes charge of all church business**.

8. **A repetitive 40-day Purpose Driven Church study program** stressing psychological relationships with each other, the community, or the world, begins.

9. **Funded, budgeted programs are abandoned**, or ignored, with **ambiguous financial reports made**.

10. Sunday morning, evening, and/or Wednesday **prayer meetings are changed** to other times; **some may even be eliminated**.

11. Sunday schoolteachers are moved to different classes, or replaced by **new teachers** more sympathetic with the changes being implemented.

12. The name, "Sunday school," is dropped and **classes are given new names**.

13. Crosses and other traditional Christian symbols may be moved from both the inside and outside of the church building. **The pulpit may also**

be removed.

14. In accordance with Rick Warren's instructions, **new version Bibles are used or only verses flashed on a screen** are referenced during regular services.

15. **Purpose Driven Church films, purchased from Saddleback, precede or are used** during regular services.

16. The decor, including the **carpets, may be changed to eliminate any resemblance to the former church.**

17. The word, "church," is often taken from the name of the church, and **the church may be called a "campus." Denominational names may also be removed.**

18. An **emphasis on more fun and party sessions** for the youth.

19. **Elimination of altar calls or salvation invitations** at the close of the services.

20. **Such words as "unconverted," "lost," "sin," "Hell," "Heaven,"** and other gospel verities are eliminated from the pastor's messages.

21. The **reclassification** of the converted and lost **to the "churched" and "unchurched."**

22. The **marginalizing, or ostracizing, of all who are not avid promoters** of the new purpose driven program.

23. **Closed meetings between the pastor or chosen staff members** without any reports made to the general membership.

24. **Open hostility to members who do not openly embrace the new program,** or who may have left for another church.

That concludes the above tract, written by a concerned Baptist. As you can see, it provides some very significant information.

This next report, just below, is by a Protestant woman who attended two churches, both of which had adopted not only the Saddleback program, but also the Willow Creek plan of church "remodeling." Here is her report. Since she went through it twice, she presents the changeover in greater detail than what you have just read above. *The picture she presents is even more ominous.*

SECOND REPORT - BY A PROTESTANT

I personally learned the following information from being in two churches that accepted both the "*Contagious Christian*" program of Willow Creek and the "*40 Days of Purpose*" out of Saddleback, combined with some information from outside sources.

Two churches I have attended here in Great Falls had the exact same scenarios of structure change upon taking on the "*Contagious Christian*" and/or "*40 Days of Purpose*," including the following:

1. Wednesday night "**believer's service**" removed.

2. In-church **Bible studies** (which, in both cases had been mostly precept studies) removed and combined with home fellowship, which was then **re-named small groups, home groups, or cell groups**.

3. Sunday sermons, as well as home group studies, carefully tailored to teach on bringing in [how

to bring in] the lost and serving the church.

4. Home groups were only allowed to use **"Bible studies"** that the pastors either chose or **prepared** themselves, and always it lined up with whatever was presented on Sunday.

5. The Sunday sermons continually increased in what I call **the entertainment factor**: longer and more **charismatic worship**, sermons filled with **more and more skits, video clips, and jokes**, and more **emphasis on the blessings of God rather than our obedience to His Word**.

6. At some point a sermon series would be given on **"fear"**; and, at the next to the last week of the series, a survey would be taken, where everyone would fill in on a card **what their greatest fear was**. The next week the pastor would announce that the greatest fear was "not knowing your PURPOSE in life." This was when he would announce to the congregation that he had GREAT news! We do have a PURPOSE!!! He would then explain that, **for the next forty days, the church would be reading a book** that was to be considered a daily devotional and that it would change the lives of everyone in the church and give the church new life! (This, of course, was *The Purpose Driven Life*, and we were told that we would have the wonderful advantage of buying the book for half price if we bought it that day, in the church.) There are forty chapters and we were told that we were to read a chapter a day. As we left the sanctuary, everyone was handed a big button pin that said "40 Days of Purpose" in big letters with "I have a PURPOSE!" under it. We were also given key chains with the same thing written on the plastic-

encased attachment.

7. At the end of the forty days, with **the pastor basing all of his sermons on the book**, of course, the entire church was instructed to come to a **Saturday night simulcast, where they would hear Rick Warren in person explaining the program**. (This cost the church two thousand dollars just to show!) The people were enticed with a free dinner and sumptuous desserts.

8. At the end of the evening, **everyone signed a covenant agreement**, that they would 1) stay committed to the program, and 2) **not cause division**. In other words, if they saw something down the road that seemed unscriptural to them, they *could not speak out!!!*

9. The next night was what they called **the “ministry fair,”** where anyone who had a ministry of any kind could set up a “booth” and try to get people to sign up to help with it. At ____, they had **the ministry leaders (as well as the pastors themselves) dress up in old-fashioned baseball uniforms**. They had **baskets of peanuts on the counters beside the sign-up sheets** and megaphones to get peoples’ attention as they “bartered” for who was going to get talked into doing what! It was literally like a circus!

10. At ____, **the three “Bible studies” that the home groups can choose from are formatted (as in video format) by the worship leader/pastor**. I suspect he receives his material from Saddleback and then uses himself to “teach” it through the video, so that people will think it’s his own stuff.

11. This, as is explained in the Gary E. Gilley

book, *This Little Church Went to Market*, is not a short-term program. A former pastor of ___ was let go two years ago because he could no longer agree with **the long-term agenda of the above program**. He told a woman who is a good friend of mine that the staff started receiving the material on how to **"prepare" the congregation slowly for what would later be implemented, at least three years before the program was put in place!** Upon addressing that issue when I had my "departure meeting" with the three remaining pastors last winter, I was told it had actually been *five!!!* (Does this remind you of the frog in the kettle?) [who boils to death slowly as the heat is gradually turned up].

12. As you can hear, by listening to one of Rick Warren's interviews on the Hank Hanegraaff Show, **this is clearly a program, first to bring more people into the church** and then to serve. Far more disturbing is the fact that **it is carefully crafted to draw people out of the full counsel of God . . . first, by substituting as many of the new translations as possible; second, by carefully dictating what they study; and, lastly, by keeping everyone so busy with do-little activities** that they feel that the time they spend in the Word in their small groups is enough. Therefore they **never learn the full counsel of God**. Oh, and lest we forget, **keeping them "happily entertained" and feeling "part of one big family"!!** (The whole time **signing one covenant after another.**)

In summary, I have witnessed a very deliberate change of attitude and presentation of God in these churches. **The concept of "fun" is presented first,**

over and over, and increasing it steadily over time—both in worship and fellowship. I believe the “*Contagious Christian*” out of Willow Creek was created for that very purpose. **When the people become used to the idea of church being “fun,” the final hook and bait is thrown out, called “PURPOSE.”** Once they read the book, *The Purpose Driven Life*, they agree that this is indeed the way they want to go as a church; **then the covenant signing begins** and it’s over.

[Apparently, her employment was a public schoolteacher. She next addresses the increasing problem of systematically ruining the youth:]

I would like to address **another facet of this program** that concerns me greatly. For six years I was involved in several Christian-based programs in our public schools that were interdenominational. **They were interactive with the different schools and churches**, therefore giving me the opportunity to become acquainted with the youth pastors of most of the Evangelical churches in our town. As the years passed, I began to notice a troubling pattern. As with the adult-level church services, **the youth services were quickly becoming more and more entertainment based.** As one church would come up with a new “gimmick” to get the kids to come, the other churches would have to compete. Of the four largest youth groups, a black light was purchased by one for what they called “Black Light Friday Night.” Therefore, soon one of the others bought **a disco ball [to cast weird lights and patterns on the people, walls, and ceiling] for their Friday night dances.** The third started taking their kids to “Chris-

tian concerts" all over the state, where there were mosh pits, ear-shattering volume, and a total lack of dress codes. The fourth one started bringing in **skateboarders, pro wrestlers**, etc. (some brandishing tattoos and/or piercings), who claimed to be Christians but whose extreme lifestyles were fuel for rebellion.

In "Youth Alive," an in-school youth group of mostly church kids, we would have **a different youth pastor each month** come to give a message. By the spring of my sixth year I made the conscious decision to break the rules by eliminating the youth pastors for the rest of the year. I could no longer listen to their **skit- and joke-filled, Scripture-void "messages"** while watching the kids look and act no differently than the rest of the kids in school. I decided that for the short time I had left I would show these students what God's Word had to say about the witchcraft many of them were practicing (thanks to the "Harry Potter" books), the piercings and tattoos more and more of them were getting, and the sensual way many of them were dressing and behaving. I started showing them the Ten Commandments (of which not one out of seventy knew) and ended by showing them Galatians 5:19-20. Needless to say, they were shocked—and I was given "the boot"! Hopefully, some of those seeds found fertile ground.

In the same year, I observed an even more concerning development that went side-by-side with **the increase of entertainment and the lack of correction**. The focus, in both worship and prayer, became **more charismatic and experiential**. The

days of memorizing and studying Scripture exponentially were being replaced with a few carefully selected scriptures to go along with a super-charged time of worship and prayer that became the new social experience of choice for more and more kids. Here's my concern . . . We know that **one of the goals of the Purpose Driven Movement is to bring Eastern meditation into the church in the camouflaged name of "contemplative prayer."** Meditation is one of the highest forms of pagan, altered-mind practices in the world, and God's Word absolutely forbids it. **The root of meditation is found in Hinduism**, probably going back to Babylon. But, it is also practiced by the Buddhists, New Agers, and even some sects of Islam. In fact, there is probably no pagan religion in the world that does not practice this repetition-based, altered state-of-mind exercise, in one form or another. In Exodus 23:20-24, God forbids His children to do anything "according to the works" (practices) of the pagan nations He was sending them into. He told them He would defeat their enemies if they obeyed Him, but that they would be the defeated ones if they did not. In Matthew 6:7, **Jesus warned His disciples not to use "vain repetitions, as the heathen do" when they prayed. Clearly this pagan practice is forbidden**, but the problem is that more and more of the church youth are Bible illiterate. God gives us a clear warning of living in this state of ignorance in Hosea 4:6: "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge . . ."

As our precious youth are led further and further into the entertainment experiential spiri-

tuality and away from the truth and obedience of God's Word, they are, at the same time, being told that they will be able to connect with God in a *new way* . . . that they will be the generation to see God's Spirit poured out as never before. They use a misinterpretation of Joel 2:28-29 to promote this. This passage of Scripture does indeed refer to a time when God will pour His Spirit out like never before. It says, "Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions." **But it will not be done through a pagan practice**—in fact, just the opposite. But what young person would not want to be one of these end-time prophets? What young person would not want to hear God in a "new way" and be filled with the Holy Spirit as never before? Lastly, what young person wouldn't trust their youth pastor if **he told them that there was a way to do that—a way practiced long ago by the "ancient Desert Fathers"?**

I have watched the beginning of this movement come into our youth groups and my heart breaks at the gullibility of the youth and the apathy of the adults to take a stand against it. **With our culture being so open now to Eastern practices (yoga, karate, etc.) I fear that this cleverly disguised practice of meditation will come in like a flood very soon and one of the last barriers between "us" and "them" (Christians and heathens) will be removed.** Satan will then have an awesome and fearful tool with which to deceive and destroy our youth . . . I pray that God will open the eyes of many adults to this book, so that they can then speak out

to other adults and, together, try to stop this cancer from infecting our youth. **Ezekiel says that we are to be a watchman when we see the sword coming, or the blood of those taken by the sword will be on our hands.** If we love your youth, we must speak out!!

That concludes the above, second report, written by a concerned Protestant church member who was exited out of two different churches which had been taken over by the "purpose-driven" people.

Now, for a third report. Several years ago, someone attended a complete training seminar by Rick Warren. **He went because he could not believe that it was as profane and ungodly as the reports he heard about it.** Thousands of pastors were in attendance. **While there, he made extensive notes and made tape recordings. From this, he wrote what he heard and learned, and what he thought about it.**

Some of the following excerpts from his report may duplicate earlier content in this research article; since Warren has a way of repeating some of his favorite phrases.

THIRD REPORT - BY A PROTESTANT

Rick Warren began the seminar by some personal bragging. He told of the vast influence his message has had throughout the world. He told the pastors and church leaders who were attending the seminar:

"You're joining a group today of over 45,000 pastors and church leaders that have gone through this conference in the last few years from about 42 different countries, from about 63 different denominations. We have a number of different countries that flew in today just for this one day conference, from Europe, from Asia, from South America."

To accent the ecumenical mood of the seminar, Warren told the assembled thousands: **"It really doesn't matter your denomination, folks. We're all on the same team if you love Jesus."**

Warren's plans for motivating the people, charting an organizational structure for ministry, and developing a marketing strategy for building a superchurch are much like what one would hear in a secular management training seminar. In fact, during an intermission this was even mentioned in a conversation with corporate businessmen who were also in attendance.

The same techniques that are used to build the base of support for a business can also be used to build a ministry's clientele. What is the key? **One must provide a product that will meet the real or perceived needs of the consuming public.** For Saddleback Community Church, that means they have to determine, via a survey, the needs of the Saddleback community at large and then provide programs at the church to meet those needs.

As a result of the survey, a composite "Saddleback Sam," or what they called an "unsaved church seeker," was defined, and the style and programs of the church were then redefined to meet his needs. Hence, the ministries (support and special interest groups, recreational fellowships,

etc.) and the style and content of the “Seeker Service” were aimed at making the typical “Saddleback Sam” feel comfortable, helped, and encouraged.

Yet it was obvious, from what I learned at the Saddleback seminar, that **neither Rick Warren, nor his Saddleback copycat ministers, who after the seminar return home to duplicate his methods and, in the process, ruin their local church, care anything about the so-called “unsaved.”** They just want more people to attend each week, regardless of whether they are saved or not. Indeed, no effort is ever made at any time to try to “save” anyone!

All the attention and activities are designed to make everyone happy for a little while, before they return home to their drinking, partying, quarreling, and all the regular things they do all week long.

Warren emphasized that **the dress must be casual.** As he explained, the typical “Saddleback Sam” (a researched composite of the unchurched yuppie commonly found in Saddleback Church’s surrounding community) dresses up for work all week, and he wants to “dress down” on the weekends.

Saddleback Sam’s “likes and dislikes” are what determine the style of the church service. Attendees and church staff alike shun any ties, suits, and dresses. **Warren himself (dressed in a casual shirt, khakis, and loafers) told his seminar audience, “Get comfortable. This is as dressed up as I get in this church. My idea of winter is I put on socks, and obviously I don’t think it’s winter yet.”** Everyone roared at that joke, as he raised one

foot and they saw he was barefooted.

Then there is the music. Rick Warren is careful never to forget that, in the planning, he presents this to the hundreds of eager, open-mouthed ministers in attendance. **The music must be contemporary.** Not only must the lyrics of the music be more recent, but the style of music should be that which the unsaved hears on a daily basis.

The entertainment composite of the Saddleback sound system, band, singers, and presentation would rival that of any secular rock concert. Warren stated that one of the first things a church should do is "replace the organ with a band." But he went on to say that, **if a band was not feasible, then at least a church could purchase a keyboard that will incorporate minidisks in order to give the sound of a band.**

And then there is the content of what the pastor preaches. **The message must be only positive.** In some respects, this is the worst part. **Nothing, not one word, to bring people to Christ! Nothing to tell them how to go to heaven! Nothing about the need to put away sin! Nothing about the importance of walking close to Christ all week! Nothing about obeying anything in the Bible!**

Instead, Warren said that **the saved and unsaved alike must always feel better about themselves after the message from the pulpit—and from everything else at that church meeting.**

It is obvious that the message should be a mixture of psychology, "God loves you as you are," and a verse of Scripture which is, as Warren called it, "uplifting." Only such topics as those

which reduce feelings of guilt and worry about the future, plus an emphasis on “building self-esteem,” should be given. Get them feeling better; enhance their mood. Tell them they are already succeeding just as they are. These are the messages they should hear.

A life in sin is a life of ongoing problems and misery, resulting in reduced physical and mental health.

So they will need to come back next week for “another pepper-upper talk.”

The ministries of the church must be geared to meeting the needs and special interests of the thousands who attend. Support groups for depression, eating disorders, infertility, family and friends of homosexuals, post abortion, and separated men and women were abundant. **No one is reproved. Anything goes.** But help them feel better in each “support group,” so they can continue on pretty much as they are already doing.

Many ministries were intended to bring together those with similar business or professional interests, common recreational interests, and so on. I could not find one single ministry listed in Saddleback Community Church’s bulletin that involved taking the Gospel message out to the lost in the community! In other words, there was nothing about trying to save the unsaved! Yet that is supposed to be the reason for all these changes in the church services!

In fact, **Warren scoffed at the idea of passing out tracts or going door-to-door; since, he said, “Saddleback Sam” would be offended by such**

old-fashion, out-moded forms of evangelism.

As I listened to all this, I seriously wondered whether Rick Warren ever was a Christian to begin with.

As Warren indicated in a closing prayer, the impact of the Saddleback experience is extensive, to say the least: **"Thank you that there is a movement, a stealth movement, that's flying beneath the radar, that's changing literally hundreds, even thousands of churches around the world."**

I had heard others say that he prays that prayer, and now I had recorded it myself. Warren thinks very highly of himself. He probably senses the need to extract some comfort out of what he is doing, in his ongoing efforts to wreck thousands of local congregations; for he is going to have to answer for it all when he faces the final Judgment.

A primary problem with the Saddleback approach is that all traditional, conservative forms of music, worship, and quiet decorum in the church are abolished and subsequently replaced with new methods and styles designed after the world. The programs of this new "superchurch" are aimed at making the unsaved, or the "seeker," feel comfortable, entertained, and meeting his temporal needs.

At the seminar, Rick Warren said, **"Now, I'll be honest with you, we are loud. We are really, really loud on a weekend service . . . And I say, "We're not gonna turn it down."** Warren then adds, **"The reason why is that baby boomers want to feel the music, not just hear it!"**

Warren then said that insisting upon the use

of traditional music in the church—was equal to the sin of idolatry. In these words, he turned common sense on its head. Those who like godly music are idolaters, and those who crave rock music are godly.

In explanation of what he had just said, Warren added these words: “You see folks, to insist that all good music came from Europe 200 years ago is thinly veiled racism, if you want to be truthful about it. It’s cultural elitism saying that all the good music was written 200 years ago in Europe . . . Now for 2,000 years, the Holy Spirit has used all kinds of music. **And to insist that one particular style of music is more sacred than the other, there’s a word for that. It’s called idolatry.**”

If the unsaved and saved alike are attracted to a church by its style of music, then how can such a response (which is obviously based upon a fleshly appeal) possibly communicate a message that will edify the spiritual inner man? **Can a response of the flesh produce a truly spiritual effect within?** Read Galatians 5:16-26 and see if there is not a contradiction of forces at work here. **While reverence in praising God will never appeal to the unregenerate,—it certainly will prepare the believer for worshipping God “in the beauty of holiness”** (1 Chron. 16:29) and receiving “with meekness the engrafted word” (James 1:21).

What does Warren say regarding those in the church who oppose the switch from conservative to contemporary in order to bring in the crowds? **He stated in no uncertain terms that the old stalwarts would have to go.** Push them into the back-

ground. Crowd them out. Get rid of them!

"Be willing to let people leave the church. And I told you earlier the fact that people are gonna leave the church no matter what you do. But **when you define the vision, you're choosing who leaves.** You say, 'But Rick, yes, they're the pillars of the church.' Now, you know what pillars are. Pillars are people who hold things up . . . And in your church, **you may have to have some blessed subtractions before you have any real additions."**

The "pillars" that Rick Warren condemns are the ones who, along with their parents and grandparents, paid to build and maintain that local church.

In every community where Warren's changeover has occurred, you will meet dear, godly, older saints (and some discerning younger believers as well!) who are heartsick about what happened to their churches after the leaders attended Saddleback seminars. **Invariably, these now-dispensable saints have a spiritual maturity and an awareness of Bible truth that is obvious. Yet, instead of their church recognizing the place and blessedness of such believers in the local body of Christ (see Titus 2:1-15), they are brushed off to the side,** told to come only to the "more traditional" midweek service or, frankly, told to move on and find another church.

Without actually saying so, **Warren strongly suggests that denominational "labels" should be abolished** (thus, Saddleback Community Church, the People's Church, Willow Creek Community Church, etc.). This is common to ecumenical endeavors which minimize doctrinal differences. Warren feels that terms like Baptist, Bible, Presbyterian, etc.

might unduly offend some or unnecessarily narrow the group of those who would visit.

If your local church has changed its name to "Shady Lane Community Church," or some such name, you know where the idea came from.

Warren candidly said, "**The unchurched culture determines our style. We're laid-back Southern California.** We're just a few miles from the beach, so we have a laid-back Southern California style . . . **The unchurched populations determine our goals.**"

Not only the goals and methods,—but the very message radically changes when a newly trained pastor arrives and irreversibly changes the organizational structure, the meetings, the names, the music system, the people who attend, and even the paint on the walls and the carpet on the floor.

It surely has become a "purpose-driven church." Only the godly who have been driven out fully understand that the purpose is to take the people to hellfire.

The Bible commands that the "whole counsel of God" be preached in the church. But that necessarily includes preaching the negative as well as the positive. Everyone in the church strives to live godly lives and helps one another do so.

A "feel-good message" does not fulfill God's command to "contend for the faith," "reprove, rebuke and exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine" and "warn of the wolves in sheep's clothing."

At one point in his presentation, **Rick Warren**

made the statement, "I don't think God cares two bits about your style of worship as long as it's in spirit and in truth."

Warren has a habit of excusing his methods by a loose, blasphemous put-down of anyone that might oppose him, including the God of heaven.

The Bible says that worship is to be practiced in holiness and reverence,—these qualities of "style" are not subjective! **The Bible says the people of God are to be holy, as He is holy. They are to be a "peculiar people," "a light set upon the hill"; they are noticeably different from the world.**

God does indeed care about our "style" in worship and methodology! Our worship is to be patterned after the likeness of Christ Himself and in accordance with the principles set forth in the eternal, unalterable Word of Truth.

First Chronicles 16:29 says, "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name: bring an offering, and come before Him: **worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.**" Is "holiness" subjective to the individual? **Absolutely not—only God is holy; therefore, the characteristics of holiness are found in the Lord, not man.** Many examples and direct statements in God's Word guide the believer, in his worship and in his witness, away from the course of this present evil age. **The qualifications of holiness are invariably different from the world; thus, holy worship includes both reverence and separation from a worldly style.**

Notice the New Testament counterpart for the Lord's people in the church: 1 Timothy 6:11-14 says,

“But thou, O man of God, flee these things; and **follow after righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, meekness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, whereunto thou art also called, and hast professed a good profession before many witnesses.** I give thee charge in the sight of God . . . That thou keep this commandment without spot, unrebukeable, until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Ephesians 4:11-12 clearly shows that **God gave individual leaders of the local church (pastors and teachers) special gifts for a particular purpose—“For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”** The local church is not an organization that is ordained by God to conform to the world in order to reach the lost. No, **the purpose of the local church is to worship God, to grow in His grace and knowledge, and to train the individual believers in the Word; so that they might better reach the lost for Christ and be a testimony to the world. They are to be different from the world—patterned after Christ—not imitating or conforming to the world.**

Not only does Warren stretch the truth, he actually tells barefaced lies. **One of his slogans is this: “Never confuse the method with the message.** The message must never change, but the methods must change!”

But both at Saddleback and the churches which have copied it—the messages have changed! Go to anyone of them and look for yourself! Listen to what they are hearing, look at what they are do-

ing, Try to hear their music (without bursting your eardrums). Attend their youth gatherings. **The message has clearly changed, and Warren's own words prove it:**

"Read Scripture from a newer translation. And as you read that Scripture, realize that you're trying to pick out Scriptures that appeal especially to baby boomers. And try to find Scriptures that specifically relate to the benefits that Christ can bring into a person's life. They've never heard the Scriptures before, so try to pick positive Scriptures that talk about the benefits of Christ . . . You want to pick out Scriptures that are very positive."

Rick Warren says it is urgent that only "positive texts" be chosen to preach—which will "correctly state" the messages and purposes of the church. He encourages changing to the newer versions of the Bible.

Warren includes, in the *Seminar Workbook* which each visiting ministers receives, a list of "safe Bible texts." Of the 41 "verses that relate to the purposes of the church" listed in the *Seminar Workbook*, none were included which dealt with insistence upon warning, doctrine, etc.; none were from Acts 20, Romans 16, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, 2 Peter, Jude, or Revelation). None from Exodus 20. None about Noah's Flood, Elijah's call on Mount Carmel. None about Christ's warnings to the people.

Vitally important texts dealing specifically with the church's doctrine, message, and ministry must be ignored in order to maintain their positive-only preaching to sinners. Yes, indeed, the mes-

sage has changed!

Further instruction regarding the purpose for the church is found in 2 Timothy 3:16-4:5; this text was also ignored by Saddleback's dynamic growth strategy:

"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works. I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; **Preach the Word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.** For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers [those who will not practice the above], having itching ears. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry."—2 Timothy 3:16-4:5.

Are you identified with a church that is led by faithful undershepherds who are committed to obeying these commands? Are they willing to contend for the faith and warn their people from the pulpit? Or is it a "positive-only" message? We must stand only with those willing to obey these essentials for faithful ministry!

According to the Saddleback strategy, more people must be brought into the church; therefore, the services must be designed in such a way that, when each one arrives, he will be comfortable and entertained. Warren teaches that **the**

ministry of the church must be stylized after those things to which the unsaved are accustomed—whether that style includes the language used, the music performed, the casual attire worn, or even the message proclaimed from the pulpit. **The character, the style, and the contemporary interests of the unregenerate community are what determine the makeup, the appearance, and the content of the services.**

The overwhelming volume of instruction in Paul's epistles was given to the elders of the churches and to pastors, such as Timothy and Titus who were to **"set in order the things which are wanting"** (Titus 1:5). This apostolic instruction had to do with **what the Christian was to believe and how he was to "behave [himself] in the house of God,** which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim. 3:15).

To Paul, no one was off-limits, due to their ethnic or cultural differences. To the philosophers on Mars Hill, Paul used their idolatry and superstitions as a springboard to tell them of the "unknown God" that they ignorantly worshipped; he preached to them Christ crucified and risen again (Acts 17:22-34). **The Gospel testimony in the pagan city of Ephesus did not result in the church being patterned after the predominate culture of the community—the temple of Diana. No, the proclamation of Christ ruined the business of the ungodly; and changed lives resulted in a changed culture, not a changed church** (Acts 19:20-21 ff). Another example of this willingness to subjugate personal liberty to win the lost is found in the ad-

vice given by the apostles at Jerusalem in Acts 15.

The church is to evangelize, but in such a way that the Biblical purpose for the church is not compromised. Saddleback's strategy is deficient and dangerous.

That concludes the third of three reports.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

Here are several additional quotations bearing on this gigantic problem:

The first is by Gary Johnson:

"Although most of today's professing Evangelicals would acknowledge that theology, in some sense of the word, does matter, a recent survey in *Christianity Today* revealed that this is more lip service than anything else.

"According to this survey . . . theology, in any sense of the word, is really not all that important to the very people to whom it should matter most: those in the pew and in the pulpit. Both groups listed theological knowledge as last in terms of pastoral priorities . . .

"We are sadly experiencing, on a rather large scale, a subjectivism that betrays its weakened hold on the objective truth and reality of Christianity by its neglect or even renunciation of its distinctive objective character . . . **Men . . . really wish to have a creedless Christianity. 'Creeds,' they shout, 'are divisive things; away with them!'** . . . Where does this leave us?

"An undogmatic [nondoctrinal] Christianity is no Christianity at all."—Gary L.W. Johnson, "Does Theology Still Matter?" in the book, *The Coming Evangelical Crisis*, pp. 58, 66, 67.

"When megachurch pastors seek to mold a mes-

sage to their ‘market’ of constituent needs, their preaching omits key [Scripture] components. Gone are the hard sayings of Jesus. Gone is the teaching on sin, self-denial, sacrifice, suffering, judgment, hell. With all its need-meeting emphases, **there is little in the church growth movement that stands crosswise to the world.**”—*Os Guinness, Dining with the Devil, p. 78.*

“Sadly, by watering down the message and using unbiblical methods, CGM [church growth movement] and its seeker-sensitive counterparts may be doing more harm than good—filling their auditoriums with vast crowds of lost people who think they’re spiritually okay . . . Having investigated both its evangelistic message and its evangelistic model, the sad conclusion is that **the gospel, according to Hybels and Warren, falls far short of the Biblical paradigm.**”—*Nathan Busenitz, The Gospel According to Hybels and Warren, p. 16.*

“While Warren’s manual [*Purpose Driven Church*] has captivated churches around the world, **a rising number of discerning readers question its subtle distortions, its half-truths, its conflicting messages, and its pragmatic permissiveness: If it works (i.e. brings people into the church), it’s okay! ‘God loves variety!’** ”—*Berit Kjos, Spirit-led or Purpose Driven? Part 1, October 9, 2003, News with Views.*

“Warren says, ‘Anybody can be won to Christ if you discover the felt needs to his or her heart.’ Warren says—

“All that people need to do is whisper a sweet prayer to Jesus and they ‘will’ be saved. ‘Quietly whisper the prayer that will change your eternity: ‘Jesus, I believe in you and receive you.’ ””—*Rick Warren, Purpose Driven Life, p. 58.*

That which worldlings most want is a worldly atmosphere of apparent happiness. Warren and Hybels provide this in their churches.

“It is my deep conviction that anybody can be won to Christ if you discover the key [that which he most wants].”—*Rick Warren, quoted in Church Growth Gone Mad.*

Few are the churches where people are told that they should keep the commandments of God through the enabling grace of Jesus Christ.

But a church where you do not have to put away any of your sins *is something that people really like.*

But when some churches also give you totally worldly entertainment, week after week,—*they become really popular!* Here is one such example:

“Willow Creek has a budget of \$48 million and \$143 million in net assets [p. 52]. Willow Creek ranks in the top 5% of 250 major brands, right up with Nike and John Deere [p. 56]. Hybels’ consumer-driven approach is evident at Willow Creek, where he shunned stained glass, Bibles [!], or even a cross for the 7,200-seat, \$72 million sanctuary he recently built [p. 55].”—*Business Week, May 23, 2005, pp. 52, 56, 55.*

Rick Warren wrote this next item, entitled “*Becoming a Purpose Driven Church: Vision and Strategy*”:

“We must start thousands more of new churches and services. It will take new churches to reach a new generation . . . We must develop a clear, practical strategy . . . Thousands of pastors and church leaders have attended the *Purpose Driven Church Seminars* here at Saddleback . . . **The secret of reaching unbelievers is learning to think like an unbe-**

liever. The problem is the longer you have been a Christian, the less you think like an unbeliever. You have to intentionally learn to think like an unbeliever again . . . such as changing the way you greet visitors, the style of music that you use, the translation of the Bible you preach from."—Rick Warren, *Becoming a Purpose Driven Church: Vision and Strategy*, February 7, 2004.

But that does not agree with Scripture, which says "to be carnally minded is death" (Romans 8:6), and "a double minded man is unstable in all his ways" (James 1:8). We are repeatedly told to "put on the mind of Christ" "For who hath known the mind of the Lord, that He may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2:16). We are to put on the mind of Christ, not the mind of the world.

The Word of God instructs us clearly that a sinner cannot solve his problems until he first repents of his evil ways and cries to Christ to forgive him and help him cast off all his old ways. He is born again, and becomes a humble, believing, obedient follower of Jesus Christ.

According to Rick Warren, nothing will matter in the Final Judgment, except whether or not a person has accepted Jesus. That is all! Doctrines, Christian growth, whether he put away his sins,—none of it will matter. Just one thing: At some point in your life, did you verbally accept and love Christ? Here is how Rick Warren says it:

"One day you will stand before God, and He will do a final exam before you enter eternity . . . God won't ask about your religious background or doctrinal views. **The only thing that will matter is,**

did you accept what Jesus did for you and did you learn to love and trust Him?”—*Rick Warren, Purpose Driven Life, p. 34.*

“Respect every diverse position or point of view. **Don’t violate someone’s comfort zone by implying that an unbiblical behavior or lifestyle constitutes sin.**”—*Berit Kjos, Dealing with Resisters, p. 53.*

Here is a letter from an older lady who saw her beloved church taken from her:

“I am one of the ‘dislocated ones’ as a result of my outspoken opposition to Rick Warren’s book that our ___ Church here adopted for an all-church project last year. I had been teaching an adult Bible Class for the past twelve years. But when I refused to cooperate with the new church program, a few in the class created enough fuss that I was asked to leave—so I did. **Warren’s program is an insidious product of Satan, himself.** Obviously, the closer we get to the end, the harder he will be fighting!”

One of the most common remarks I hear from Christians who have left their church because it is gone “purpose driven” is: “We didn’t know what was happening until it just happened.” Often this rather quickly occurs through a new pastor, or an ambitious assistant, resulting in a dictatorial leader or staff member clique. The dismissal and replacement of other church employees and the absence of financial reports are just a couple of several other resulting problems.

By the time the membership finds out what is going on, the church is already taken over or, we could say, stolen. If there is opposition, then those who are against the change in music, wor-

ship, and leadership are “marginalized” or invited to leave.

But the Bible says **we should speak up at such a time of church crisis**: “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them. For it is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret” (*Eph. 5:11-12*).

Here is another letter from someone who lost her church:

“I live in South Orange County, not far from the Saddleback Church where this started. Now our board has pushed out our fine Bible-teaching pastor and is embracing this. The congregation is splitting, and it’s very chaotic. Please pray for us.”

RICK WARREN’S PREFERRED MUSIC

Rick Warren was asked by a newspaper reporter: **“If you weren’t a pastor, what would you have been?”** Here was Warren’s reply:

“A rock musician, probably. Growing up, I played guitar. I had shoulder-length, blonde hair . . . [But I decided] if you want to affect culture, you have to start with people’s hearts and lives.”—*Rick Warren, quoted in Dallas Morning News, May 20, 2005.*

Jack Wheaton, professor of music at three major universities, including the University of Southern California, wrote in his book, *The Paganization of Worship*:

“It’s happening. **We are being spiritual and morally deceived by allowing Christian rock to become part of our worship service.** In fact, in some churches today, it is the most important part, particularly if liberal pastors and churches read and

believe their own propaganda, that the 'unsaved' will not set foot in a church without it being filled with satanically inspired music. It's like a bad dream."—*Dr. Jack Wheaton, Paganization of Worship.*

Rock music is satanic! Yet it is the preferred form of music at Saddleback, Willow Creek, and most of the megachurches.

Those who make the rock music clearly know what they are doing; for they have very definite objectives:

"What we dish out is the musical equivalent of war: war upon quiet, war upon dullness, war upon certainty and stability."—*The Who, interview in Rolling Stone, Vol. 2.*

"The major innovators and pioneers came mostly from Great Britain, with the Beatles and the Rolling Stones being the two strongest European forces in early rock music. The Rolling Stones are still performing, even though several are grandfathers today. The Rolling Stones began as a cover group for the Beatles. With a new manager, **they changed their persona and then set out to 'free' teenagers from cultural restrictions** and to irritate parents.

"The truth is that rock music is sex, and you have to hit them in the face with it!"—*Mick Jagger of the Rolling Stones, quoted in Mike Warnke, The Satan-Seller.*

Huxley says that everyone can be captured and ruined if he listens repeatedly to rock music.

"If exposed long enough to the tom-toms [drums] and the singing, every one of our philosophers would end by capering and howling with the savages . . .

Assemble a mob of men and women, **treat them to amplified band music, changes in lighting . . . and soon you can reduce them to a state of almost mindless subhumanity.** Never before have so few been in a position to make fools, maniacs, or criminals of so many."—*Aldous Huxley, The Devils of Laudun.*

It is the addictive factor which is the primary reason for the power and popularity of rock music. Rock music rediscovered the power of pagan music all over the world. **It brought that pagan wildness to the West in its volume, repetitiveness, and highly syncopated rhythm patterns.** Loud rock music triggers the fight-or-flight response, and initiates the first stages of hypnosis. It overcomes a person's resistance to becoming part of a group consciousness.

Detoxing from rock music can be just as difficult as detoxing from cigarettes, alcohol, or so-called recreational drugs. Man in both the secular and so-called Christian rock community have an extremely difficult time in trying to escape from this music.

Rick Warren is jubilant. **He believes he is drawing nearer to the time when all the "fundamentalists" (those who believe in doctrine) will be gone,** and all the churches will be little copies of his own.

"I could count the number of true fundamentalists on a couple hands today. There really aren't that many left . . . [In contrast] simply are those who would say we believe in a personal relationship to God . . . We're in every denomination, including the Catholics. It is a focus more on re-

lationship than religion.”—Rick Warren, Aspen Ideas Festival, July 2005.

WILLOW CREEK AND HYBELS

WILLOW CREEK CHURCH AND BILL HYBELS

We now turn our attention to the Willow Creek Church, in south Chicago, and its pastor, Bill Hybels.

Willow Creek Church is a nondenominational, multigenerational Evangelical Christian megachurch located in the Chicago suburb of South Barrington, Illinois. It was founded in 1975 by Bill Hybels, who is currently the senior pastor. The church has three weekend services averaging 24,000 attendees, making it the third largest church in the United States. The church has been listed as the most influential church in America for the last several years in a national poll of pastors (*Church Report*).

Willow Creek’s state-of-the-art *Worship Center* (completed in 2004 at an estimated cost of \$73 million) seats 7,095 people, making it one of the largest theaters in the United States (*Jim Stokes, “Willow Creek Redefines Worship,” Sound & Communications, April 18, 2005*).

Bill Hybels trains more than 100,000 pastors each year (they go to his church for a week of instruction), **and leads a network of 10,500 churches which have worship services like his.**

“He also appeals to Adventist pastors who have flocked by the hundreds to his training programs over the last thirty years.”—Thomas Mostert, Hid-

den Heresy, p. 51 (published 2005).

Willow Creek’s focus on “seekers,” on Saturday nights and Sunday mornings, attracts over 17,000 worshipers. Its membership is over 6,000.

The following official statement by Willow Creek says this:

“The practice [of spiritual formation at] Saturday morning meetings provides a rhythm of worship, teaching on a particular spiritual discipline, and time to experience or ‘practice’ that discipline. This practice time allows participants to get a fuller understanding of how to incorporate the discipline into their daily lives.”—*Spiritual Formation at Willow Creek.*

Ruth Haley Barton, former *Associate Director of Spiritual Formation* at Willow Creek Church, wrote how **she felt better emotionally after she began practicing contemplative mantra meditation** (*Ruth H. Barton, “Beyond Words: Experience God’s Presence in Silence and Solitude”*).

The leadership of Willow Creek was deeply influenced by the Jesus Movement of the 1960s and 1970s. In addition, **Hybels was greatly influenced by Gilbert Bilezikian, an Arminian theologian, and Robert Shuller, founder of the Crystal Cathedral** in southern California. **The former proclaims a theology that emphasizes man over God; the latter teaches a theology of self-esteem** and positive thinking rather than one of sin and genuine conversion.

Willow Creek Community Church seems to have spared no expense in its mission to attract the masses. Looking past the swans gliding across a mirror lake, one sees what could be mistaken for

a corporate headquarters or a very upscale shopping mall.

Close to the main church auditorium is a large bookstore and an extensive eating area supplied by a food court with five different vendors. A Jumbotron screen allows an overflow crowd or those enjoying a meal to view the proceedings in the main sanctuary. The sanctuary itself is spacious and high tech; it is complete with three large screens and the state-of-the-art sound and lighting systems for multimedia, drama, and musical presentations.

While impressive, Willow Creek is not unique among megachurches in trying to bring people in off the streets by every possible method. **Mega-churches across the country have added bowling alleys, NBA regulation basketball courts with bleachers, exercise gyms and spas, locker rooms, auditoriums for concerts and dramatic productions, and Starbucks and McDonald's franchises—all for the furtherance of the gospel. Or so it is claimed.**

Although it is true that such churches are full of church attendees, that does not make these sales successes Christian. Indeed, people are being fooled into thinking that they are being saved by attending such gatherings, when—by the very nature of what happens there—this is generally not so.

The leadership at Willow Creek places so much emphasis on the evangelistic seeker service that **only rarely do regular members receive any information about Bible truths.** Also, by focusing on the

pleasantness of the facilities and the service tailored for worldlings, **Willow Creek is vulnerable to incorrect teachings, shallow theology, and even false doctrine.**

**BRIEF ANALYSIS OF
DR. PRITCHARD'S REPORT**

G.A. Pritchard, a 1989 Ph.D. candidate, decided to write his doctoral dissertation about one of the most influential churches of modern times, Willow Creek, near Chicago. For a full year he researched every facet of the ministry of this huge church. He later put all that information in his 1996 book, *Willow Creek Seeker Services*.

Here is a very brief overview of Pritchard's moral analysis of the objectives, methods, and results of the Willow Creek Church:

Willow Creek began with the selfish entertainment desires of men and women, instead of with a presentation of the Inspired Word of God and calling for repentance, a return to God, and a change of life.

Willow Creek's secular objective ultimately distorted and corrupted everything it has done, from the preaching of the gospel to attempts at sanctification.

In Pritchard's book, **he clearly reveals what happens to churches where the wrongfulness of transgression of God's law is never taught.** After mentioning that **Willow Creek has never stressed the transcendent moral law as a means to show people the holiness of God and the utter depravity of sinful humanity** (pp. 261-264),

Pritchard tells how a careful survey of its members revealed that a large percentage were, by their own admission, regularly guilty of breaking God's law—often in very serious ways.

In the six months prior to the survey, 33% of those in the congregation had **lied**, 18% had **stolen**, 12.5% had committed **adultery**, and 27% of the men had viewed **pornography**.

What was Bill Hybels to do with these facts? Should he, for the first time in the history of Willow Creek, call for repentance and a coming to Christ? Should he preach a powerful Bible sermon?

When confronted with these facts the following Sunday, Hybels told the congregation that they could be proud that their sins could now be willingly exposed to grace and truth, and now they could walk a little differently in the future.

But Pritchard observed: **“The audience had not repented. They had not confessed their sin” to God, even though the sins had been admitted** on a survey form to men (p. 264). —*And, very likely, a larger number who received that survey sheet had not admitted to any of their sins!*

In the middle of the week after that, Hybels was shown the results of a survey of singles at the church. (Singles constitute 25% of the total congregation.) A very large percentage of the single adults had “admitted having an **illicit sexual relationship** in the last six months” (p. 64). Hybels responded the next Sunday by disclosing those results to the congregation,—and then saying that, although some were love starved, Jesus would take care of it through His grace and love.

Pritchard concluded that this was a subtle way of emphasizing God's love and compassion, while distorting the truth about God's holiness and the need for repentance and change (p. 265).

"Instead of encouraging Creekers to know and love God, Hybels encourages them to know and accept themselves and develop a strong self-esteem. The goals and means of one's ethics change from a God centered to a human centered orientation."—G.A. Pritchard, *Willow Creek Seeker Services*, p. 234.

"We are a love-starved people, with broken parts that need the kind of repair that only he [Christ] can give long-term. **We need to bring our brokenness out into the light of His grace and truth.**"—Bill Hybels, quoted in C. Mathew McMahon, *Pelagian Captivity*, pp. 19-20.

In a different analysis of Willow Creek attendees, George Barna surveyed Willow Creek's weekend participants—and found that, **while 91% stated that their highest value was having a deep personal relationship with God, of this same group 25% of singles, 38% of single parents, and 41% of divorced individuals "admitted to having illicit sexual relationships in the previous 6 months."**

Here is a comment about Willow Creek religion by a very concerned Southern Baptist:

"Bill Hybels is one of the most dangerous religious leaders in America. Through his ministry at Willow Creek Community Church, South Barrington, IL, and the Willow Creek Association, he is leading many Baptists into the web of compromise. **Churches are being destroyed, while at the**

same time they are growing in membership. If this seems to be a contradiction, just remember that when a church departs from the faith it is destroyed, no matter how many members they may continue to have.

“This is not your regular church service. There is no organ, piano, hymnbooks. They do not join in singing the grand old hymns of the Christian faith. Neither is there a Biblical sermon preached.

“This is their so-called ‘seeker service,’ which is produced in order to get lost people to enjoy church without guilt or shame. There are no sermons against sin, nor is there a call for repentance. Instead of this, there is plenty of rock music from a rock band. Instead of a Biblical sermon they feature dramas and multimedia. Of course, the lost man likes to be entertained, and he gets plenty of that at WCC.”—*International (Baptist) Social Pulse Newsletter, November 2003.*

CONCLUSION

**CONCLUSION:
THESE NEW CHURCHES LACK
REPENTANCE AND OBEDIENCE TO GOD**

Whoever you are that is reading this book just now, face the fact that a complete, radical reshaping of the churches in America, and many overseas, is now in process! Tragically, few pastors and church leaders are willing to say anything about it. The causes, as shown in the Willow Creek analysis, are obvious. But ***because the solutions—repentance, turning away from sin,***

and obedience to the law of God—are not mentioned in the pulpits, pastors and church leaders are turning to Oriental mysticism to satisfy the longings of the soul.

"The Bible is interpreted in a manner that is pleasing to the unrenewed heart, while its solemn and vital truths are made of no effect. Love is dwelt upon as the chief attribute of God, but it is degraded to a weak sentimentalism, making little distinction between good and evil. God's justice, His denunciations of sin, the requirements of His holy law, are all kept out of sight."—*Great Controversy*, 558.

"The experience of the past will be repeated. In the future, Satan's superstitions will assume new forms. Errors will be presented in a pleasing and flattering manner. False theories, clothed with garments of light, will be presented to God's people. Thus Satan will try to deceive, if possible, the very elect. Most seducing influences will be exerted; minds will be hypnotized."—*Maranatha*, 59.

One of the Willow Creek theory papers on small groups in churches suggests that we need to remove "religious words" in our efforts to reach the community.

Yet it is with these very Biblical religious words that we learn what the Bible teaches, pray to God, and share our beliefs with others! What religious words used by every major and minor Prophet in the Torah and by Christ and His Apostles would you suggest we remove? It is with these very Biblical religious words that we praise His Holy Name.

Jesus used religious words when He called forth Lazarus from the grave. The halt, the lame and the blind went bounding through the streets with religious words after being cured by Jesus or the Apostles. **Religious words are precisely what Noah preached** to them who perished in the Flood because they did not fear God and hearken unto His words.

Religious words are what Jonah preached to turn 120,000 people (the entire population of Nineveh) to “repent”—another religious word. These Ninevites were not only in the “post-Christian era,” but their culture had *never* heard the Gospel or had any Biblical form of religion. There was no modification of the message or methodology simply because they were unchurched. But Jonah used the very same message in that age and nation as we need in this present age and every nation. That message is simply “Repent.” And it worked! God’s Word was not defective and did not return void!

Church growth advocate Lee Strobel recommends reaching ‘unchurched Harry and Mary’ **by starting with their ‘felt needs’ (rather than with righteousness, self-control, and judgment to come** as Paul did with Felix in Acts 24). Thus—

“If you discover that unchurched Harry suffers from a sagging self-esteem . . . you can tell him how your own self-esteem has soared ever since you learned how much you matter to God.”—*Lee Strobel, Inside The Mind of Unchurched Harry & Mary, p. 92.*

Or, if he’s a thrill seeker, tell him that there is “nothing more exciting, more challenging, and more adventure packed than living as a devoted follower

of Jesus Christ" (*ibid.*). In other words, discover what a sinner wants out of life and give it to him. Tell him you are giving it to him "in Jesus."

Rick Warren is not simply recommending that preachers bear their audience's background in mind; **he is advocating a total change in the technique, style, and form of historical Evangelical preaching. And he'll even twist Scripture to make his point.** He favors a rendering of Colossians 4:5-6, which reads like this:

"Be tactful to those who are not Christians . . . **Talk to them agreeably and with a flavor of wit, and try to fit your answers to the needs of each one.**"—Warren, *Purpose Driven Church*, p. 293.

Yet the context of Colossians 4:5-6 is not about public preaching; and the translation Warren favors is not in the least bit accurate to the original Greek text.

"Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time. Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."—*Colossians 4:5-6*.

Concluding their weak gospel presentations, many church growth preachers lead their audience in a model "sinner's prayer." Warren advises sinners that this is the way to accept Christ:

"Real life begins by committing yourself completely to Jesus Christ. If you are not sure you have done this, **all you need to do is receive and believe . . . bow your head and quietly whisper the prayer that will change your eternity: 'Jesus I believe in you and I receive you.'** Go ahead. If you sincerely meant that prayer, **congratulations! Welcome to the family of God.**"—Rick Warren, *Pur-*

pose Driven Life, pp. 58-59.

Concluding their weak gospel presentations, many church growth preachers lead their audience in a model “sinner’s prayer.” Warren advises sinners that, “real life begins by committing yourself completely to Jesus Christ. If you are not sure you have done this, **all you need to do is receive and believe . . . bow your head and quietly whisper the prayer that will change your eternity: ‘Jesus I believe in you and I receive you.’** Go ahead. If you sincerely meant that prayer, congratulations! Welcome to the family of God” (*Rick Warren, Purpose Driven Life*, pp. 58-59).

(If you ever listen to the *Billy Graham Evangelistic Association* on the radio on Sunday morning, you will find that they always conclude with giving you “the sinner’s prayer,”—which is identical to the one quoted above. *Just verbally accept Christ and be eternally saved!*)

No conviction of sin, no repentance, no forsaking of the sinner’s way, no counting the cost—just ‘accept and receive’ and the job’s done. Do these false teachers actually understand the true need of the sinner? Clearly not; for sinful man’s first and greatest need is repentance (not self-esteem as Schuller teaches). Man needs salvation from sin, deliverance from wrath, and cleansing from guilt. **Through the enabling strength of Christ, he needs to repent and forsake his sins; resist temptation; and, by Christ’s grace, obey God’s Ten Commandment law.**

The person who walks through the door of the church is not just a “consumer” that you are selling

a bill of goods to,—but actually a rebellious unclean sinner who, **far from being "always right" only needs to believe in himself more; many times he is wrong.** He doesn't feel his need for the "product" which he really needs because he is spiritually dead. **He only thinks he loves God and wants a relationship with Jesus; yet he actually knows nothing about his true sinfulness and God's righteousness and power to help him overcome sin in his life.**

The true gospel is not about making people feel better about themselves, but about making people realize that—without total submission to Christ and obedience to the law of God—they are lost, guilty, and perishing!

The Bible plan does not attempt to bring people to Christ to meet their felt needs. Instead, **it proclaims forgiveness and justification to meet their real need if they will repent, trust alone in Christ, and humbly submit to His enabling grace in order to become obedient, commandment-keeping children of God.** Only then can they find their fullest happiness in life of walking day by day with Jesus, their Lord and Saviour.

A product that exposes sin, condemns pride, and strips away self-righteousness can never be "marketed." It is foolishness to the lost (1 Cor. 1:18). Yet the new gospel is being presented as an attractive item to the sinner because **it brings a new excitement into his life. It liberates his self-esteem, fills his emptiness, gives him an exciting life, and appears to meet his needs and heal his hurts.**

In painful contrast, the false gospel says, "You may not believe in God but God believes in you, and you need to believe in yourself."

Another problem with the "purpose driven church" is that, **in order to make the church more appealing to the world, it turns the inside of the church into a very worldly recreation center!** Apparently, since unchurched Harry has to dress smartly at the office all week, he insists on the casual look on weekends. To make him feel comfortable, the saints must remove their respectful Sunday best and also dress in a casual, even scruffy appearance.

Then there's the "music problem." Unchurched Harry is said to hate organs and choirs. A cappella singing makes him cringe. **Instead of showing him a better quality of music, it must be contemporary and loud. According to Warren, Saddleback exploded with growth after loud rock music made its entrance. People want to feel the music, not just hear it.**

It is assumed, by the "church growth" and "sales-volume" experts, that **gathering several times a week for nothing more than hymn singing and Bible teaching is not what worldlings want.** Ministries, programs, and small groups must be introduced to meet people's needs for counseling about poor self-esteem, depression, infertility, singleness, weight loss, co-dependency, addictions, and more. Psychological methods are used to solve those problems.

According to Warren, providing the primary issues are in focus (Christ and His gospel), the sec-

ondary issues (the church model/methods) can be as varied as you like. **What works (pragmatism) is all that matters.**

“I contend that when a church continues to use methods that no longer work, it is being unfaithful to Christ.”—Rick Warren, *Purpose Driven Church*, p. 65.

At Saddleback, Warren uses multiple meetings to “target” different markets. A jazz service for jazz lovers. A rock-n-roll service for rockers. Based on a mistranslation of Acts 5:42, Warren claims he’s following the apostles who provided different kinds of services in separate “courts” of the temple.

One of the most insidious aspects of the seeker-friendly approach to doing church is an attempt to impress the unchurched by **looking to and quoting those regarded as the experts in solving all their mental, emotional, and behavioral problems—psychiatrists and psychologists.** Nothing in the history of the church has undermined the truth of the sufficiency of God’s Word for “all things that pertain unto life and godliness” (2 Peter 1:3) more than the introduction of the pseudoscience of psychotherapy. Its thousands of concepts and hundreds of methodologies are unproven, contradictory, unscientific, and thoroughly unbiblical.

Both Willow Creek and Saddleback are entrenched in the psychotherapeutic. Although claiming to be Christ-centered rather than psychological, **the overriding message from psychologically driven Willow Creek and Saddleback is that the Word of God and the power of the Holy Spirit**

are insufficient for delivering a person from a habitual sin and for transforming his or her life into one that is fruitful and pleasing to God. Again, what these churches say and do is exported to hundreds of thousands of church leaders around the world.

A large part of the Evangelical Church has developed a pleasure-laden, cruise ship mentality, but it will result in a spiritual Titanic. Seeker-friendly church pastors (and those tempted to climb aboard) need to get on their knees and read the words of Jesus to the church of the Laodiceans (Rev. 3:14-21). They were “rich and increased with goods”; yet they failed to recognize that, in God’s eyes, they were “wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” Jesus, standing outside their church, where they had unwittingly displaced Him, offers them His counsel, the truth of His Word, which alone will enable them to live their lives for His pleasure. There can be nothing better here on earth, and for all eternity.

But the great tragedy is that, by attending such a worldly entertainment center week after week, they imagine that their salvation is assured. Indeed, is not this what they are told at church week after week?

BIBLE VERSES YOU WILL NEVER HEAR AT ONE OF THESE LOOK-ALIKE CHURCHES

Here are some of the Bible verses you will never hear in a Saddleback or Willow Creek “seeker pleasure” church:

“And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wil-

derness, to humble thee, and to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldest keep His commandments, or no."—*Deuteronomy 8:2*.

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."—*Galatians 6:7-8*.

"But this people hath a revolting and a rebellious heart; they are revolted and gone . . . Your iniquities have turned away these things, and your sins have withholden good things from you.

"For among My people are found wicked men: they lay wait, as he that setteth snares; they set a trap, they catch men. As a cage is full of birds, so are their houses full of deceit: therefore they are become great, and waxen rich."—*Jeremiah 5:23, 25-27*.

"And he said unto them, Set your hearts unto all the words which I testify among you this day, which ye shall command your children to observe to do, all the words of this law. For it is not a vain thing for you; because it is your life: and through this thing ye shall prolong your days in the land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it."—*Deuteronomy 32:46-47*.

"The show of their countenance doth witness against them; and they declare their sin as Sodom, they hide it not. Woe unto their soul! for they have rewarded evil unto themselves. Say ye to the righteous, that it shall be well with him: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings. Woe unto the wicked! it shall be ill with him: for the reward of his hands shall be given him."—*Isaiah 3:9-11*.

"But the wicked are like the troubled sea, when

it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.”—*Isaiah 57:20-21*.

“Know therefore that the Lord thy God, He is God, the faithful God, which keepeth covenant and mercy with them that love Him and keep His commandments to a thousand generations; and repayeth them that hate Him to their face, to destroy them: He will not be slack to him that hateth Him. He will repay him to his face.”—*Deuteronomy 7:9-10*.

“Moreover all these curses shall come upon thee, and shall pursue thee, and overtake thee, till thou be destroyed; because thou hearkenedst not unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to keep His commandments.”—*Deuteronomy 28:45*.

Chapter Three

Other Dangerous Penetrations

**“HOLY LAUGHTER”
AND OTHER SPIRIT ARRIVALS**

HISTORY OF THE "HOLY LAUGHTER" MOVEMENT

Here, very briefly presented, are key events in this, a different manifestation of demons in their efforts to penetrate Christian churches.

This is actually another form of the same spirit penetration and control which Buddhists and Hindus are bringing to the West. **While gurus brush a feather against the forehead and a person falls back, possessed, the same occurs at a "holy laughter" meeting. As the forehead is touched, a person falls back. The same spirits are present at both places.**

In May 1979, John Wimber, an unknown pastor of what would later be called the *Vineyard Christian Fellowship* in Anaheim, California, invited a young man who had been involved in the hippy "Jesus people" movement, in San Francisco, to speak at his church on Sunday morning. Wimber's church was not, at that time, a Pentecostal church,—but then everything suddenly changed.

The young man spoke briefly, and then announced that it was time for the Holy Ghost to fall on the people. Nearly a minute of silence passed,—and then he cried loudly: "Holy Spirit, come!"

"People fell to the floor. Others, who did not believe in tongues, loudly spoke in tongues. The speaker roamed among the crowd, praying for people [who had not yet been affected], who then immediately fell over."—*John Wimber and Kevin Springer, Power Evangelism, pp. 24-25.*

John's wife, Carol, describes this event as **the "watershed experience that launched us into**

what today is called power evangelism” (Carol Wimber, “A Hunger for God,” in Springer, *Power Encounters*, p. 12). She vividly remembers the chaos that ensued:

“One fellow, Tim, started bouncing. His arms flung out and he fell over, but one of his hands accidentally hit a mike stand and he took it down with him. He was tangled up in the cord with the mike next to his mouth. **Then he began speaking in tongues, so the sound went throughout the auditorium . . .** The majority of young people were shaking and falling over. At one point it looked like a battlefield scene—bodies everywhere, people weeping, wailing, and speaking in tongues, much shouting and loud behavior . . . I got up and started stepping over bodies and putting my hand next to them. **I could feel the power, like heat or electricity, radiating off of their bodies.**

“I asked one boy who was on the floor, ‘what’s happening to you right now?’ **He said, ‘It’s like electricity. I can’t move!’** I was amazed by the effect of God’s power on the human body.”—Carol Wimber, “A Hunger for God,” in Kevin Springer, *Power Encounters*, pp. 12-13.

Another important event occurred in July 1979. In South Africa, Rodney Howard-Browne, at the age of 17, commanded God to give him power. But he did it in such a course, profane way that the Spirit of God left him and Satan took over.

“Either You come down here and touch me or I am going to come up there and touch You.” He began to shout over and over, “God, I want power!” He shouted until he was hoarse (*Howard-Browne, Flowing in the Holy Ghost*, p. 15). Then, suddenly:

“The Fire of God came on me. It started on my

head and went right down to my feet. His power burned in my body and stayed like that for four days. I thought He was going to kill me . . . It was as shocking as if I had unscrewed a light bulb from a lamp and put my finger in the socket . . . **I began to laugh uncontrollably and then I began to weep and then speak with other tongues** . . . I was so intoxicated on the wine of the Holy Ghost that I was beside myself . . . Because of this encounter with the Lord, my life was radically changed from that day on."—*Howard-Browne, Fresh Oil from Heaven, pp. 27-28.*

Then the spirit which had taken over Howard-Browne's body, told him to get other people "saturated," and not to lift his hands off people until they were "drunk in the Holy Ghost" (*Howard-Browne, The Touch of God, p. 74*).

While others introduced the screaming and falling down activities, **it was Rodney Howard-Browne (who calls himself "the Holy Ghost bartender") who brought the laughing revival to America** from South Africa in the late 1980s. This new phenomenon became known as holy laughter and spread everywhere that Howard-Browne went.

In 1990, Howard-Browne got one of his first major breaks when, upon arriving in America, Benny Hinn invited him to speak at his church in Orlando, Florida. As pastors and people began to fall, laugh, and get drunk in the spirit, Howard-Browne commanded the spirit to begin giving double and triple doses of the "new wine." Then he screamed, "This is the Holy Ghost here!" (*Benny Hinn, discussion at the 1995 National Religious*

Broadcasters Convention in Nashville).

Charisma Magazine reported that **Howard-Browne's "rise to fame accelerated . . . during a watershed 1994 meeting at Carpenter's home church in Lakeland, Florida"** (*Julia Duin, "Praise the Lord and Pass the New Wine," Charisma Magazine, August 1994, p. 23*).

Assemblies of God Pastor Karl Strader needed help, and Howard-Browne nicely provided it. Strader's 10,000-seat church was split over an alleged \$3.7 million pyramid scheme by his son (*Charisma Magazine, August 1994, p. 62*).

When Howard-Browne arrived he brought "holy laughter" to the church, fame for himself, and many more members for Strader's church.

But Howard-Browne provided no healings, only jokes in the pulpit, followed by "spiritual drunkenness" for the church members.

Christian leaders from America, Africa, Australia, Argentina, and elsewhere came to Strader's church, **hoping to find new ways to fill their own churches back home.** Even Richard Roberts (1948-), president of *Oral Roberts University*, was there and hoping for solutions to the \$40 million debt inherited from his father, Oral (1918-2009). But all it accomplished for him, as for many other church leaders who came, was to end up on the floor laughing.

Oral also came and fell on the floor, laughing. Afterward, he proclaimed that Howard-Browne's ministry signaled "another level in the Holy Spirit," and that Howard-Browne was "raised up from a new kind of seed, with a new kind of revelation . . . yet a fresh wave" (*Richard M. Riss, History of the World-*

wide Awakening, p. 12).

Benny Hinn (1952-) began declaring that he was healing people at church services; and his first nationally televised service was held in Flint, Michigan, in 1989. At Hinn's "Miracle Crusades," he has allegedly healed attendees of blindness, deafness, cancer, AIDS, and severe physical injuries. However, investigative reports by the Los Angeles Times, NBC's Dateline, the CBC's The Fifth Estate, and the Nine Network's 60 Minutes have called these claims into question. He predicted the end of the world in 1992 and 1999.

In November 2004, the CBC Television show, The Fifth Estate, did a special entitled "*Do You Believe in Miracles*," on the apparent transgressions committed by Benny Hinn's ministry. **With the aid of hidden cameras and crusade witnesses, the producers of the show demonstrated Benny's apparent misappropriation of funds, his fabrication of the truth, and the way in which his staff chose crusade audience members to come on stage to proclaim their miracle healings,** making sure that no one with obvious disabilities came close to him (*Bob McKeown, "Do You Believe in Miracles?" The Fifth Estate (Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, November 2004).*

In December 2006, Hinn's organization sent out a mailing, asking for donations toward a new Gulfstream G4 SP jet valued at an estimated US\$36 million and costing over \$600,000/year to maintain and operate. The 22-seat craft was purchased in 2007 and christened "Dove One."

We now turn our attention to Randy Clark.

Just before coming to America, he traveled to Rhema, South Africa, to meet Howard-Browne. Clark was utterly discouraged and later said he had given up on God. At Rhema, Clark “fell under the power” of the spirit as Howard-Browne prayed for him. Clark suddenly fell to the floor, unable to rise. Wondering whether this could be from God, “two bodies fell down on me, and one was oinking like a pig” (*Randy Clark, Catch the Fire '94*). **Clark later said that a person on top of him, sounding like a pig, convinced him that this was the power of God!** Clark immediately began laughing and felt drunk in the spirit.

Arriving home, he told God that he would not eat until God touched him with power (*Clark, Test Me Now*). Then he went back to another Howard-Browne meeting. When prayed for that evening, he got the spirit.

At home, he spoke at his local church, and everything went wild. People fell down, laughing, yelling, and screaming all over the building.

The laughing revival did not catch the full attention of the world until mid-January 1994, when it came to the Toronto (Canada) Vineyard Church, pastored by John Arnott. Here one heard not only uncontrollable laughter, but horrible animal-like sounds—and worse—from those in the throes of the “blessing.”

Arnott became filled with the spirit when, in 1993, he visited Benny Hinn’s Orlando church. After Hinn prayed for him, a spirit entered Arnott, and he took it back to his Toronto church.

Then Randy Clark arrived from South Africa and began speaking at the podium. The pandemonium became even wilder. **Quickly "almost 80 percent of the people were on the floor"** (*John Arnott, The Father's Blessing, p. 20*). As John explains, "It was like an explosion. We saw people literally being knocked off their feet by the Spirit of God . . . Others shook and jerked. Some danced, some laughed. Some lay on the floor as if dead for hours. People cried and shouted" (*ibid., pp. 71-72*). The church receptionist could not speak for three days and, after that, "could only speak in tongues" (*Arnott, quoted in Reiss, Worldwide Awakening of 1992-1995, p. 26*).

Postscript: Late in 1995, the Toronto Vineyard Church was removed by John Wimber (1934-1997) from the Fellowship of Vineyard Churches. Because of this, its name was changed to *Toronto Airport Christian Fellowship*. The reason: Wimber did not mind the wildness and animal noises; for it was in all the other Vineyard churches. But he could not stand the fact that Toronto claimed that these manifestations were Scriptural; because **Wimber firmly believed that nothing—neither beliefs nor actions—needed to be proved from the Bible!**

The truth is that a primary objective of these men is getting money, money, and more money. When people come "to get the spirit," they give money before they leave.

"In Toronto my wife and I personally witnessed Howard-Browne berate people who dared to get up and leave during his impassioned plea for money. He publicly ridiculed those who left the auditorium. It was a sad and pathetic scene."—*Robert S.*

Liichow.

The next major event was the Pensacola Outpouring that began on June 18, 1995. Years later, John Kilpatrick, pastor of the Brownsville Assembly of God Church in Pensacola, Florida, said that he saw what was happening in Toronto as “a great opportunity for him to get into it also” (*Kilpatrick, quoted in Pensacola News Journal, March 7, 1999*).

Stephen Hill (1954-), pastor of the Holy Trinity Church in Brompton, England, had been on street drugs for twelve years, and was trying to get off of them (*Hank Hanegraaff, Counterfeit Revivals, pp. 302-303*).

(As a teenager, Hill had gotten heavily into alcohol and illicit drugs. At the age of twenty-one, due to the effects of drug abuse, his body began to shut down one Saturday morning. For three days he suffered through extreme convulsions. Then, in October 1975, a Lutheran minister prayed for him. After being personally prayed over by Carol Arnott, Hill “received the spirit” and began having wild experiences at his church.)

Learning about what was happening in Brompton, Kilpatrick asked him to come to Pensacola—and help them get started “in the spirit.” As Brenda Kilpatrick recalls, “We were so excited and said maybe this will bring revival!” (*as quoted in “The Hunger Before Revival”*).

At the beginning of that meeting, on June 18, 1995, Hill told the assembly that God told him that everyone at this meeting would be “drenched with a heavenly rain.”

“Hill launched into a time of personal testimony.

He told of his own conversion. **According to Hill, he was converted completely apart from the gospel** [!]. As a junkie, mainliner [of street drugs], and thief, Hill says he encountered a Lutheran vicar who claimed that all he had to do to be set free was to 'say the name Jesus.' Despite the fact that he did not believe in God, Hill complied. **In unbelief he repeated the word, 'Jesus,' over and over again for thirty seconds.** Then, says Hill, he was miraculously converted into a brand-new person."—*Hank Hanegraaff, Counterfeit Revival, p. 58.*

After telling that, Hill waved his hand, shouted for the spirit to come down,—and people all over the church began falling to the floor, laughing, screaming, weeping. **On and on it went. Week after week for months. It became known as the Pensacola Outpouring.**

In time, the church opened its doors for Wednesday-through-Saturday evening revival services, to accommodate the thousands of people who arrived and waited in the church parking lot before dawn for a chance to enter the packed sanctuary (*"Fire from Above," Charisma Magazine, June 2005*).

"More than four million people are reported to have attended the meetings from its beginnings in 1995 to around 2000."—*Ibid.*

"Millions have visited the church's Wednesday-through-Saturday evening revival services . . . After the sermons were over, hundreds of thousands accepted the invitation to leave their seats and rush forward to a large area in front of the stage-like altar. Here, they 'get right with God' . . . Untold thousands have hit the carpet, **where they either writhe in ecstasy or lie stone-still in a state**

resembling a coma, sometimes remaining flat on the floor for hours at a time. Some participants call the experience being 'slain in the Spirit.' Others simply refer to receiving the touch of God. Regardless of what they call it, these people are putting the 'roll' back in 'holy roller.'"—*Steve Rabey quoted in Margaret M. Poloma and John C. Green, The Assemblies of God: Godly Love and the Revitalization of American Pentecostalism, p. 1.*

Although a dangerous thing to do, one investigator decided to attend a Sunday morning service at the Brownsville church, near Pensacola.

"One Sunday morning, I sat in the sanctuary of the Brownsville Assembly of God and watched in horror as a woman in the choir began to jerk her head spasmodically from side to side. An hour went by, then another. All the while the shaking continued unabated as intermittently she bent spasmodically at the waist.

"A church member, noting the look of concern on my face, quickly attempted to assure me that this woman was merely under the influence of the 'Holy Ghost.' When I asked if she was certain it was the Holy Ghost, she seemed incredulous. **'What else could it be?' she snapped. 'We're in church, aren't we?'**"—*H. Hanegraaff, Counterfeit Revival, p. 70.*

By 1997, it was common to have lengthy, rapturous periods of singing and dancing and altars packed with hundreds of writhing or dead-still bodies of a variety of ages, races, and socio-economic conditions at the Brownsville church ("*Brownsville Revival: The Money and the Myths,*" *Pensacola News Journal, November 16–20, 1997*).

According to *Newsweek*, **by 1995 this strange spirit possession of people in Christian churches**

had already spread to roughly 7,000 congregations in Hong Kong, Norway, South Africa, and Australia, plus scores of churches in the U.S. The are jerking spasmodically, dancing ecstatically, and acting like animals (*Newsweek*, February 20, 1995, p. 54).

The primary part of the revival ended in 2000, when Hill left and later started a church in the Dallas area, where he now serves as senior pastor.

During those five years at Brownsville, thousands of pastors visited it and returned to their home congregations, leading to an outbreak of mini revivals that helped the Assemblies of God denomination recover from what some said was a denominational decline ("*Brownsville Revival: Five Years Later*").

SAME AS KUNDALINI AWAKENINGS

You have just read about the strange things which have occurred at Toronto, Brownsville, Lakeland, and a growing number of other churches.

—Yet, for practical purposes all of those exhibitions are identical to those of Kundalini or Shakti yoga!

The meetings which mystic Hindu gurus hold are called *Darshon*. **At those Hindu meetings, devotees go forward to receive spiritual experience from a touch by the open palm of the hand,** often to the forehead, by the guru in what is known as the *shaktipat* or divine touch. The deepening spiritual experience which results is called "*raising Kundalini*" (as the serpent, said to be at the base of everyone's spine, rises up through the chakras—and hits the brain). At some point, the spirits induce strange conduct in the worshipers.

They begin to shake, jerk, hop, and squirm uncontrollably; sometimes they break into uncontrolled animal noises or laughter—as they reach an ecstatic high. —All this is caused by the Hindu gods.

These manifestations are called **Kriyas**. Devotees sometimes roar like lions and show all kinds of physical signs during this period.

Often they move on to so-called “higher states of spiritual consciousness” and become physically inert. **They appear to slip into unconsciousness as they lose a sense of what is happening around them.** This state is called **Samadhi**, and it leads to still deeper spiritual experience.

The guru Shri Yoganandji Maharaja has frequently declared, “When your body begins trembling, hair stands on roots, you laugh or begin to weep without your wishing, your tongue begins to utter deformed sounds, you are filled with fear or see frightening visions . . . **the Kundalini Shakti has become active.**”

OTHER DEMONIC MANIFESTATIONS

Similar manifestations occur in various places throughout the world. **In China, there is a popular Kundalini movement called Qigong.**

When Yan Xin, a Chinese Qigong spiritual Master, gave a talk to a crowd in San Francisco in 1991, the San Francisco *Chronicle* reported that many in the crowd began to experience what Yan called “spontaneous movements.” He told his audience that those who are sensitive might start having some strong physical sensations—or start laughing or crying, but that this is quite normal.

In the 18th century, Franz Mesmer was a famous occult healer in Germany. He practiced what was called “**mesmerism**” (now known as hypnotism). He called it “animal magnetism.” Many of the most prominent figures of European society came to him for guidance and help. **Those who sought his help would frequently experience falling down, jerking, convulsions, strange grunts and cries, hysterical laughter, etc.**

Whether earlier in history or now, the same demons are ready to help those who turn from Bible principles and the help of Christ, and seek after the witches and wizards of Endor.

Chapter Four

Into Our Own Denomination

**EITHER CAST THIS OUT
OR BE OVERCOME**

INTRODUCTION

CHURCHES RADICALLY CHANGING

Charles H. Spurgeon (1834-1892) was the most important British preacher of the 19th century. He remains highly influential among Christians of different denominations. He said this:

“I fear there are some who preach with the view of amusing men, and as long as people can be gathered in crowds, and their ears can be tickled, and they can retire pleased with what they have heard, the orator is content, and folds his hands, and is satisfied.”—Charles H. Spurgeon, “Soul Saving Our One Business,” *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Vol. 25, pp. 674-676 (1879).

George Barna (1955-) is the founder of *The Barna Group*, a market research firm specializing in studying the religious beliefs and behavior of Americans, and the intersection of faith and culture. Barna wrote these words:

“To the average American, truth is relative to one’s values and circumstances. Only one out of four adults—and even fewer teenagers—believe that there is such a thing as absolute moral truth. The Bible is relegated to nothing more than a book of riveting stories and helpful suggestions. Human reason and emotion become the paramount determinants of all that is desirable and appropriate. This condition may be the single most intense threat to the health of the United States and its people.

“Consider the social implications. **Without an objective standard of right and wrong, laws and regulations become recommendations rather than mandates.** Rights are nothing more than sets of competing preferences. There can be no such thing as deception, only differing vantage points. Personal claims to authority and to the exercise of

related power are susceptible to unsubstantiated challenges. Without accepted guideline pillars to anchor reality, those who succeed are the ones who argue loudest, most convincingly, and most diligently.

“This cultural perspective hardens the hearts and deafens the ears of those who embrace it. **Without absolute moral truth, there can be no right and wrong. Without right and wrong, there is no such thing as sin. Without sin, there can be no such thing as judgment and no such thing as condemnation. If there is no condemnation, there is no need for a Saviour.** This progression renders the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ historically unique—and eternally meaningless.”—George Barna, *The Second Coming of the Church*, p. 62.

Whoever you are, reading this book just now,—face the fact that a complete, radical reshaping of the churches is now in process! Tragically, few pastors and church leaders are willing to say anything about it. The causes, as shown in the Willow Creek analysis, are obvious. But **because the solutions—repentance and turning away from sin and obedience to the law of God—are not mentioned in the pulpits,—pastors and church leaders are turning to Oriental mysticism to satisfy the longings of the soul.**

“The Bible is interpreted in a manner that is pleasing to the unrenewed heart, while its solemn and vital truths are made of no effect. Love is dwelt upon as the chief attribute of God, but it is degraded to a weak sentimentalism, making little distinction between good and evil. God’s justice, His denunciations of sin, the requirements of His holy law, are all kept out of sight.”—*Great Controversy*, 558.

“The experience of the past will be repeated. In the future, Satan’s superstitions will assume new forms. **Errors will be presented in a pleasing and flattering manner. False theories, clothed with garments of light, will be presented to God’s people.** Thus Satan will try to deceive, if possible, the very elect. **Most seducing influences will be exerted; minds will be hypnotized.**”—*Maranatha*, 59.

—*For much more Inspired guidance as to our duty individually, and as a people, at this time—read Section Three at the back of this book: “Statements from Inspiration.”*

Both the “Purpose Driven Church” invasion, from Saddleback and Willow Creek trainees, and the Oriental Hindu and Yoga invasion of yoga spirit contacts are invading our churches. This chapter is about these two penetrations into our beloved denomination:

1 - THE “PURPOSE DRIVEN” INVASION INTO OUR CHURCH

A VERY REAL DANGER TO OUR OWN DENOMINATION

Worldly business can be big business—and it can be very successful. So much so that **the sheer success that worldly methods bring—can overwhelm our own pastors who investigate it and find that the public loves its gatherings and**

fills its churches.

We should not be sending our ministers to try to learn the ways that these megachurches are using to bring in the unrepentant, keep them unrepentant, while increasing their contentment with their sins.

Our ministers should instead be giving an urgent call to come out of the world and out of Babylon—which the megachurches are part of!

But, **instead of giving the three angels' messages, the tragedy is that many of our pastors are going to Saddleback and Willow Creek** in order to check them out—and discover ways to make our churches into something far greater, more glorious, more attractive.

Jan Voerman explains:

“Gregory E. Taylor, an SDA pastor, visited Willow Creek with his wife several times to attend training sessions. **Gradually they became impressed by the atmosphere, the principles and methods applied there and soon doubts about their own religious convictions arose.**”—*Jan Voerman, Hidden Agenda*, pp. 68-69.

Why bother staying with the much maligned Sabbathkeepers, when the world apparently has so much greater glitter and tinsel, so much more excitement to offer?

“In personal correspondence, Gregory confirmed that **Willow Creek has had a great influence on his way of thinking and on his decision to leave the SDA Church.** He also confirmed that others followed a similar path. He writes:

“ ‘Yes, one of the men I was studying with has taken his church out of the SDA system into an

Evangelical Church. There are others. **Clay Peck** in Berthoud, Colorado; **Richard Fredericks** in Damascus, Maryland; and I have heard of others' (*J. Voerman correspondence with G.E. Taylor, November 9 and 18, 2004*).

"Listen to Clay Peck's testimony, which reveals how in visiting Willow Creek many times he was caught and turned away from Adventism by the principles of the modern 'church growth' experts:

" 'Shortly after [Andrews] Seminary, I visited Willow Creek in Chicago. Since then, I've been back many times. I wondered how that could be "Babylon" and how I could call people out of that into what Adventism had to offer' (*Clay Peck, My Journey Out of Legalism, pp. 5-6*)."—Voerman, *Hidden Agenda, p. 70*.

The fundamental issues of life concern the need to forsake sin, through the enabling grace of Jesus Christ, and to become His humble, obedient child. Clay Peck had never truly grasped this great truth, which will determine the destiny of everyone.

The following description underlying the megachurch principles was written over a century ago:

"Ministers of popular churches are many of them softening down and diluting the plain word of truth. They are obscuring the light, and **changing the message, in order to accommodate it to the prejudices, and adjust it to the opinions and habits, of the people.** Thus they cater to the taste of the world-loving members of the church. But while they are so free to change the truth of God, on the other hand they advise their members to exercise the greatest caution lest they hear the message of God from the messengers He chooses to send to

the people.”—*EGW, Signs, August 27, 1894.*

“Those who are studying the ways and methods of men and following their customs, are deceived if they think that they are following the directions of God in the matter.”—*EGW, ibid.*

Oh, how the supposedly great men of earth will someday regret the words they earlier spoke to mislead others! They can come up with wholly illogical arguments which ignore basic Bible principles and divine commands!

“Often our Pastors have applied the command to ‘rest’ to moments of reflection in nature and quiet moments with God whenever they happen . . . **The observance of Time is no longer sufficient to satisfy what the Sabbath is all about.**”—*Richard Hirst, Willow Creek Pastor, answering questions about the Seventh-day Sabbath, October 21, 2003.*

After Seventh-day Adventist pastors go for training at Saddleback or Willow Creek (and a very large number have),—they have never been able to successfully present our basic beliefs with success. Never. All they end up doing is holding meetings, where someone bangs on drums and soloists up front sway back and forth as they sing.

“Several Sabbath-keeping congregations have adopted the church growth methods used by the popular Willow Creek and other non-traditional churches. The results are undeniable. One [Adventist] administrator lamented **huge amounts of money, which have been lost on such church plants** [“planted churches”] with poor returns. There has been **an incredible loss of finances, churches, pastors,** and worse, souls in Sabbath-keeping churches when rock music and drum sets are used.”—*Karl Tsatalbasidis, Drums, Rock, and Worship, pp.*

55, 57 (published by *Amazing Facts*, 2003).

The epitaph on the tombstone of these worldly churches will read, “Lost, all lost, because the world seemed more exciting than the Word of God.”

Clay Miller, at the *2003 Shepherd’s Conference*, declared:

“In short, people are not saved . . . by the Word of God in this system . . . I would say that **the church growth movement . . . strikes a blow at almost every major doctrine**: depravity, regeneration, sanctification, worship and even evangelism.

“The sad reality is that this movement, which began with the intent and the motive to evangelize the lost, I would say, emasculates true evangelism . . . It has produced a barren wasteland of doctrine.

“And that barren wasteland of doctrine . . . will produce a barren wasteland of believers which means churches, sadly filled with unbelievers—thinking they are believers—coming and worshipping a God that they don’t even know.”—*Clay Miller, Church Growth Gone Mad: A Sobering Look at the Church Growth Seeker-sensitive Models. Outreach Ministries, 2003.*

2 - THE ORIENTAL INVASION INTO OUR CHURCH

SOME OF THE MANY NAMES FOR THIS

There is a new emerging so-called “spirituality;” with its emphasis on the teachings of the Desert Fathers (ancient Catholic mystics) and Buddhist gurus. It is leading many Protestants back into Catholic monastic rituals, and beyond

into ancient Buddhism and Hinduism.

It is important that you be aware of the names that are being used. They were listed near the front of this book. But I will repeat them again here—and place them in larger print. You or your loved ones may be invited to take part in one or more of these rituals which lead to self-hypnotic procedures:

Here are some of the various names under which this supposedly wonderful new pinnacle of intense personal spirituality is entering the Catholic, Protestant, and Orthodox churches are the following:

Spiritual formation, spiritual direction, spiritual redirection, spiritual directors, discipling, spiritual discipling, spiritual guide, mentoring, mentoring time, prayer stations, spiritual retreats, the silence, ancient prayer practices, centering, centering prayer, centering down, centering up, divine center, divine light, inner light, light space, tiny space, beyond words, Ignation contemplation, contemplative, contemplative prayer, sacred space, prayer rooms, prayer space, ancient prayer practices, contemplative prayer, mind emptying, Jesus prayer, breath prayer, imaging, visualizing, guided visualization, mind-emptied meditation, and thought-emptied meditation.

More names: altered state of consciousness, ancient wisdom, Aquarian light, Christ consciousness, visualization, higher self, inner di-

vinity, interspirituality, journaling, Kundalini, lectio divina, mantra, meditation, metaphysical light, mysticism, rebirthing, new age, new thought, occult, occultism, pantheism, panentheism, Reiki, sacred space, samadhi, spirit guide, spiritual meditation, spiritual formation, religious formation, the god within, god in you, true self, the higher self, your higher self, mother god.

More names: labyrinths, prayer labyrinths, walking the labyrinth, walking the circle, Taize, chanting, OM (the sound that Buddhist monks chant together in order to call in the spirits), journaling (keeping a self diary).

In addition, there is yoga, yoga position, spiritual trance, a thin place, entrance into thin places, mind emptying, ReFormation, Renovaré, rethink, emerging spirituality, emergent movement, the emerging church, emergence, TM, transcendental meditation, Eastern lore, and the wisdom of the East.

There is also channeling, spirit messages, Eastern healing, crystal power, mesmerism, hypnotism, magnetic healing, shamanism, Santería, Supernatural light, Spirit messages, Wicca, universalism.

Important personalities in this field are the Desert Fathers; Ignatius Loyola; the lengthy list of Dark Ages' mystics in the Catholic Church; Buddhist and Hindu gurus and holy men; and

modern Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish writers, speakers, and their organizations.

“Spiritual formation” has been a basic identifying name for a number of years. But, because genuine Christians have recently become suspicious of it, **in order to better hide its identity, religious leaders and teachers (including in our own denomination) are now changing the name from “spiritual formation” to “religious formation,” “deepening religion,” “religious dedication,” “meditation,” “spiritual meditation,” or some other confusing term.**

Be on guard! Those who have dared to dabble in one of these mind-emptying rituals—have had an evil spirit enter their minds. And their concern now is for you to share in the experience also!

THE WORDS THAT ARE NOT USED!

But, hidden in the smoke screen of apparent godliness in some of these terms, there are a number of words and concepts which are not mentioned—and totally avoided,—including these:

Bible study, real prayer to God (genuine prayer to God is talking to Him, not trying to silence the mind into thoughtless vacancy), sin, wickedness, repentance, conversion, obedience to God and His moral law of Ten Commandments. Instructing how to help and bless others. Warning others to repent, come to Christ, and plead with Him for forgiveness and strength to resist temptation and sin. Teaching the doctrines of

the Bible, baptizing souls, and preparing them for heaven.

Jeannette Bakke, author of *Holy Invitations: Exploring Spiritual Direction*, said in a *Christianity Today* interview that Protestants today are turning to spiritual formation as a way to find God:

“Evangelicals are listening for God in ways that are different from our usual understanding of discipleship. We are looking at many Christian disciplines, including prayer, silence and solitude, discernment, journaling, and others . . . **Spiritual direction is one of these disciplines many Evangelical Christians are learning about and exploring.**”—*Got Your ‘Spiritual Director’ Yet?*” *Christianity Today*, April 1, 2003.

The morning after he was elected our new president, **Ted Wilson warned the church to have nothing to do with spiritual formation.** Unfortunately, that has not stopped the flow of this Buddhist/Catholic influence into the hearts and lives of our people.

“Stay away from non-Biblical spiritual disciplines or methods of spiritual formation that are rooted in mysticism such as contemplative prayer, centering prayer, and the emerging church movement in which they are promoted.”—*President Ted Wilson, Atlanta General Conference Session, July 2010 key note speech.*

In the following pages, you will find that, tragically, **every aspect of this new pagan revival into the Christian churches—is also penetrating our own!** This is terrible; it is a horrible tragedy! **God’s special last day church is succumbing to a set of practices started by ancient Bud-**

dhism, initially adapted into early apostate Christianity by the Desert Fathers, and then given a final touch by Ignatius Loyola during his spiritist sessions with demons.

But why are some leaders in our denomination so persistent in their determination to drag all of us into yoga and related mind-emptying practices?

It is for the same reason that, in 1989, they brought celebration worship services into our local churches. *It is believed that band music and swaying singers up front will dazzle our people and keep them coming to church, increase the offerings, and encourage more non-members to start attending.*

But what our leaders do not realize is that the world already has band music and swaying, spotlighted vocalists, and yoga. They do not need to attend our churches to get all they want of worldly entertainment which only Satan can bless.

We urgently need to return to our Bible/Spirit of Prophecy foundations. The world has nothing to offer us of any value. Only in returning to God's Inspired Writings, and humble obedience to them in our proclamation to the world,—will we fulfill the will of God for our lives at this time.

The unanswerable question is "What will a man give for his soul?" Unless we return to God's Word and obey it, we will be in danger of losing our souls when the

Judgment sits and the books are open. Then the great Shepherd will say, "Where is thy flock?" And many of us will reply, "We gave the flock to the Buddhists."

—*vf*

EARLY ANN ANNOUNCEMENT

This was an important early 2004 ANN article, to see what kind of reaction it would bring. Apparently, few church members noticed it.

“Adventist News Network Feature: Church, Congregations Increase Focus on ‘Spiritual Formation’ February 3, 2004—**Spiritual formation is a topic being raised by many pastors and church leaders in a growing number of Christian denominations. It’s no longer enough to just know doctrine and facts**—in today’s hectic society people are searching for something deeper and more meaningful, something that makes sense in their whirlwind lives.

“Spiritual formation is not a new idea or concept, and ‘a lot of Protestants are in the same boat—we are rediscovering it,’ says Dr. Jon Dybdahl, president of Walla Walla College, an Adventist institution in Washington State. ‘And,’ he adds, ‘the Adventist Church has some work to do.’

“Traditionally the Adventist Church has emphasized intellectual truth and accepting certain facts and ideas about God,’ Dybdahl says. At least in many places it has not talked so much about the importance of directly experiencing God. The difference is between knowing about God and knowing God. Sometimes what we teach people is knowing about God.”—*Adventist News Network Feature:*

Church, Congregations Increase Focus on “Spiritual Formation,” February 3, 2004.

And then the ANN article concluded with the following brief paragraph—which announced that a new international organization had been established, to bring spiritual formation into our churches throughout the world field!

“The Adventist world church created the International Board of Ministerial and Theological Education (IBMTE) in September 2001, designed to provide overall guidance and standards to the professional training of pastors, evangelists, theologians, teachers, chaplains and other denominational employees involved in ministerial and religious formation, or spiritual formation, in each of the church’s 13 regions around the world.”—*Ibid.*

Is the God of heaven pleased when we go to Buddhist/Catholic/Protestant sources in order to deepen our religious experience?

“With stern and commanding voice Elijah cries: ‘How long halt ye between two opinions? if the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him. And the people answered him not a word’ . . . In this fearful crisis, in the presence of the idolatrous priests and the apostate king, they remained neutral. If God abhors one sin above another, of which His people are guilty, it is doing nothing in case of an emergency. Indifference and neutrality in a religious crisis is regarded of God as a grievous crime and equal to the very worst type of hostility against God.”—*3 Testimonies, 280-281.*

BREATH PRAYERS

DYBDAHL'S INSTRUCTIONS

The use of one's own breathing is called a breath prayer. **Another spirit is said to enter your body; that is, if you believe that breathing will let it in!** Jon Dybdahl, one of our important church leaders, urges the use of breath prayers:

"Another method of simple praying is the use of one's own breathing, a form often called the breath prayer. Since most religious traditions practice it, can we consider it Christian? Yes, if the content and context are Christian. The way I use the prayer for myself is to pray for the infilling of the Holy Spirit. **I simply say as I inhale, 'Spirit of the living God' and as I exhale, 'Fall afresh on me!'** I find the combination of the words with my breath very powerful, especially as I remember that 'spirit' means 'wind' or 'breath.' We can employ any scriptural words. In fact, we pray a shortened Jesus prayer. **Simply inhale to 'Lord, Jesus Christ' and exhale to 'have mercy on me.'**"—*Jon Dybdahl, Hunger: Satisfying the longing of your soul, p. 32.*

It is thus related to glossolalia (Pentecostal tongues), during which **the soul is said to communicate directly with God in "the language of heaven" without the participation of the mind.**

An Eastern "breath prayer" is not what Ellen White was referring to when she wrote "Let every breath be a prayer"? (*Ministry of Healing, pp. 510-511*). It is not what Paul meant when he said to "pray without ceasing" (1 Thess. 5:17).

God's plan is for us to be in a constant attitude of prayer; so that our minds naturally turn

to Him in gratitude and praise, when we experience good things and for support when we experience difficulties. Christian prayer is a way of actively engaging in the service of our Master. When we begin our day with prayer, laying all our plans at His feet (*Steps to Christ*), we keep our requests in mind throughout the day, ready to respond to God's providential leading.

We are not to wait until we can sit in a Buddhist yoga position in order to pray to God.

“Cultivate the habit of talking with the Saviour when you are alone, when you are walking, and when you are busy with your daily labor. Let the heart be continually uplifted in silent petition for help, for light, for strength, for knowledge. Let every breath be a prayer.” (*Ministry of Healing*, 510-511).

God asks us to come and reason with Him. In order to do that, we have to think. Our minds must be awake, not asleep in a hypnotic mind-emptying state.

“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”—*Isaiah 1:18*.

“A truth's initial commotion is directly proportional to how deeply the lie was believed. It wasn't the world being round that agitated people, but that the world wasn't flat. When a well-packed web of lies has been sold gradually to the masses over generations, the truth will seem utterly preposterous and its speaker a raving lunatic.”—*Dresden James*.

“No man drops in one day from perfect faith to gross error; much less do multitudes of people

apostatize all at the same time. **Error is insidious in its working, and the people who fall away are rarely conscious that any change is taking place in them.**—E.J. Waggoner, “Present Truth,” *January 30, 1902.*

THE JESUS PRAYER

DYBDAHL'S BOOK

In 2007, the Review published a book on spiritual formation, entitled *The Hunger: Satisfying the Longing of Your Soul*, by Jon Dybdahl. It was included as a valuable resource for “Revival & Reformation” in the January 2011 issue of *Adventist World*.

Jon Dybdahl, in his book, *Hunger*, recommends a Catholic method, which is based on mindless repetition, similar to what is done when a faithful Catholic repeats the rosary a dozen or so times.

“A good example of a short prayer is the Jesus prayer. **Popular in the Russian Orthodox tradition, it has spread widely in Christendom** through the book, *The Way of a Pilgrim*.

“The prayer is biblically based [Luke 18:38] and says simply: ‘Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ You can shorten it even more in various ways, such as ‘Jesus, have mercy on me’ or ‘Have mercy on me.’ **The Orthodox tradition repeats the prayer, either out loud or in the heart, many, many times** until eventually it moves from the head to be the constant melody of the heart, influencing all areas of life. **Francis of Assisi reputedly prayed all night saying just ‘Jesus, my Jesus.’**”—Jon Dybdahl, *Hunger: Satisfying the*

Longing of Your Soul, p. 32.

Such repetition is widely recognized as a doorway to self-hypnosis. It is unfortunate that Dybdahl does not demonstrate how the techniques he presents are different from the techniques promoted by the recommended authors. As it is, **Dybdahl's descriptions of prayer are identical to those practiced by Protestant and Catholic practitioners of Eastern religions.**

If a technique is dangerous, it is not enough to be using a different name for God or even to have a different worldview than other practitioners such as Buddhists or the Hindus.

Dybdahl mentions the book, *The Way of the Pilgrim*, as a useful source of spiritual instruction. In that book, we find this statement about prayer:

“The continuous interior Prayer of Jesus is a constant uninterrupted calling upon the divine Name of Jesus . .

“Here is a rosary. Take it and, to start with, say the Prayer of Jesus three thousand times a day. Whether you are standing or sitting, walking or lying down, continually repeat ‘Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy on me.’ Say it quietly and without hurry, but **without fail exactly three thousand times a day** without deliberately increasing or diminishing the number. God will help you.”—*Anonymous (translated by R.M. French), The Way of a Pilgrim and the Pilgrim Continues His Way*, pp. 7-8.

The “Jesus Prayer” is actually about the same as the “breath prayer,” except for the specific words used. **This prayer uses a vast number of repetitions of a set of words, implying that the repetition of these words has some spiritual power all**

of its own. Yet, such a concept agrees more with Catholic than with Protestant teachings.

Furthermore, multiplied repetition of the name of Jesus will inevitably tend toward diminishing reverence for God. Is that what you and I want in our lives? It is a serious matter to use the name of God repetitiously:

“Even in prayer its frequent or needless repetition should be avoided. ‘Holy and reverend is His name.’ Psalm 111:9. Angels, as they speak it, veil their faces. With what reverence should we, who are fallen and sinful, take it upon our lips!”—*Education*, 243.

This multiplied repetition of the name of Jesus would violate reverence to God.

REPETITION OF A MANTRA

VOP AND FFT HEARTQUEST / iFOLLOW

A mantra is a single word or brief phrase which is repeated over and over again until the mind simply blanks out. A hypnotist uses similar devices to mesmerize people.

“This state of self-hypnosis is an altered state of consciousness (**a hypnotic state**) that **Buddhists, Catholics—and now many Christians—interpret as being in the presence of God.** Yet similar practices of repeating phrases or the name of a god are also practiced in various non-Christian religions.

“Repetition of any mantra or name of the Lord is known as *Japa*. **From Buddhists to Muslims, Christians to Sufis, this path is hailed as one of the most meritorious forms of prayer** in many spiritual traditions.”—*Basil Pennington, Centering Prayer*, p. 32.

**VOP AND FFT HEARTQUEST
TEACH THE USE OF MANTRAS**

In a letter to pastors, regarding HeartQuest, Mike Tucker writes: “**HeartQuest is a different approach to NET evangelism designed to reach a younger, more secular audience.** As you can tell from the artwork, this series of meetings is different . . . Here are some of the details: . . . Doctrines are presented as tools for knowing God better.”—Mike Tucker, *HeartQuest*, letter to pastors.

In the third session of HeartQuest, Mike Tucker presented the following instructions:

“One form of meditation involves softly repeating the words of Scripture over and over again. The words suggest that we actually murmur the words to ourselves, until they become a part of our being. If you have had difficulty knowing how to do this, I’d like to offer a few suggestions today . . . First, choose a passage of Scripture no longer than six to eight verses in length. Begin with a time of silent preparation during which you come in touch with your desire to hear from God. Next, read the passage through. Read it once or twice slowly as you **look for a word or phrase that strikes you. It is a word or phrase that stands out from all the rest**, in the sense that you either resonate with it or you find that it brings out a sense of resistance. Once you have found that word or phrase, spend a brief period of silence during which you savor or **repeat it without trying to figure out what it means** or understand why you have reacted to it as you have.”—*HeartQuest*, Third Lesson.

Here are the websites which iFollow recom-

mends in this lesson. At these sites you will find the ancient mystical contemplative spiritual practices taught “that savors of hypnotism, the science by which satanic agencies work” (2SM 350).

“**All about God Ministries** is a nondenominational information service on Christianity. It includes material on Christian meditation under its ‘Discipleship’ section: *allaboutgod.com*

“**John Mark Ministries** is a nondenominational counseling ministry for Christian clergy who are struggling with burnout. Included on its website is practical information about meditation: *jmm.aaa.net.au/articles/13763.htm*.

“**Renovaré** is a Christian parachurch organization that provides resources related to spiritual disciplines: *renovare.org*.”—*HeartQuest, Third Lesson*.

WIZARD MUTTERING RECOMMENDED VOP AND FFT / iFOLLOW

Here is more from this iFollow instructional manual on Spiritual Formation:

“We know that **non-Christian meditation often includes sounds, chants, and mantras**. It brings to mind a completely different passage—or is it so different [than Christianity]?”

“**There is a text about ‘wizards that peep and mutter’** (KJV). The text is Isaiah 8:19. Here it is, from the New American Standard Bible: ‘And when they say to you, Consult the mediums and the spiritists who whisper and mutter, should not a people consult their God?’ . . . **Clearly, the action the wizards were performing was not wrong**—in fact, we are commanded to do it . . . These wizards and mediums are using a God-given form of communica-

tion . . . **To be afraid to do that is like being afraid to use the telephone in case you might get a wrong number.**"

The point of the above passage is that it is all right to repeatedly mutter a mantra, but you must do it to God and not to devils.

CENTERING PRAYER

DYBDAHL'S BOOK / VOP AND FFT / AUSTRALIAN SIGNS OF THE TIMES

Dybdahl's book, *Hunger*, mentions the concept of "centering down" and "centering prayer." He uses those phrases because they are standard jargon in this Buddhist/Catholic spiritual formation invasion of modern Protestantism—and now Adventism as well.

The phrase refers to quieting and then blanking out the mind, so that it can enter into "communion with God."

"Just use the prayer word to keep your mind otherwise blank as you wordlessly spend time with God . . . **Do not give in to endlessly contemplating the sound and meaning of the prayer word.** Just say the word within yourself."—*Centering Prayer: An Ancient Christian Prayer Form, King of Peace Episcopal Church, Kingsland, Georgia.*

Centering prayer is a form of self-hypnosis:

"Centering prayer is essentially a form of self-hypnosis. It makes use of a 'mantra,' a word repeated over and over to focus the mind while striving by one's will to go deep within oneself. The effects are a hypnotic-like state . . .

"After reading a published description of centering prayer, a psychology professor said, 'Your

question is, is this hypnosis? Sure it is.' He said the state can be verified physiologically by the drop in blood pressure, respiratory rate, lactic acid level in the blood, and the galvanic conductivity of the skin."—*John D. Dreher, "The Danger of Centering Prayer," This Rock, Vol. 8, No. 11 (November 1997),*

Centering prayer is making contact with fallen angels. This is precisely what is done in a séance. Centering prayer is occult Eastern mystical meditation **Christianized by the Desert Fathers of the fourth century. Self-hypnosis lies at the foundation of this practice.** Minds indeed are being hypnotized. Centering Prayer is identical to what the Buddhist and Hindu does when he engages in meditation. The hand of spiritualism through the movement of Spiritual Formation with all its associated dangers is being grasped by the hand of Protestantism and, unfortunately, Adventists also.

One of our denominational magazines praises centering prayer as the great solution to all our problems:

"Feel your hunger for connection with the Divine and express your adoration. **God is waiting to connect with you, but it may take some time for you to focus.** If you are distracted by thoughts, let them float past you without following. **One method, called 'centering' prayer, encourages you to re-focus on God by internally saying one of the names of God that you relate to.** This can help you to be present to God again."—"Stillness Is Golden," *Signs of the Times—Australia/New Zealand, Vol. 119, November 2004.*

Notice the difference between the type of contemplation recommended by Ellen White and that

recommended by the author of the above Australian *Signs* article:

“It would be well for us to spend a thoughtful hour each day in contemplation of the life of Christ. We should take it point by point, and let the imagination grasp each scene, especially the closing ones. As we thus dwell upon His great sacrifice for us, our confidence in Him will be more constant, our love will be quickened, and we shall be more deeply imbued with His spirit. If we would be saved at last, we must learn the lesson of penitence and humiliation at the foot of the cross.”—*Desire of Ages*, 83.

The *Signs* article recommends, “If you are distracted by thoughts, let them float past you without following.” In other words, the recommendation is to empty the mind and to avoid thinking. **By contrast, Ellen White recommends a focus of the mind on the life of Christ—an active use of the mind and the thoughts.** These are two very different types of contemplation. **The emptying of the mind is typical of Eastern meditation.**

SPIRITUAL FORMATION INSTRUCTION VOP AND FFT

“Classes/Training—The Voice of Prophecy and Faith for Today have teamed up together **to present a series of instructional studies on spiritual formation.** Mike Tucker either wrote the studies or supervised in their production. **The materials were essentially copied from a non-Adventist spiritual formation organization.**”—*vop.com*.

Here is the “*Spiritual Disciplines Curriculum*” of the *VOP and FFT Biblical Institute*.

“The following are the specific goals for each of the areas of training:

“Spiritual Formation—The Spiritual Disciplines curriculum of the Biblical Institute for the Voice of Prophecy and Faith for Today is developed around the following basic assumptions (*adapted from Forster Freeman, Readiness for Ministry through Spiritual Direction. The Alban Institute, 1986*) . .

“There are spiritual practices that help a person notice and respond to God’s overtures for relationship. These include, but are not limited to, **contemplative prayer**, meditation on Scripture, worship, fasting, retreat, interpersonal relationships, and guided reflection on everyday living.”—*vop.com*.

The silence that Ellen White encourages—a silence and solitude that is essential in order to hear the voice of God—is not the silence brought about by a mantra-style repetition of words:

“All who are under the training of God need the quiet hour for communion with their own hearts, with nature, and with God. In them is to be revealed a life that is not in harmony with the world, its customs, or its practices; and **they need to have a personal experience in obtaining a knowledge of the will of God. We must individually hear Him speaking to the heart.** When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. He bids us, ‘Be still, and know that I am God.’ **This is the effectual preparation for all labor for God.** Amidst the hurrying throng, and the strain of life’s intense activities, he who is thus refreshed, will be surrounded with an atmosphere of light and peace.

“He will receive a new endowment of both physical and mental strength. His life will breathe out a fragrance, and will reveal a divine power that will

reach men's hearts."—*Ministry of Healing*, 58.

BEWARE, BEWARE!

Centering prayer and mantra yoga is the making of contact with fallen angels. This is precisely what is done in a séance. Centering prayer is occult Eastern mystical meditation Christianized by the Desert Fathers of the fourth century. Self-hypnosis lies at the foundation of this practice. Minds indeed are being hypnotized. Centering Prayer is identical to what the Buddhist and Hindu does when he engages in meditation.

"The Protestants of the United States will be foremost in stretching their hands across the gulf to grasp the hand of Spiritualism; they will reach over the abyss to clasp hands with the Roman power; and under the influence of this threefold union, this country will follow in the steps of Rome in trampling on the rights of conscience."—*Great Controversy*, 588.

The hand of spiritualism through the movement of Spiritual Formation with all its associated dangers is even now being grasped by the hand of Protestantism and, unfortunately, by Adventists also.

The so-called "Desert Fathers" were hermits and monks who moved to the desert (primarily in North Africa) and tried to become holy. It was through them that monasticism and asceticism entered the Catholic Church about A.D. 400. They copied the practices of pagan Egyptian temples, and Buddhist teachings and practices. This is how yoga techniques entered into Catholicism,—which has more recently passed them on to Protestantism, and now into Adventism.

Many individuals who spent part of their lives in the Egyptian desert went on to become important figures in the Church of the fourth and fifth centuries. Among them were Athanasius, of Alexandria; John Chrysostom; John Cassian; and Augustine of Hippo. The work of these **concepts and practices of the Desert Fathers, which emphasized an ascent to God through periods of purgation and illumination resulting in unity with the Divine, deeply affected the spirituality of the Western and Eastern Catholic Churches.**

Catholic priest William Shannon in his book, *Seeds of Peace*, declares that we are already, automatically and fully, in God and in paradise,—but just do not realize it yet!

“This forgetfulness, of our oneness with God, is not just a personal experience, it is the corporate experience of humanity. Indeed, this is one way to understanding original sin. **We are in God, but we don’t seem to know it. We are in paradise, but we don’t realize it.**”—*William Shannon, Seeds of Peace, p. 66.*

One can find similar quotations in practically every book written by contemplative authors. **A Hindu guru or a Zen Buddhist master would offer the same explanation.** This conclusion becomes completely logical when tracing the roots of contemplative prayer.

When you voluntarily permit your mind to be blanked out during a yoga séance (for that is what it is), a demon enters your mind.

“Seventh-day Adventists are not to place themselves under the counsel and instruction of teachers who know not the truth for this time.”—*Counsels*

to *Parents and Teachers*, 401.

“If God has any new light to communicate, He will let His chosen and beloved understand it, without their going to have their minds enlightened by hearing those who are in darkness and error. I was shown the necessity of those who believe that we are having the last message of mercy, being separate from those who are daily imbibing new errors. **I saw that neither young nor old should attend their meetings;** for it is wrong to thus encourage them while they teach error that is a deadly poison to the soul and teach for doctrines the commandments of men. The influence of such gatherings is not good. **If God has delivered us from such darkness and error, we should stand fast in the liberty wherewith He has set us free and rejoice in the truth.**

“God is displeased with us when we go to listen to error, without being obliged to go; for unless He sends us to those meetings where error is forced home to the people by the power of the will, He will not keep us. The angels cease their watchful care over us, and we are left to the buffetings of the enemy, to be darkened and weakened by him and the power of his evil angels; and the light around us becomes contaminated with the darkness.”—*Early Writings*, 124-125.

“The experience of the past will be repeated. In the future, **Satan’s superstitions will assume new forms. Errors will be presented in a pleasing and flattering manner. False theories, clothed with garments of light, will be presented to God’s people.** Thus Satan will try to deceive, if possible, the very elect. Most seducing influences will be exerted; minds will be hypnotized.”—8 *Testimonies*, 293.

“I saw the rapidity with which this delusion

[spiritualism] was spreading. A train of cars was shown me, going with the speed of lightning. The angel bade me look carefully. I fixed my eyes upon the train. **It seemed that the whole world was on board.** Then he showed me the conductor, a fair, stately person, whom all the passengers looked up to and revered. I was perplexed and asked my attending angel who it was. He said, **'It is Satan. He is the conductor, in the form of an angel of light. He has taken the world captive . . . And they are all going with lightning speed to perdition.'** **This delusion will spread, and we shall have to contend with it face to face; and unless we are prepared for it, we shall be ensnared and overcome.**—*Faith I Live By*, 319. Also read *Early Writings*, pp. 88, 263.

Leonard Sweet spoke at a pastor's conference, in our Oregon Conference, in 2003. In his book, *Quantum Spirituality*, Sweet says this:

"Mysticism, once cast to the sidelines of the Christian tradition, is now situated in postmodernist culture near the center . . . In the words of one of the greatest theologians of the twentieth century, Jesuit philosopher of religion/dogmatist Karl Rahner, 'The Christian of tomorrow will be a mystic, one who has experienced something, or he will be nothing.' Mysticism is metaphysics arrived at through mind-body experiences. Mysticism begins in experience; it ends in theology."—*Leonard Sweet, Quantum Spirituality*, p. 76.

What Rahner is saying is that the information, given by spirit guides to mystics, ultimately changes their doctrinal beliefs.

Christian mystics have already crossed the line by accepting Buddhist teachings and practices. Tony Campolo says that mystics, through their

mind-emptying learning experiences, may yet be able to unite with the concepts and practices of Islamic mystics, the Sufis (*Tony Campolo, Speaking My Mind, pp. 149-150*).

But just because Christians are now practicing Buddhist religious rites, do not think that Buddhists have come to like us. Read this:

“Yoga guru Baba Ramdev, known for twisting his body through a series of difficult yoga poses and having millions of followers, has drawn the church’s criticism for his ties with right-wing groups infamous for attacking Christians.

“Christian Rights groups say **on average around 200 incidents of attacks on Christians are reported each year and a majority of them can be attributed to groups like the World Hindu Council.**

“In 2008, over 100 Christians were killed and thousands of houses and churches burned in eastern Orissa state’s Kandhamal district. **It is believed that the World Hindu Council was one of the groups that incited the violence.**”—*Yoga Guru’s Hindu Radical Links Irk Indian Christians, Christian Post, June 20, 2011.*

YOGA

Yoga is everywhere. Classes are taught in churches and nursing homes, through city recreation programs, and at elementary schools—both private and public.

Perhaps it has become so common that it is easy to overlook its heathen origins. Yet Hindu and yoga communities are loudly proclaiming, “Yes, all of yoga is Hinduism. Everyone should be aware

of this fact” (from an e-mail written to Laurette Willis by a staff member of the Classical Yoga Hindu Academy in New Jersey).

Doctors encourage the elderly, depressed patients, the mentally ill, and terminally ill patients to practice yoga for its mental and spiritual benefits—as if there is no better comfort available in the world than yoga.

One in 10 Americans practice yoga, according to *Yoga Business Academy*.

**ADVENTIST CHURCH CONNECT:
GRACE NOTES “HOW TO PRACTICE YOGA”**

There are 3,762 churches and schools that use *Adventist Church Connect* provided by the North American Division.

The publisher of *GraceNotes* is the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America. *The Center for Creative Ministry* is the Grace Notes content coordinator for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in North America.

Erika Gladden wrote a lengthy article for *Grace Notes* in 2009, which told all the health benefits that would come to Seventh-day Adventists if they would begin practicing yoga every day!

Here are the first two, and the last, paragraphs in this full-size article, entitled *The Art of Yoga*:

“The ancient art of yoga has been practiced by many people in various cultures and settings. It has become a growing trend in recent years in the United States.

“If you have been looking for ways to gain strength, flexibility and good posture, stress relief as well as health benefits, then yoga might be for you . .

“The only way to know if you will receive these benefits is by trying yoga for yourself. It is recommended to try a class that lasts eight weeks long in order to gain these benefits.”—*Erika Gladden, Grace Notes, 2009.*

THE NAD iFOLLOW STUDY LESSONS TEACH SPIRITUAL FORMATION

The just released iFollow Discipleship Resource has been made globally available via the Internet; and, according to the North American Division, it is “designed to be used in congregations to assist people in their pursuit of God.”

In addition to being released **on the web** (ifollowdiscipleship.org), it has also been released **in the 18th volume of the Pastor’s DVD**. The home page banner states: “Finally: a discipleship training resource that pastors can really trust.”

***Focus on breathing* to obtain mental stillness—**
“One of the easiest ways to practice this ‘stillness’ is to pay attention to your breathing. Don’t make any effort to change how you breathe. Just notice when you are breathing in and when you are breathing out. At first, you will find yourself distracted from your breath by your thoughts. When you realize that you are not paying attention to your breath, just notice this and **go back to focusing on your breathing.**”—*iFollow Discipleship Training Program, p. 2.*

***Stop thinking*—**“You have already asked the Lord to clear your mind of the cluttered, worried, and (let’s face it) self-centered thoughts that usually live there. But you’ll find it’s not as easy as you wish to cooperate with Him. Your mind is so used to scrambling, on six levels, at ninety miles an hour (remember the “chatter”?), that **it takes practice**

to shift into neutral. An almost universal complaint of beginners at meditation is, "I can't do it. My mind just wanders!"—*iFollow Discipleship Training Program, p. 2.*

Repeat a mantra—"Apparently in Bible times, people meditated out loud. So **you could say, or murmur, or whisper one of the names of God.** Or you could sing. It is well known that music goes to the heart as nothing else can do. If you're a visual person, gaze at a lake or stream, or **gaze at a lit candle.** The important thing is to think of something that will help you to concentrate on Him. Not on thoughts about Him or to Him or from Him, not yet, but just on Him. This is where the breathing exercise above can come in. You can **concentrate on your breathing going in and out.** When intruding thoughts come in (and they will), **calmly and patiently turn your mind back to its focal point.**"—*iFollow Discipleship Training Program, p. 7.*

DANGERS OF HYPNOSIS

"Never allow anybody to hypnotize you, no matter how light it is, unless you know the background of the person doing it. It should never be done by anybody who is not properly and competently trained for it."—*The dangers of hypnotic regression, by Jaime T. Licauco, September 16, 2011, Asia One News.*

The warning is given: Have nothing to do with hypnotism!

"In dealing with the science of mind cure [hypnosis], **you have been eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which God has forbidden you to touch** . . . Cut away from yourselves every-

thing that savors of hypnotism, the science by which satanic agencies work.”—2 *Selected Messages*, 350.

GOD DOES NOT WORK WITH SATAN

We cannot take something that has an intrinsically false foundation such as Contemplative Christian Meditation with its focus on breathing, staring at a candle, repeating a phrase or the name of Jesus, all for the purpose of bringing the mind into a neutral state,—and believe that God will come more closely to us.

In the same way, we cannot pray over a Ouija Board and expect that God will spell out the answers to our questions. God will not work in partnership with Satan.

“For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for **ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. **Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.**”—2 *Corinthians* 6:14-17.**

“Meditation/contemplation techniques may bring the practitioner to experience any or all of the following three stages: 1. Bring the body to a relaxed state. 2. Empty the mind by focusing concentration 3. Connect to an entity.”—*stargate.net*.

Here are several warnings about the danger of either hypnotizing others, being hypnotized by an-

other, or hypnotizing yourself. —**Whichever way it is done, Satan controls all those who are involved! Whether someone else controls your mind through hypnotism, or Satan does it directly as you hypnotize yourself—the results are all the same!**

Hypnotism is also called “mind cure,” because it purportedly seeks to improve the mind, mentally and spiritually.

“No individual should be permitted to take control of another person’s mind, thinking that in so doing he is causing him to receive great benefit. **The mind cure is one of the most dangerous deceptions which can be practiced upon any individual. Temporary relief may be felt, but the mind of the one thus controlled is never again so strong and reliable.**”—*2 Mind, Character, and Personality*, 706.

“While **those who are devoted to these sciences laud them to the heavens because of the great and good works which they affirm are wrought by them, they little know what a power for evil they are cherishing;** but it is a power which will yet work with all signs and lying wonders—with all deceivableness of unrighteousness. Mark the influence of these sciences, dear reader, for the conflict between Christ and Satan is not yet ended.”—*Ibid.*, 712.

“**The theory of mind controlling mind was originated by Satan to introduce himself as the chief worker,** to put human philosophy where divine philosophy should be. Of all the errors that are finding acceptance among professedly Christian people, **none is a more dangerous deception, none more certain to separate man from God,**

than is this. Innocent though it may appear, if exercised upon patients, it will tend to their destruction, not to their restoration. **It opens a door through which Satan will enter to take possession both of the mind that is given up to be controlled by another and of the mind that controls.**—*Ibid.*, pp. 712-713.

“This is the science that Satan teaches. We are to resist everything of the kind. **We are not to tamper with mesmerism and hypnotism**—the science of the one who lost his first estate and was cast out of the heavenly courts.”—*Ibid.*, 713.

“I am instructed that you are entertaining ideas with which God has forbidden you to deal. **I will name these as a species of mind cure.** You suppose that you can use this mind cure in your professional work as a physician. In tones of earnest warning the words were spoken: Beware, beware where your feet are placed and your mind is carried. God has not appointed you this work. **The theory of mind controlling mind is originated by Satan to introduce himself.**”—*Ibid.*, 713.

“In taking up the science you have begun to advocate, **you are giving an education which is not safe for you or for those you teach.** It is dangerous to tinge minds with the science of mind cure.

“This science may appear to you to be very valuable, but to you and to others it is a fallacy prepared by Satan. It is the charm of the serpent which stings to spiritual death. It covers much that seems wonderful, but **it is foreign to the nature and spirit of Christ.** This science does not lead to Him who is life and salvation.”—*Ibid.*, 714.

“To study this science is to pluck the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil. God for-

bids you or any other mortal to learn or to teach such a science.”—*Ibid.*, 716.

“Remember that **Satan has come down with great power to take possession of minds and to hold them captive under his sway.**”—*Ibid.*, 716.

“**The mind cure is the most awful science which has ever been advocated.** Every wicked being can use it in carrying through his own evil designs. We have no business with any such science. We should be afraid of it. Never should the first principles of it be brought into any institution.”—*Ibid.*, 716-717.

“Take not a particle of interest in Spiritualistic theories. Satan is waiting to steal a march upon everyone who allows himself to be deceived by his hypnotism. He begins to exert his power over them just as soon as they begin to investigate his theories.”—*Ibid.*, 718.

“The experience of the past will be repeated. In the future, Satan’s superstitions will assume new forms. **Errors will be presented in a pleasing and flattering manner. False theories, clothed with garments of light, will be presented to God’s people.** Thus Satan will try to deceive, if possible, the very elect. **Most seducing influences will be exerted; minds will be hypnotized.**”—*Ibid.*, 719.

“Mesmerism was from the devil, from the bottomless pit, and that it would soon go there, with those who continued to use it.”—*Ibid.*, 719.

“We must be guarded on every side and perseveringly resist the insinuations and devices of Satan. He has transformed himself into an angel of light and is deceiving thousands and leading them captive. **The advantage he takes of the science of the human mind is tremendous.** Here, serpentlike, he imperceptibly creeps in to corrupt the work of God. The miracles and works of Christ he would

make appear as the result of human skill and power.

“If he should make an open, bold attack upon Christianity, it would bring the Christian in distress and agony to the feet of his Redeemer, and his strong and mighty Deliverer would put the bold adversary to flight. **He therefore transforms himself into an angel of light and works upon the mind to allure from the only safe and right path.**”—*1 Testimonies*, 290.

“**For thousands of years Satan has been experimenting upon the properties of the human mind, and he has learned to know it well.** By his subtle workings in these last days, he is linking the human mind with his own, imbuing it with his thoughts; and he is doing this work in so deceptive a manner that those who accept his guidance know not that they are being led by him at his will. **The great deceiver hopes so to confuse the minds of men and women that none but his voice will be heard.**”—*Ibid.*, *Medical Ministry*, 111.

People need to recognize the fact that, when they empty their minds and cause them to go blank, they have not come to God—but have left Him! Their minds are bewildered, and Satan is able to enter and control them.

“The mystic voices that spoke at Endor and at Ephesus are still by their lying words misleading the children of men. Could the veil be lifted from before our eyes, we should see evil angels employing all their arts to deceive and to destroy. **Wherever an influence is exerted to cause men to forget God, there Satan is exercising his bewitching power. When men yield to his influence, ere they are aware, the mind is bewildered and the soul polluted.** The apostle’s admonition to the Ephesian church should be heeded by the people of God to-

day: 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them' (Ephesians 5:11)."—*Acts of the Apostles*, 290.

"Side by side with the preaching of the gospel, agencies are at work which are but the medium of lying spirits. **Many a man tampers with these merely from curiosity, but seeing evidence of the working of a more than human power, he is lured on and on until he is controlled by a will stronger than his own.** He cannot escape from its mysterious power.

"The defenses of the soul are broken down. He has no barrier against sin. When once the restraints of God's Word and His Spirit are rejected, no man knows to what depths of degradation he may sink."—*Desire of Ages*, 258.

DOCTORAL LEVEL Ph.D.

ANDREWS UNIVERSITY INSTRUCTION

The Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary at Andrews University in Berrien Springs, Michigan, is promoting contemplative spirituality (i.e., spiritual formation) through a new concentration in their Doctor of Ministry degree program. An October 2009 Andrews newsletter explains that *Discipleship and Spiritual Formation* will begin in February 2010.

Our young theology students from all over the world can now obtain a one-year advanced doctorate in discipleship and spiritual formation. When they receive it, they can be hired as teachers at our colleges, worldwide, and teach these pagan concepts to our young people!

“The *Doctor of Ministry Discipleship and Spiritual Formation Concentration* integrates an understanding of **a theology of discipleship and spiritual formation**, with the process and dynamics involved in the participants’ personal spiritual growth and consequent modeling, mentoring and teaching roles within the context of family, church and community.”—*andrews.edu*.

ANDREWS COURSE DESCRIPTION—Here is the official description of the program of studies in this field at Andrews University, for the Doctor of Ministry degree. Its official title is *Discipleship and Spiritual Formation*:

“Discipleship and Spiritual Formation

“The *Doctor of Ministry Discipleship and Spiritual Formation Concentration* integrates an understanding of **a theology of discipleship and spiritual formation with the process and dynamics involved in the participants’ personal spiritual growth and consequent modeling, mentoring and teaching roles** within the context of family, church and community.

“*Competencies*: The D. Min. Discipleship and Spiritual Formation Concentration **seeks to create competency in the areas related to the discipline**.

“*Academic*: To enable participants to **acquire knowledge of current and classic literature related to the area of spiritual formation and the process of discipleship**. To engage this area of ministry through theological, biblical, and psychological perspectives, as well as to learn basic research skills relating to the field of discipleship and spiritual formation.

“*Spiritual and Theological Formation*: **To en-**

able participants to reflect on their personal spiritual and theological perspectives and to integrate them into their practice of ministry.

“Praxis [practice sessions]: To enable participants to **acquire skills pertinent to their practice in pastoral care and spiritual leadership within the context of discipleship and spiritual formation** in the family, church, and wider community.

“Self-reflection/Personal Growth: To enable participants to understand that, in Christian ministry, being is as important as doing and that true spiritual formation is grounded in a ‘double knowledge’—that of self and God. [Nothing about the Bible, Bible truth and doctrines, or Spirit of Prophecy.]

“Outcomes: Upon completing this program, the participants will be able to:

“Articulate a Seventh-day Adventist perspective on discipleship and spiritual formation. • *Demonstrate* a continuing maturity in Christian formation, personal growth and ministry. • *Integrate* the theological, theoretical, experiential, and practical dimensions of discipleship into a theologically reflective practice of ministry. • *Train* spiritually mature and relationally gifted people as spiritual mentors. • *Embrace* and carry out a biblically and theologically faithful praxis [practicing] of discipleship and spiritual formation both individually and corporately. • *Discern* truth from counterfeit as a means of both personal and corporate protection in light of the growing number of nonbiblical ‘spiritualities.’ ”

Do not imagine that ours is the only Christian university offering doctoral degrees to ministers who are heavily oriented to spiritual forma-

tion. *Andrews is just copying programs which are already being taught in other Protestant, Catholic, secular, and liberal Jewish universities.*

“Examine Spiritual Formation Doctoral Degrees, offered by +1000 top accredited universities & colleges. Find detailed information, contact . . .”—*emagister/net/doctoral degrees.*

Here is a selective list of some of the most prominent and influential of the many educational institutions (secular, Catholic, liberal Protestant, Evangelical, and Jewish) now placing heavy emphasis on spiritual formation:

- Baylor University, Texas
- Chicago Theological Seminary, Illinois
- University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana
(heavily Roman Catholic)
- Pittsburg Theological Seminary, Pennsylvania
- Talbot School of Theology (Biola University,
La Mirada, California)
- Hebrew Union College: Jewish Institute of
Religion, Cincinnati, Ohio
- University of California at Santa Barbara
- Liberty University, Virginia (It is strongly
Evangelical; Jerry Falwell founded it.)
- Florida State University, Tallahassee

NEW TRAINING PROGRAM

PATHWAYS

Pathways is a program that has been recently developed by the Roseville SDA Church; and, in March 2008, it was presented to pastors, conference leaders, and church members of the Northern California Conference (NCC). This pro-

gram is closely related to Spiritual Direction.

The following is part of the announcement for the Pathways Retreat:

“We use selected EGW books; books by David Benner: *Desiring God’s Will, The Gift of Being Yourself, Sacred Companions, and Surrender to Love* (which we have found to be the most helpful). We also use some mentoring handbooks from a company who specializes in working with church groups from the Auburn area. Hope this helps.”—*Roseville SDA Church Announcement of Roseville Pathways Retreat, February 2008.*

Benner’s book, *Sacred Companions*, openly promotes the teachings of Thomas Merton; and it is actually a who’s who of mystical and panentheistic writings such as atonement denier Alan Jones (*Reimagining Christianity*), Thomas Keating, and a host of like-minded writers.

SPECIAL ANN NEWS RELEASE

PREPARING OUR PEOPLE

The following is an abridgment of a very lengthy *Adventist News Network* press release that was issued in February 2004. It was designed to prepare our churches and members for the flood of spiritual formation instruction which would later follow. Many innovations and enlargements have occurred since then to bring our denomination, leaders, pastors, colleges, universities, and church members into a much fuller lockstep coordination with current spiritual formation practices in the other churches.

“ANN Feature: Church, Congregations Increase Focus on ‘Spiritual Formation’

“3 Feb 2004—**Spiritual formation is a topic being raised by many pastors and church leaders in a growing number of Christian denominations.** It’s no longer enough to just know doctrine and facts. —**In today’s hectic society people are searching for something deeper and more meaningful,** something that makes sense in their whirlwind lives . . .

“These concerns can be linked to how the church rates **in the area of spiritual formation, which has been defined by one Adventist Church pastor as ‘the process of becoming a mature Christian disciple of God.’** Another person describes it as ‘whatever you do to specifically nourish your relationship with God.’

“Today this subject is receiving serious emphasis in Adventist institutions, as well as in local congregations. Though the church doesn’t have an accredited educational program dealing with spiritual formation at any of its theological schools [they now do], it’s seeing this subject become more common in today’s modern, seeking world. **Spiritual formation is not a new idea or concept, and ‘a lot of Protestants are in the same boat—we are rediscovering it,’ says Dr. Jon Dybdahl,** president of Walla Walla College, an Adventist institution in Washington State. And, he adds, the Adventist Church has some work to do . . .

“Pastor Martin Feldbush, associate director for Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries, whose work brings him in contact with leaders of several other denominations, says that **the Adventist Church is not alone in its quest for deeper spiritual formation among members.** ‘A lot of churches out there are

struggling with the same issues as we are. We're not in isolation as though there's something wrong with us' . . .

"John Jenson, pastor of the 150-member South Bay Adventist Church in Torrance, California, says, **'There's a need for spiritual formation within the [Adventist] Church because we have been so doctrinally oriented . . .** Jenson says that, without spiritual formation, a person would be 'spiritually uncivilized.' **It 'is the process by which they can go from being a spiritual infant to spiritual maturity . . . developing the potential that God has put within you.'** Dybdahl adds that people need to 'begin to recognize that knowledge without life experience can be dead. [They need to] recognize how crucial it is to people's lives [and] how much the younger generation values experience.'

"Nikolaus Satelmajer, from the church's *Ministerial Association*, responsible for continuing education for Adventist clergy, **believes there's now a shift from emphasis on doctrine to more emphasis on spiritual formation within the Adventist Church** . . .

" 'Though it's not a concept that's easy to grasp for an organization as a whole, spiritual formation is something each individual member can work on,' Feldbush says . . .

"Spiritual formation is not about what one does, but what the motivations behind one's actions are. Dr. Roger Dudley, professor emeritus of *Christian Ministry* and director of the *Institute of Church Ministry* at Andrews University Theological Seminary, and the 2002 survey coordinator, says there are stages of moral development. **'A person who studies the Bible every day because he'll be lost if he doesn't has a low level of moral development.'**

[Spiritual formation takes on several forms:] “ ‘There are disciplines of devotion, meditation, prayer, listening and so on,’ Feldbush explains. ‘It’s a discipline which can be heeded through the assistance of a person who is trained in helping people grow in these ways’ . . .

“The Adventist world church created the *International Board of Ministerial and Theological Education* (IBMTE) in September 2001, designed to provide overall guidance and standards to the professional training of pastors, evangelists, theologians, teachers, chaplains and other denominational employees involved in ministerial and religious formation, or spiritual formation, in each of the church’s 13 regions around the world.”—*Silver Spring, Maryland, United States, Wendi Rogers/ANN (Adventist News Network)*.

LECTIO DIVINA

JON DYBDAHL / D. KOVACS

Lectio divina takes a few words of Scripture—and turns them into a mantra!

The essence of the Spiritual Formation Movement utilizes methods such as *lectio divina*, visualization, altered-state-of-mind meditation using breath prayers, Jesus prayers, centering prayers, and prayer labyrinths for achieving this free and open communication with heaven.

How is lectio divina done? Lectio practitioners begin by reciting a chosen phrase or word over and over, to help free the mind by partially or wholly blanking it out. Then they are prepared to receive from a spirit the proper meaning of a verse of Scripture.

The book, *Hunger*, by Jon Dybdahl and the book, *Devotional Retreats*, by Debbonnaire Kovacs, **both published by our church**, teach how to reach this deep experience with “God” by using these methods.

LECTIO DIVINA IMAGING

iFOLLOW / iFOLLOW DISCIPLESHIP

Lectio divina study is also concerned with intensifying a high level of imagining scenes. This is supposed to help a person be more spiritual. The Adventist *iFollow* spiritual formation training program takes this to an extreme. **It says to imagine movies in your mind in order to draw you closer to God!**

“Here’s an interesting idea next time you have the remote control in your hand. **If you’re watching a movie and you come to a scene that stimulates in your heart the qualities you desire, rewind that scene and play it again.** Watch it carefully. **Allow yourself to feel the desire, longing, passion** for the divine qualities being manifested. Rewind it again and play it. Watch it. Feel it. Reflect on it. **Talk about it with your partner or friend watching with you.** Consider doing this throughout the whole movie, spending time focusing on the divine qualities being shown.”—*iFollow - Followdiscipleship.org, Discipleship Resource for Seventh-day Adventists.*

DIRECTORSHIP, MENTORING, AND DISCIPLING

Learning how to practice yoga and mind emp-

tying is only part of what is involved in the Spiritual Formation Movement in Protestantism and in our church. **Also of extreme importance is training men and women who can individually lead out as “spiritual guides” in indoctrinating still more people into it.** They are called “spiritual directors.” The actual instruction is called “mentoring” and those being instructed are said to be “discipled.” *Shalem.org* is the largest training school for spiritual formation directors.

“Seek mentorship and spiritual guidance. The expression ‘**spiritual guide**’ may wave red flags to some Protestants, but it need not do so. A spiritual guide is not an authority who tells us exactly what we should do. But a fellow pilgrim listens to us and tries to help us on our way. If the term truly bothers you, use the [Latin] word, *æmentor*. **It implies someone of experience who can help us grow in the knowledge and practice of the disciplines.**”—*Jon Dybdahl, Hunger: Satisfying the Longing of Your Soul, p. 136.*

“Do not depend upon human beings for spiritual help. Resist the temptation to make flesh your arm. Look to God as children look to an earthly Father. Believe that He loves you and that He will help you, even as He has promised. If you will believe, you will have confidence, trust, reliance, and rich blessings, because you will realize that Christ is the foundation of your faith.”—*EGW, The Gospel Herald, March 1, 1901.*

“God has been greatly dishonored by His people leaning upon human beings. He has not told us to do this. He has told us that He will teach us, He will guide us . . . Think of how many promises He has given us, which we may grasp by

the hand of faith . . . He wants us to become acquainted with Him, to speak to Him, to tell Him of our difficulties, and obtain an experience in asking of One who never misjudges and never makes a mistake.”—*Lift Him Up*, 55.

“The promises of God are full and abundant, and there is no need for anyone to depend upon humanity for strength. **To all that call upon Him, God is near to help and succor.** And He is greatly dishonored when, after inviting our confidence, we turn from Him—the only One who will not misunderstand us, the only One who can give unerring counsel—to men who in their human weakness are liable to lead us astray.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, 381-382.

WOMEN CLERGY CONFERENCE TAUGHT SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND MENTORING

“Women Clergy Conference Focuses on Nurture, Mentoring, and Education

“The North American Division hosted its third annual Women Clergy Conference in Donaldson, Indiana, October 15-18, 2006, **focusing on spiritual leadership with the theme “Soul Designer.”** Scores of female pastors, chaplains, and others in spiritual leadership throughout the division attended, as well as several female seminarians from the Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, Michigan.

“**Ruth Haley Barton**, co-founder and president of *The Transforming Center*—**a Christian organization located in Wheaton, Illinois**, that provides resources for pastors—began the conference with her presentation, ‘Strengthening the Soul of Your Leadership.’

“**Ruth Haley Barton trains thousands a year in the art of contemplative prayer.** ‘Ask for a

simple prayer to express your willingness to meet God in the silence . . . a simple statement . . . such as 'Here I am' . . . Help yourself return to your original intent by **repeating the prayer phrase that you have chosen.**

"Ruth Haley Barton was trained at the Shalem Prayer Institute for Spiritual Formation."—*Ruth Haley Barton, Discipleship Journal, Vol. 113, 1999.*

Here is one of many statements by the founder of Shalem Institute regarding the unity of Christian and Eastern religions:

"This mystical stream [**contemplative prayer**] is **the Western bridge to Far Eastern spirituality** . . . It is no accident that **the most active frontier between Christian and Eastern religions today** is between contemplative Christian monks and their Eastern equivalents."—*Tilden Edwards, Shalem Founder.*

THE ADVENTIST CHAPLAIN

The Adventist Chaplain is a quarterly publication of *Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries*, the chaplaincy services department and official endorsing agency of the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

In this article by Martin Fieldbush, carefully notice his words in this General Conference periodical, The Adventist Chaplaincy Ministries:

"A Word about This Issue's Special Focus—While serving as a chaplain near Chicago, **I took a class in Spiritual Direction at nearby DeAndreis Theological Seminary [Roman Catholic Seminary]. It was my introduction to the classic ministry form refined through the centuries by Catholic religious and clergy and in recent decades discovered by many Protestants as well.** It is a ministry that focuses on discerning God's mov-

ing and guiding in our daily lives. **I have asked two Seventh-day Adventist women trained as spiritual directors to give us an overview of their ministry.** First Delcy Kuhlman will provide an overview of the ministry and its process. Then Diane Forsythe will focus on the qualifications of spiritual directors.”—Martin Fieldbush, *The Adventist Chaplain: adventistchaplains.org/pdf/newsletter/jul_sep_2003*.

Should we be going to the Catholic Church in order to find ways to better approach God?

“It is a backsliding church that lessens the distance between itself and the Papacy.”—EGW, *Signs, February 19, 1894*.

There are several spiritual direction training programs which are available for chaplains and pastors. For more information, visit www.sdiworld.org and take the navigation bar to “Training Programs and Retreats.” Some of the better known programs are *The Shalem Institute* and *The Upper Room*, but you will find others as well (*the Editor, ibid.*).

“But what if you have a spiritual need that another sermon or another counseling session won’t help? What if you want to listen to God more and more fully; and engage God more and more deeply? It could be that you need a spiritual director more than a chaplain or pastor. Sometimes a pastor or chaplain is also a spiritual director. But all pastors and chaplains are not spiritual directors any more than all medical doctors are cardiologists.”—*Ibid., p. 5*.

“For a better understanding of this process or to help discern God’s invitation into it, the reader might find *Sacred Companions* by David Benner or *Soul Keeping* by Howard Baker a very good read.

Other resources can be found at www.shalem.org and www.sdiworld.org.”—*Ibid.*, p. 4.

David Benner, the author of *Sacred Companions*, clearly promotes contemplative spirituality in his book.

Shalem.org is the largest training school for spiritual formation directors.

“The Shalem Institute provides in-depth support for contemplative living and leadership—a way of being in the world that is prayerfully attentive and responsive to God’s presence and guidance.

“For over 30 years, we have offered **a wide variety of programs and resources for spiritual directors, clergy, lay leaders** and individuals who want to open themselves more fully to God in their daily lives and work.

“All of our programs share **a common, central grounding in the Christian contemplative tradition** that encourages an awareness of God’s immediate presence, humility in understanding God’s ways, and a radical trust in God at work in our own lives and the lives of others. Throughout our history, **our programs also have been enriched by the contemplative wisdom of other faith traditions.**

“Participants come from many different denominations, faith traditions, and walks of life—all seeking connection, nurture and support. Over the years, thousands of men and women, nationally and internationally, have immersed themselves in our long-term extension programs and been refreshed through our many shorter programs. Often participants, especially from our longer programs, find their lives and ministries renewed or transformed.

“Shalem programs are uniquely experiential in approach and are grounded in our understanding of **classic contemplative wisdom**. All offer a **rich variety of practices, teachings and leadership styles**. Program leaders and program design seek to create a sense of sacred space that fosters authentic spiritual community and spiritual growth.

“At Shalem, we honor each individual spiritual path and welcome anyone who would seek to learn from the contemplative way.”—*Shalem Institute, brochure*.

“**You need to have a spiritual director/companion for yourself, meeting at least monthly, beginning in February at the latest**. If you do not already have such a relationship and are not able to find an appropriate person, we may be able to provide contact with someone near you from the pool of Shalem Spiritual Guidance Program graduates. If you have never had a director before and feel the need to understand what spiritual direction is about and what to look for in a director, you might benefit from reading the relevant sections in Tilden Edwards’ *Spiritual Director/Spiritual Companion: ‘Guide to Tending the Soul’* (Paulist Press [Catholic publisher] 2001).

“You also need to have a **personal prayer/meditation practice** that includes some unambiguous time each day for the presence of God. You further are asked to take at least **two days of silent, guided retreat**, sometime before the end of the Program, and to **explore some form of journal keeping**. In addition, we believe that you can benefit greatly from forming a prayerful support group for yourself that meets regularly, if you do not already have one.”—*Supplementary Information and Application, Class of 2013*.

JOURNALING

Since all of spiritual formation is focused on thinking about yourself, it is to be expected that “journaling” would be also.

Journaling consists of writing down your thoughts about yourself. **It is actually an introspective diary! All these notes of thinking about your feelings and attitudes, day after day, are to be presented for the inspection of your spiritual director** who is mentoring (discipling) you. **All this, of course, is foreign to the teachings of God’s Word.** We are to personally come to God, confess our sins, receive forgiveness, live to obey God’s Inspired Writings, and seek to help and bless others. However some Adventist pastors and study courses are teaching this journaling:

“**Imagine** you are at the foot of the cross. Record in your Bible study **journal** what you ‘see’ happening around you. Describe what the soldiers, priests, common people, disciples, and Mary (Jesus’ mother) are doing.”—*Grace Link Curriculum, Power Points, Second Quarter, Year A, p. 21.*

“**Imagine.** Close your eyes and imagine the scene. What smells and sounds are there? What colors do you see? Write in your Bible study **journal.**”—*Ibid., p. 37.*

Dr. William Loveless, while president of Columbia Union College and later a leading pastor in southern California, spent most of his time in the pulpit urging his audiences to practice journaling (writing down their emotional impressions) and imaging (visualization) as the best way to draw closer

to God.

WALKING THE LABYRINTH

Many pagan religions have used the labyrinth as a way to contact the gods, either by walking silently or praying for an infilling of divinity. Finally, at the center of the labyrinth, the merging into godhood occurs.

Labyrinth walking has now entered our own denomination!

The labyrinth at the **Calimesa Seventh-day Adventist Church**—“Weather Watch, a Union-wide time of prayer and renewal begins for us next weekend. Prayer Service on Friday night, Oct. 6, 7 pm in the sanctuary: a time for worship, community prayers, and silent prayers. **On Sabbath**, Oct. 7, **enjoy a Prayer Labyrinth** set up in the Fireside Room following second service, and open until 4 pm. All ages welcome to participate!”—*Calimesa, California, SDA Church announcement, September 9, 2007.*

The labyrinth at the **Trans-European Division and Newbold College (Education Leadership Summit)**—“**The Labyrinth Experience**, Newbold Gymnasium”—*Trans-European Division and Newbold College joint announcement, May 10, 2009.*

The labyrinth at the **La Sierra University**—“Adventist Women and the Earth: A Response to Ecofeminism’ will take place at the La Sierra University Church. The conference will feature talks, workshops, panels, a film screening, **prayer labyrinth** and community outreach activities.”—*La Sierra University announcement, April 2009.*

The labyrinth at the **Newbold College (Week of Spiritual Emphasis)**—“To encourage participants to think about their spiritual journeys, the organising team had invited MA Theology student, Patty Miranda, to arrange a **labyrinth** – a mini spiritual journey in Salisbury Hall. In candlelight and against a background of tranquil music, the path led individual seekers on a spiritual journey where they encountered music, meditation, art, media and symbolic activities at interactive stations. Audio prompting challenged participants to rethink their relationship with themselves, other people, the planet, and God. Albanian MA student, Ermira Kollarja, was moved by her labyrinth experience. She said, ‘It was beautiful. I cried three times. When I dropped the stone into the water, it felt like Jesus was beside me lifting the burdens from my shoulders. It was so real.’”—*Adventist News, UK*.

Commended in the *Australian Signs of the Times*—“The **Labyrinth** is a spiritual experience that invites you to be still and silent as you participate in progressive experiences integral to the spiritual journey.”—*Australian Signs of the Times, November 2004*.

The labyrinth at the **Escondido Seventh-day Adventist Church**—“**Prayer Labyrinth** April 4 following lunch after church.”—*Escondido, California, Church announcement*.

The labyrinth at the **Redlands Academy**—“Students have donated to projects sponsored by ADRA, World Vision, Heifer International, and the International Red Cross. They have participated in a “global issues experience,” a **prayer labyrinth-type contemplative adventure** across a world map with sta-

tions designed to enable students to confront their attitudes about the big issues.”—*Redlands, California, Academy, notice in Pacific Union Recorder.*

The labyrinth at the **North Hawaii Community Hospital (SDA)**: “The grounds of North Hawaii Community Hospital in Waimea have a **5-circuit labyrinth** that is used both as a healing path of prayer for the hospital community and as a fundraiser.”—*Notice in the North Hawaii Community Hospital news sheet, the Heartpath.*

Adventist Education Prayer Labyrinth—On the Spiritual Resources for Adventist Teachers website you will find this link: *Lost in Wonder - Online Prayer Labyrinth: Reflectively journey through 10 stages of Christian prayer online.* “**A labyrinth is an ancient spiritual tool that leads the traveler along a meditative path.** Through images, words, music and actions we hope that you are able to consider your spiritual journey and be inspired and challenged. “Reflectively journey through 10 stages of Christian prayer online.”—*sdaedspiritualresources.net (the first part of a lengthy article).*

We have learned that this variety of ancient pagan practices, now being called “spiritual formation,” actually originated in Eastern pagan religions, were adopted by the Desert Fathers of the Catholic Church, and are now being offered to the Protestant community. While the goal of achieving higher spirituality is a worthy one, the method recommended is dangerous in the extreme. Deeper spirituality is experienced through

surrender to Christ, the putting away of sin,—and sanctifying obedience by the enabling grace of Christ to the Word of God and the Ten Commandment law.

It seems futile to attempt to Christianize practices of pagan origin—such as breath prayer, lectio divina, and the Jesus Prayer—and attempt to use them in our worship of God. We cannot use practices based on an intrinsically false view of God to worship our Creator God who wishes to have an intimate relationship with us. We cannot expect God to work through this modality by requesting that He will, any more than we can pray over a Ouija board and expect that God will answer our questions.

“**‘For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? For ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.’**”—*2 Corinthians 6:14-17.*

Instead of being a means to draw us closer to Christ, Eastern-style meditative practices only draw us closer to evil spirits. They do not help to draw us into true fellowship with Christ in His work in this world—a work that is outward-focused rather than inward-focused. The spirituality produced by Eastern-style meditation and prayer is a seducing counterfeit of the genuine.

**ADDITIONAL WAYS THAT
SPIRITUAL FORMATION
IS BEING SPREAD IN OUR CHURCH**

Every year, some new promotional activity is advertized and conducted in our denomination. For practical purposes, it is impossible to keep track of them all.

In the late 1980s, the emphasis on so-called “celebration churches” began, with their band music and swaying singers in front of the audience.

Heavy promotion of spiritual formation began about the turn of the century. Since 2005, this concern, that all members of the church practice yoga and related activities, has become more urgent. Surely, we are nearing the end of time!

Some of these spiritual formation projects have already been mentioned. Here are still more:

**ZEN, YOGA, AND TM:
BOOKS BY DEBBOINAIRE KOVACS
COMBINING BUDDHISM AND ADVENTISM**

On the back page of the *Adventist Review* (June 2001, North American Division edition) will be found an advertisement for a book from Pacific Press entitled ***Devotional Retreats, by Debbonnaire Kovacs***. In this book she defends the practice of combining the techniques of “Zen Buddhism, Yoga, and Transcendental Meditation” with “Christian meditation.”

In chapter one of *Devotional Retreats*, the author tells how she became interested in various meditation disciplines such as Zen Buddhism, Yoga, and Transcendental Meditation. Seeing

what she believes to be the benefits of the mysticism of these oriental religions, she relates how it **occurred to her that perhaps there was a way to “combine” these practices “with Christian meditation.”**

She experimented with the idea and found a way to blend the mysticism of these oriental religious practices into her devotional life. **After using the process that both pagan and Roman Catholic mystics employ to go into vision by emptying their minds, she would “see Jesus” and talk with him.** However, after being warned by Seventh-day Adventist counsel against the danger of inculcating mysticism into Christianity, she became afraid and for a time discontinued her mystical exercises.

She tells how, in “meditation,” “Jesus” promised to grant to her a cherished desire. She does not reveal what that desire was, but goes on to explain that the promise was never fulfilled and she realized that it would never be fulfilled. This of course added to her doubts and apprehension.

However, after a protracted struggle with her fears and doubts, alas, **she tells how she finally went back to her self-initiated trances.** She relates how she had a breakthrough after reading Morris Venden’s book, *How to Know God’s Will in Your Life*:

“The answer to my question—Is it, or is it not, safe to prayerfully imagine conversations with God—is **Yes, it is safe, as one part of a whole, well-rounded Christian understanding of how God leads us!**”—*Debbonnaire Kovacs, Devotional Retreats.*

She relates her emotions at her return to the

“Jesus”; he *appeared to her after she used Buddhist methods to enter a partial trance:*

“I cried. I told my friends and family. Most of all, I thanked God. I went back to meditation. I hugged Jesus and cried some more.”—*Ibid.*

This book, *Spiritual Retreats*, sold many copies among Adventists. It was featured on page three of the July 2001 issue of the *Pacific Union Recorder* in a positive review by the Director of Women’s Ministries for the North American Division. In her comments she expressed her belief that, “This book is definitely worth your devotional time!”

The Review 2001 Camp Meeting Catalog featured the book on page 5, in its “Knowing God Better” section. The advertisement promises that, by using the method taught in the book, one will “draw **closer to Jesus.**” However the counsel of the Spirit of Prophecy, in regard to Kellogg’s book on Eastern religion, advises us just the opposite regarding the sophistries of mysticism:

“We need not the mysticism that is in this book. **Those who entertain these sophistries will soon find themselves in a position where the enemy can talk with them, and lead them away from God.**”—*1 Selected Messages, 202.*

Incredible though it may sound, **after publishing *Devotional Retreats in 2001*, Kovacs has since been asked by Pacific Press to write still more books for our people!** She has authored two books and several articles, which include **the first two of four new elementary Bible textbooks for our children!**

Very subtle elementary facets of her mysticism have been woven into the *Grace Link Cur-*

riculum, a publication of Sabbath School/Personal Ministries Department, General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists. **Our children in Sabbath School class are instructed to practice simple aspects of this mysticism.**

In 2002, Pacific Press published a second book by Kovaks, entitled *Gardens of the Soul: Cultivating a Devotional Life with God*.

In 2011, the Youth Ministries Department of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventist Church published *My Identity in Christ: 365 Daily Devotionals*, written by Debbonaire Kovacs for our junior-age youth. This is astounding! The woman who believes that Christ appears to her when she practices yoga—has been given the opportunity to publish a devotional book for our children!

On Debbonaire Kovacs' website, we find this statement:

“My largest and most humbling contracts have been to write Bible textbooks for use in elementary church schools. These were not planned with homeschoolers in mind, but they were written by a longtime homeschooler; so I tried to write them in a way that would be useful in that context. I know of a couple of homeschooling families that have used them with success. **The complete series from first through eighth grade is available through the textbooks link on pacificpress.com.**

“Each one of the primary series may be used with all four primary grades.”—*Debbonaire.com*.

The Scriptures warn us not to inquire as to the methods used by heathen nations to worship their gods:

“Take heed to thyself that thou be not snared by following them, after that they be destroyed from before thee; **and that thou inquire not after their gods,** saying, How did these nations serve their gods? even so will I do likewise.”—*Deuteronomy 12:30.*

“Then said he unto me, Son of man, hast thou seen what the ancients of the house of Israel do **in the dark, every man in the chambers of his imagery?**”—*Ezekiel 8:12.*

“Today the mysteries of heathen worship are replaced by the secret associations and séances, and the obscurities and wonders, of spiritistic mediums. **The disclosures of these mediums are eagerly received by thousands** who refuse to accept light from God’s Word or through His Spirit. Believers in spiritism may speak with scorn of the magicians of old, but **the great deceiver laughs in triumph as they yield to his arts under a different form.**”—*Prophets and Kings, p. 210.*

“But this thing commanded I them, saying, **Obey My voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be My people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you,** that it may be well unto you. But they hearkened not, nor inclined their ear, but walked in the counsels and in **the imagination of their evil heart,** and went backward, and not forward.”—*Jeremiah 7:23-24.*

“Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Hearken not unto the words of the prophets that prophesy unto you: they make you vain: they speak a **vision of their own heart,** and not out of the mouth of the Lord.”—*Jeremiah 23:16.*

“Likewise, thou son of man, set thy face against the daughters of thy people, which **prophesy out of their own heart;** and prophesy thou against them.”—*Ezekiel 13:17.*

**ADVENTIST REVIEW ARTICLE
PRAISING THE DESERT FATHERS**

The Following excerpts are from *The Gentle Whisper—Connecting with the Divine through solitude*, *Adventist Review*, January 29, 2004, by Bonita Joyner Shields, assistant editor of the *Adventist Review*:

“In the fourth century, men and women entered the desert *en masse* in a movement known as the Monastic Movement. **These ‘desert fathers and mothers,’ as they were called, exited society in order to lead a solitary, contemplative life of prayer. They were seeking a deeper experience with God.** While I’m not advocating a reclusive lifestyle (neither did Jesus), **I’ve had a fascination with these men and women of faith, and have learned much from them about the spiritual discipline of silence.**

“In his book, *The Solace of Fierce Landscapes: Exploring Desert and Mountain Spirituality*, Belden Lane explores what the desert meant for these ancient men and women, and what it can mean for us today.

“To submit to silence in prayer is to admit that we stand naked before God, without even words to cover ourselves. Words are the fig leaves we continually grasp in the effort to clothe our nakedness’ (*Lane, p. 68*).

“This past spring I decided it was time for me to take an extended personal spiritual retreat. (No, I didn’t go camping; I’m not there yet!) **I left home on a Sabbath morning and headed out to a personal retreat center [Shalem Institute is the largest and closest one to the Review**, and is the one that thousands go to for instruction in spiritual

formation], **where I got a room, meals, and all the solitude I could handle until Sunday afternoon.** Even before leaving on this relatively short excursion, though, I wondered how I would fill up that much time with solitude.

“What I discovered after spending this time reading, writing, praying, walking, eating, thinking, planning, crying, laughing, and *sleeping*—almost all of it in silence—was that . . . I had more deeply connected with the Divine.”—*Adventist Review*, January 29, 2004.

ADVENTIST WORLD MAGAZINE: ICELANDIC CONFERENCE

Adventist World*, December 2007—*Re-Formation in Iceland, by Gavin Anthony, director of *Youth and Discipleship* for the *Iceland Conference*.

“The Iceland Conference is building its discipleship model around spiritual formation, a term that identifies the focus of discipleship—the practical and spiritual re-forming of broken human hearts back into the image of Jesus.”

“To learn more about the spiritual formation work in the Iceland Conference, go to reflectingJesus.org.”—*Adventist World*, December 2007.

REFLECTING JESUS

The website, reflectingjesus.org, says that it is about “discipleship and spiritual re-formation resources for the journey.” The one in charge of it, Gavin Anthony, says, “I am currently working as a pastor in Dublin while doing a Ph.D. in Religious Education, focusing on Christian Formation and Discipleship, at Andrews University.” So this is an Adventist website.

He also wrote this:

“But as I began to search for the editor’s email

address to attach the document, an alarming thing happened. **All of a sudden, the hairs all over my body stood up on end as the room was filled by an evil presence.** It is hard to describe, but my mind suddenly went very hazy, and it was as though all the energy in my body was being sucked out. **From previous experiences, I knew what was happening.** All I could do was slam my laptop shut, and find a phone to ask someone to pray for me. However, as I stood up, my knees buckled because I had already become so weak. In a strange way, I was almost glad for that experience. If what I had been writing was important to Satan, it was evidently important to God. **The next day I emailed off the manuscript, confident of God's hand in my life.**—*reflectingjesus.org*.

Anthony's "Discipleship Links" are three of the most influential in spiritual formation: Spiritual Formation Forum, Renovaré, Dallas Willard.

GODENCOUNTERS.ORG BREATHING AND MANTRA

This is a new Adventist youth and young adult organization, which also uses single-word mantra methods in the hope of "deepening spirituality."

"GODencounters Schedule for 2008—GODencounters is a movement of [SDA] young adults who are wholeheartedly **seeking a 24/7 experience of GOD, recklessly living for His renown.** Daring to deepen intimacy with God, GODencounters gives focus to seven discipleship themes where practices of the Christian faith are emphasized.

" 'We prayed GODencounters would be a catalyst for deep, personal experiences with GOD,' asserts co-founder Jeff Gang. '[GODencounters is] not an act or a program, but an everyday, every moment way of living. GODencounters aims to **deepen de-**

votion to Jesus by developing disciples, walking recklessly in His footsteps.’”—godencounters.org.

“The Art of ‘Being Still’: A Work in Progress. Here are some helpful hints for ‘being still.’ First, identify ‘sacred space’ where you spend nonnegotiable time with God free of distractions. Second, take some deep breaths **imagining Christ breathing the breath of life into you** and you exhaling out your worldly cares. Third, ask God to speak to you. If you choose to read Scripture, ask yourself what might God be telling you in that passage. Next, learn to listen. **If you find your mind wandering, slowly repeat the name of Jesus over and over again.**”—godencounters.org.

LOMA LINDA BROADCASTING TEACHES MANTRA, TO EMPTY THE MIND

On Loma Linda Broadcasting Network TV, May 16, 2009, in a program called *Views to Use*, where the topic was *Sacred Rhythms: Solitude*, John Brunt, senior pastor of the Azure Hills Adventist Church, Grand Terrace, California, asks the question: “What do you do about the problem of the racing mind, to have silence and solitude? For some people it’s just hard to get the mind to quit and concentrate. Do you have any tips on what one can do?”

In answer to this question, John Choi, **Spiritual Formation Pastor** at Azure Hills, replied: **“I have this prayer, this same prayer that I pray and I just pray it** and let my mind calm down; and then, after that, I go into meditative prayer. That seems to work for me.”

Earlier in the program, Pastor Choi quoted the Catholic ascetic and writer, Henri J.M. Nouwen, who promotes contemplative prayer. Nouwen states:

“The quiet repetition of a single word can help us to descend with the mind into the heart . . . This way of simple prayer . . . opens us to God’s active presence” (*Henri J.M. Nouwen, The Way of the Heart*).

**LIVING WITH HOPE SEMINAR
RECOMMENDS RICHARD FOSTER**

“*Living with Hope* Seminar materials, from the NAD Church Resource Center, are now available at no charge for pre-release download at livingwithhopeseminar.com.

“This is a complete 16-part Bible seminar sharing fundamental Seventh-day Adventist beliefs.

“*Living with Hope* will be released in July 2009, and will be free to every Seventh-day Adventist Church in the North American Division on the Pastor’s DVD Volume 16.”—*Living with Hope Seminar, brochure.*

In Lesson 11 of this pastor’s DVD series entitled *Spiritual Disciplines*, **Richard Foster is mentioned four times. Foster is the founder of one of the largest interdenominational spiritual formation training organizations.**

“Renovaré (founded by Richard Foster) is a Christian parachurch organization that provides resources related to spiritual disciplines: www.renovare.org.”—*iFollowdiscipleship.org, Discipleship Resource for Seventh-Day Adventists*).

Chapter One of this book contains many statements about how deeply Richard Foster is into the mysteries of Buddhism and Hinduism.

**LOMA LINDA UNIVERSITY:
COURSEWORK ON SPIRITUAL FORMATION**

“Loma Linda University is now offering and spon-

soring a nine week program on **Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction** that counts as credit toward MFCC and LCSW degrees. **Mindfulness is a positive word in English vocabulary, but in this context it is just another word for meditation.** Wikipedia states that it **'plays a central role in the teaching of Buddhist meditation,'** and that it is a **'critical factor in the path to liberation and subsequent enlightenment.'** **In Buddhist tradition it is known as Vipassana meditation.** Around 1970, like most other contemplative disciplines, it has come into Western psychology and later into medicine in general. **This term is often used, so that meditation can be taught without seeming to have any religious implications. It is argued that, if it is stripped of Buddhist spirituality, it can be used in a secular way.** I am not sure if that is truly possible; but, even if you take away Buddhist spirituality, the mindfulness practice will still be wrapped in the Buddhist philosophy. Ultimately, **it was created to accomplish goals that have nothing in common with Christianity.**"—llu.edu/wholeness/Mindfulness.

On the flyer for this Loma Linda University course, "mindfulness" is defined as paying attention, in a nonjudgmental way, to each moment. This technique goes beyond the thoughts and lets you observe or become aware of your own thoughts, body, or anything in the present moment without any judgment. **The Buddhist website for Vipassana meditation is an excellent** source of information; and here is how it describes the process of mindfulness: **The student is thus taught to be introspective and continually think of himself!**

"Mindfulness" is nonjudgmental observation. It is that ability of the mind to observe without criticism. With this ability, **one sees things without**

condemnation or judgment. One is surprised by nothing. One simply takes a balanced interest in things exactly as they are in their natural states. **One does not decide and does not judge.** One just observes.”

The flyer for the course also states that “the emphasis on mindfulness . . . fosters a practical way to apply these methods to everyday life.” **How is this process, secularized or not, going to agree with the work of the Holy Spirit which is to convict us of sin and lead us to repentance,** when we keep practicing how to observe our thoughts in a non-judgmental way? **How will we practice discernment and distinguish right from wrong if we practice observing the present moment without any judgment** and learn to take a balanced interest in all things?

Since “it is a way of self-transformation through self-observation and introspection,” where does it leave a need for a Saviour?

This introspective meditation is often used, even for therapeutic purposes in combination with other types of meditation, and is present in many other religious traditions that focus and calm the mind by purging it of all thoughts. **The final result will be learning to achieve an altered state of consciousness.** When discussing the *Mindfulness Based Relapse Prevention* program on his blog (*Scientific Mindfulness*), Brian Thompson, Ph.D., states:

“MBRP is an 8-week group-based treatment. Participants are initially introduced to mindfulness through a body scan, a practice developed by Kabat-Zinn in his program. Sitting meditation is eventu-

ally introduced, and **there is also some yoga.**”—
scientificmindfulness.com.

The course given at Loma Linda University is based on a practice developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn, who is known for introducing and integrating mindfulness and meditation with medicine. He is a Professor of Medicine Emeritus and founding director of the *Stress Reduction Clinic* and the *Center for Mindfulness in Medicine, Health Care, and Society* at the *University of Massachusetts Medical School* (*umassmed.edu*).

Also on Loma Linda University’s website there is a section devoted to spiritual disciplines which includes meditation, silence, and solitude. (*explorewholeness.com/spiritual-disciplines*).

There is also an “Innerweave” column, where the featured article [the only one actually shown] is the one promoting *lectio divina*.

(*explorewholeness.com/mindbodyspirit-innerweave*).

While spiritual formation is still taught at our Seminary, they have changed the name to hide its identity.

“ ‘Spiritual formation’ is a controversial topic in the Seventh-day Adventist Church. *Adventist Review* editor, Bill Knott, recently interviewed three seminary faculty members about criticism the seminary has received for programs on spiritual formation. **The seminary chose to drop the term, opting instead for ‘Biblical spirituality.’**

“ ‘Spiritual formation’ and ‘spiritual discipline’ are terms that are new to some, and there can be a tendency to reject something simply because the label is unfamiliar . . . **By whatever name we call it,**

the subject is important.”—*Bill Cork, Who’s Afraid of Spiritual Formation? August 16, 2011.*

**LA SIERRA UNIVERSITY
EMPOWER MINISTRY CONFERENCE:
SPIRITUAL FORMATION AND RETREAT**

“Empower Ministry Conference to Host Jon Dybdahl & Jon Paulien—Empower Ministry Group’s 5th National Leadership Conference will take place this year on the Labor Day weekend, August 31-September 2, **at La Sierra University Alumni Center, featuring Jon Dybdahl and Jon Paulien as seminar speakers.** Established in 2002 as a non-profit organization by a group of Korean-American youth and young adult pastors, Empower is **a ministry-support organization for next-generation Asian-American Adventist leaders.** In the past, **Empower has drawn 300-400 attendees from across North America in their mid-teens to 50s . .**

“There will be two foci to this year’s Empower Conference: (1) *Spiritual Formation* and (2) the Book of Revelation. The conference will commence in the evening of Friday, August 31, with the opening worship. **On Sabbath, Jon Dybdahl (former president of Walla Walla University and professor of mission at Andrews Seminary) will lead the conference through a full-day ‘retreat’ focusing on personal spiritual formation.**

“Those who attended the Seminary in the 1990s will recall the powerful impact that Dybdahl’s *Spiritual Formation class* had on their lives. Many will also remember the daylong retreat that was part of that course. On the Sabbath of the weekend, Dybdahl will guide us through that special experience and teach us how to lead such a retreat.”—*La Sierra University, Empower*

Ministry Conference, announcement sheet.

“**Spiritual formation is not a new idea or concept, and a lot of Protestants are in the same boat—we are rediscovering it,**” says Dr. Jon Dybdahl . . . And, he adds, ‘the Adventist Church has some work to do.’ For many years, his Spiritual Formation at *Andrews Seminary* has surprised, shocked and blessed pastor-students who thought they knew everything there is to know about spiritual growth and discipline. **His fresh approach to spiritual formation for Adventist leaders will help re-ignite the fire within you for ministry.**”—*Empower 2005 Conference information sheet.*

**SOUTHEASTERN CALIFORNIA
CONFERENCE: TASK FORCE TO REACH
THE NEXT GENERATION**

“**The Task Force to Reach the Next Generation was set up by the administrators of the Southeastern California Conference (of Seventh-day Adventists) . . . to reach and retain youth and young adults . . .** As additional groups of pastors were formed, the ‘official’ name became *The Journey to Reach the Next Generation* . . . and **most participants and leaders now refer to the process simply as ‘The Journey.’**”—*Adventist Pastor Dr. Merle Whitney, “A Journey with God and Colleagues in Solitude, Support and Sharing,” Adventist Today magazine, September 1, 2002.*

“Paul Jensen, director of *The Leadership Institute*, and an ordained Adventist minister, was commissioned to direct and facilitate the task force (to reach the next generation). He was joined by his Institute colleagues Wayne Anderson, Jon Byron, and Chuck Miller. They have continued the process along with other Institute staff and resource persons who have been added (*ibid.*).

“Paul Jensen is also an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Leadership and Christian Formation and Spirituality in Contemporary Culture at Fuller Theological Seminary. He has served on the staff of *Campus Crusade for Christ* and pioneered campus ministries **and trained campus chaplains for the Adventist Church.**”—*tli.cc.(the Leadership Institute website; also in “The Journey” brochure, November 2010.*

“Staff includes Jon Ciccarelli, who “serves as senior pastor at the Calimesa Seventh-day Adventist Church. Jon is a singer/songwriter and speaks on the subjects of spiritual formation/life transformation, worship, mentoring, and leadership. With his wife, Lisa, Jon leads *Sacred Hearts*, a retreat ministry for married couples, deepening their intimacy with one another through deepened intimacy with God.”—*Ibid.*

“On the Journey, we will experience two Spirit-led journeys (Inner & Outer): An Inner Journey. At the heart of this process is spiritual formation—the central priority of discipleship and the foundational base from which Christian leaders learn to serve the church and the world with love and power . . . Attention will be given to nourishing the inner life of participants through the daily exercise of spiritual disciplines and in extended times alone with God for silence, solitude, prayer, confession, worship, celebration, study, praying the hours, meditation, reflection, examen, lectio divina, journaling, spiritual reading, etc. Target Audience: pastors, associates, church planters, youth pastors, parachurch staff, missional leaders, teachers, chaplains and marketplace leaders.”—*Ibid.*

“The foundation for “The Journey” was the spiritual formation of the pastors involved in the

process. Though we who began The Journey . . . did not know this was a key element in what we were getting into, it was welcomed and quickly accepted. **Soon spiritual formation as part of The Journey process became an important aspect of recruiting subsequent groups** . . . The Journey is truly a life-saving journey to God. And as a pastor on this journey I have the privilege of inviting my parishioners to join me. They in turn invite others. I wish you, too, could come along.”—*Adventist Pastor Dr. Merle Whitney, “A Journey with God and Colleagues in Solitude, Support and Sharing,” Adventist Today magazine, September 1, 2002.*

GODENCOUNTERS

SDA YOUTH TRAINING SEMINARS

GODencounters Schedule for 2008:

“GODencounters is a movement of SDA young adults who are wholeheartedly seeking a 24/7 experience of GOD, recklessly living for His renown. Daring to deepen intimacy with God, GODencounters gives focus to seven discipleship themes, where practices of the Christian faith are emphasized.

“ ‘We prayed GODencounters would be a catalyst for deep, personal experiences with GOD,’ asserts co-founder Jeff Gang. ‘This is not an act or a program, but an everyday, every moment way of living.’ GODencounters aims to deepen devotion to Jesus by developing disciples, walking recklessly in His footsteps.

“May 23-25, 2008 – GODencounters @ **Florida Conference Camp Meeting** May 26, 2008 – GODencounters Intensive Training @ **Forest Lake Church** May 28-31, 2008 – GODencounters @ **Georgia Cumberland Conference Camp Meeting** June 20 & 21, 2008 – GODencounters @ **Pennsylvania**

Conference Camp Meeting June 28, 2008 – GODencounters @ **New Jersey Conference Camp Meeting.**—*godencounters.org*.

**SPIRITUAL FORMATION:
TRANS-EUROPEAN DIVISION
FIVE-YEAR INSTRUCTIONAL PLAN**

“Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church: **You are looking at an outline of our plan for the next five years. We are the Trans-European Division of the Seventh-day Adventist Church:** Christ-centered, Bible-based, interested in the well-being of man as a whole, and with an endtime focus.

“1.5 Spiritual Formation and Nurture

“1.5.1 Discipleship and Spiritual Formation - Paul Clee **GOAL:** Build widespread **awareness and practice of discipleship** in all fields, **including the disciplines of spiritual formation.**

“IMPLEMENTATION: Develop and use **seminars for local training on the use of spiritual disciplines:** Inwardly (meditation, prayer, fasting, study), Outwardly (simplicity, solitude, submission, service), and Corporately (confession, worship, guidance, celebration).

“RESOURCES: Literature such as: *The Equipping Church* (Sue Mallory); *Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home* (**Richard Foster**); *Celebration of Discipline* (**Richard Foster**).”—*Trans-European Division, Five-Year Instructional Plan, p. 20* (*ted-adventist.org*).

**IN CONCLUSION:
TWO CHRISTIANS SPEAK**

THE FIRST ARTICLE

The first article is by a professed Christian who says that he knows all about how yoga came from ancient paganism,—but he loves it anyway!

Yes to Yoga: Can a Christian breathe air that has been offered to idols? from *Christianity Today*, May 19, 2005—

“Now, my enthusiasm for yoga doesn’t mean I’m in denial about its Hindu roots. The magazine, *Hinduism Today*, editorialized that **‘the knowing separation of Hatha Yoga from Hinduism is deceptive.’** I know that hard-core yogis believe that **yoga is more than exercise or a relaxation technique. To them, it’s a religious ritual.**

“In other words, yoga is like the meat that had been offered to idols. Can I put it on my sandwich? That, more or less, was the question on the minds of some of Christians in Corinth. ‘We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one,’ Paul wrote to them. ‘For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth . . . yet for us there is but one God.’ Food ‘does not bring us near to God; we are no worse if we do not eat, and no better if we do,’ he said.

“As for me, put that meat on my sandwich! Yummy! Thank you, Jesus!”—*Yes to Yoga: Can a Christian Breathe Air That Has Been Offered to Idols? Christianity Today*, May 19, 2005.

The above unbelievably profane article reveals the attitude of *Christianity Today*, America’s leading Evangelical magazine, toward Buddhist practices, even the deepest ones!

THE SECOND ARTICLE

This second article is by a woman who began practicing yoga at the age of seven, and later taught it as a professional instructor for years.

*Knowing all about it,—**she has decided yoga, in all its forms, is from the devil, and will take all who keep dabbling in it—to perdition.***

Here is her entire article. It is outstanding!

Say No to Yoga

Why I Left Yoga for Christ

by Laurette Willis

Over the last several decades yoga has been embraced by the mainstream of society—and even the church. We find yoga classes offered at YWCAs, church fellowship halls, and even elementary schools.

There are an estimated 15-20 million people practicing yoga in the U.S., and estimates of 50,000 to 100,000 yoga instructors offering classes at 20,000+ locations.

As a child growing up on Long Island, I became involved with yoga at the age of seven, when my mother and I began watching a daily yoga exercise program on television. For the next 22 years I was heavily involved with yoga, metaphysics, and the New Age Movement until I came to the end of myself and surrendered my life to Jesus Christ in 1987.

I call yoga “the missionary arm of Hinduism and the New Age Movement.” We don’t often think of other religions having missionaries, but **the philosophy and practice of yoga have been primary tools**

of Hindu “missionaries” to America since “Indian priest and mystic” **Swami Vivekananda** introduced yoga to the West at the 1893 World’s Fair in Chicago.

Swami Vivekananda

Swami Vivekananda is an “Indian priest and mystic” who first introduced yoga to the West at the 1893 World’s Fair in Chicago. He is called “Hinduism’s greatest modern missionary” by Swami Palani, in *Hinduism Today*.

Interestingly, Swami Vivekananda is attributed with the idea of combining the theory of “evolution of the soul” with his teachings of Hinduism. Instead of working out one’s “karma” by becoming a grasshopper, ant or human in progressive lives, he taught an “evolution of the soul,” whereby the individual continues in an evolutionary process to “manifest the god within.”

Another Hindu missionary welcomed into elite circles was **Paramhansa Yogananda**; he started the Self-Realization Fellowship in Los Angeles.

Yogananda cleverly chose to demonstrate that yoga was completely compatible with Christianity. Wearing a cross, he came to America in the 1920s with the Hindu religious text, the *Bhagavad Gita*, in one hand and the Bible in the other. He reasoned that yoga was the binding force that could connect all religions.

Personal Experience

From experience I can say that yoga is a dangerous practice for the Christian and leads seekers away from God rather than to Him. You may say, “Well, I’m not doing any of the meditation stuff.

I'm just following the exercises." It is impossible, however, to separate the subtleties of yoga the technique from yoga the religion. I know because **I taught and practiced Hatha Yoga for years.** Hatha Yoga is the most popular yoga style available on store-bought videos and in most gyms.

Perhaps you have sensed uneasiness while doing yoga (what some call a "check in your spirit"), but you ignored that quiet nudge. I urge you to pay attention to it. Jesus Himself said, "The sheep follow Him; for they know His voice" (John 10:4).

The yoga mudra (hand gesture or "gateway") for Namaste ("I bow to the divine in you") is a Hindu gesture that predates Christianity. The Bible speaks of praying with uplifted hands or "hands spread up toward heaven" (1 Kings 8:22, 54; 2 Chronicles 6:13).

"Let my prayer be set forth before you as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice." *Psalm 141:2.*

Your yoga teacher may bow to her class saying, "Namaste." ("I bow to the divine in you.") Poses have names such as *Savasana* (the Corpse Pose) and *Bhujangasana* (the Cobra or Snake Pose). References are made to *chakras* or "power centers" in the body, such as the "third eye." **The relaxation and visualization session at the end of yoga classes is skillfully designed to "empty the mind" and can open one up to harmful spiritual influences.**

As Christians, you are instructed to "be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2), not the emptying of your mind. Many believe that transformation process occurs as we medi-

tate and feed on the Word of God—renewing our minds by filling them with God’s thoughts, not emptying them or filling them with the prideful thoughts of man.

The Dangers of Yoga

It seems the enemy has a counterfeit for almost everything the Lord offers. (Note: When I use the phrase, “the enemy,” I am not referring to a person or group of people. Rather, “the enemy” refers to Satan, the devil, the enemy of your soul. We love people. We hate sin and the author of it—the one Jesus calls “the thief,” in John 10:10, “a murderer” and “the father of lies” in John 8:44.)

While mind-numbing tranquillity may feel good for a time, it’s a poor substitute for the “peace which surpasses all understanding” (Philippians 4:7) and “the joy of the Lord” which “is your strength” (Nehemiah 8:10).

Yoga’s breathing techniques (*pranayama*) may seem stress-relieving; yet they can be an open door to the psychic realm—inhaling and exhaling certain “energies” for the purpose of relaxation and cleansing.

What is Pranayama?

According to one yoga website: “**Pranayama forms a vital step in the path to ascendancy** (*i.e.* liberation, freedom or salvation) through Yoga. *Pranayama* is derived from two Sanskrit words—*Prana* (life force) and *Ayama* (control). Therefore, in its broadest description, Pranayama would mean “the control of the flow of life force.”

In other words, **pranayama involves manipulation of so-called life force energy, and is part**

of the twisted “plan of salvation” through yoga.

In Paul’s letter to the church at Ephesus, he refers to the enemy of our soul as “the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the children of disobedience” (Eph. 2:2). “Air” in this instance does not mean the oxygen we breathe. Rather, Paul is referring to what some call the “second heaven,” or “psychic arena.”

The first heaven is the atmosphere we can see (planets, sun, moon and stars). The third heaven is where God dwells (2 Cor. 12:2). Hence, the “second heaven” is that realm between, an atmosphere wherein angelic and demonic forces dwell (Daniel 10:10-13). Dabbling in this arena as if it were a playground is certainly not what we as believers are called to do.

It can be quite dangerous to manipulate “life force energy.” Those who do so are moving into the realm of psychism, magic, and witchcraft—where the “god of this world” as Paul called him has “blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them” (2 Cor. 4:4).

What about Tai Chi?

Whenever you see the words *prana* (Hinduism), *chi* (Chinese, Tai Chi), *ki* (Japanese, martial arts), or *mana* (Hawaiian Huna religion), they are all referring to the same thing. **Like yoga, Tai Chi and traditional martial arts involve similar manipulation of life force energy, thus opening the door to deceptive spiritual influences.**

PraiseMoves Scripture Sequences, where we flow from one PraiseMoves posture to another as we re-

cite verses of Scripture, may be considered “The Christian Alternative to Tai Chi!”

Chanting and Out-of-Body Travel

Both chanting and the customary relaxation period at the end of a yoga session also have an agenda that may surprise the weekend yogi. Before becoming a Christian, **I remember numerous instances of “traveling outside my body” during yoga relaxation periods.** I wonder who—or what—checked in when I checked out? Whether you believe such phenomena can happen or not, **some medical professionals claim such experiences have led to psychosis.**

Yoga is Hinduism

Nine out of ten Hindus agree with this statement: “Yoga is Hinduism.”

Again and again we hear or read, “Yoga is just exercise,” or “Yoga is a science. It is not religion.” But what do Hindus and true yogis say?

Time Magazine featured a quote from Subhas Tiwari, a professor of yoga philosophy and meditation at the *Hindu University of America* in Orlando, Florida:

“Yoga is Hinduism,” said Professor Tiwari of the Hindu University of America. You may read the full article from the September 5, 2005, *Time Magazine* issue on “Stretching for Jesus.”

A staff member of an east coast classical yoga academy wrote to me, “Yes, all of yoga is Hinduism. Everyone should be aware of this fact.” This staff member went on to say she didn’t appreciate my “running down of the great Hindu/Yogic religion.”

“Christian yoga” is an oxymoron (that is, there is no such thing).

People ask me, “Christian Yoga is okay, right?” Well, you tell me.

Listen to the description of this book about “Christian Yoga Metaphysics” and tell me if you can spot anything Christian about it:

“The Life and the Way: The Christian Yoga Metaphysics” by A.K. Mozumdar.

“A.K. Mozumdar was the founder of the *Christian Yoga Society*; and this book outlines much of its spiritual philosophy. East and West are brought together to allow those from both spiritual backgrounds to enhance their growth and to possibly experience an all-pervading Oneness in the universe. This is an important spiritual work that is capable of transforming an individual. From reading it, one may discover a unique path to follow and achieve spiritual peace of mind.”

This “Father of Christian Yoga” lived from 1864-1953. Here’s an interesting quote from Mozumdar, who obviously denies that Jesus came to earth in the flesh, as a man (a basic tenet of Christianity):

“If man thinks and acts, is not the thinker and actor God? If God is all life, then all lives are God. The creative power is the very nature of the being of the Creator; hence the creative power is God. Life is the Creator, and will never be reduced to the level of its own creation. This knowledge sets a man free.”—A.K. Mozumdar, *The Life and the Way: The Christian Yoga Metaphysics*.

No, A.K., it is only knowledge of the truth that Jesus is the only Way, the Truth and the Life that sets one free. I for one am SO grateful that Jesus, the King of Glory, lowered Himself and came to earth as a man, His own creation, that He could be the perfect sacrifice for mankind.

So much for so-called “Christian Yoga.”

What did the apostle John under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit say about testing the spirits, whether they are of God or not?

“Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God; because many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.”—*1 John 4:1-3*.

Did you know that yoga poses are offerings to the 330 million Hindu gods? Can you see a twisting of Romans 12:1 here (“present your bodies a living sacrifice”)?

George P. Alexander, Ph.D., who taught World Religions at Biola University, is a friend of our family. Born in Sri Lanka, George grew up in India, the birthplace of Hinduism and yoga. **He told us that yoga poses are actually offerings to the 330 million Hindu gods.**

“Many Westerners who practice yoga today are unaware that the physical positions assumed in yoga symbolize a spiritual act: worshipping one of the many Hindu gods,” Dr. Alexander said. “To a Hindu, yoga is the outward physical expression of a deep spiritual belief. You cannot separate one from the other.”

Since yoga is tied so strongly to Hinduism, can there be such a thing as “Christian yoga,” or would that be an oxymoron (a contradiction in terms)?

Many practicing Hindus, as well as Christians, agree that, since yoga IS Hinduism, the two cannot be combined.

One of our friends spent three months on a missionary trip to India several years ago. **She said her group often saw people performing yoga poses in front of statues of the gods in the streets!** Some brought offerings of flowers, some fruit, some themselves.

Acts 15:29 tells us to “abstain from things offered to idols.”

Where Yoga Leads (according to Hindus)

In an article, dated May 14, 2006, Darryl E. Owens, of the *Orlando Sentinel*, quoted Sannyasin Arumugaswami, managing editor of *Hinduism Today*. Arumugaswami said **Hinduism is the soul of Yoga “based as it is on Hindu Scripture and developed by Hindu sages. Yoga opens up new and more refined states of mind; to understand them one needs to believe in and understand the Hindu way of looking at God . . . A Christian trying to adapt these practices will likely disrupt their own Christian beliefs.”**

In an article entitled “*An Open Letter to Evangelicals*,” from the January 1991 issue of *Hinduism Today*, Swami Sivasiva Palani writes:

“A small army of yoga missionaries—hatha, raja, siddha and kundalini, beautifully trained in the last 10 years, is about to set upon the Western world. They may not call themselves Hindu, but Hindus know where yoga came from and where it goes.”

Swami Palani goes on to write:

“We hope this proves useful to you. I close with a quote from Swami Vivekananda, Hinduism’s great-

est modern missionary, spoken in January of 1895, **'What I now want is a band of fiery missionaries.'** It's a hundred years late. But it appears he's going to get his wish."

In the West, the term, "yogi," is used to refer to anyone who practices yoga. However, in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, **the god Krishna says that the true yogi is one who has surrendered himself "fully unto me."**

Besides these historical evidences, **I can clearly state from my own experiences and those of many I knew while in the New Age Movement, yoga class was the door that led us into the New Age Movement.**

New Age is a combination of a number of religions and has, as its foundation, pantheism (the doctrine that all forces, manifestations, etc. of the universe are God; also, the worship of all gods) **and astrology** (the belief that the positions of the sun, moon, stars and planets guide or affect human affairs, and can foretell the future).

According to Swami Vishnudevananda, one of yoga's most influential leaders, **Hatha Yoga "prescribes physical methods to begin . . . so that the student can manipulate the mind more easily as he advances, attaining communication with one's higher self."**

Maharishi Mahesh Yogi taught that **through meditation, not salvation through Jesus Christ, "a sinner comes out of the field of sin and becomes a virtuous man."**

It seems the student is being manipulated as well. **Yoga's "least religious" form, Hatha Yoga**

[the kind that all non-Buddhist Muslims, including Christians, use], influences one's spiritual life as unmistakably as any one of the dozens of other yoga techniques. *Hatha Yoga* is actually seen as the stepping stone to *Raja Yoga* (the form said to involve "psycho-physical meditation techniques to attain an experience of the truth and ultimate liberation from the [reincarnation] cycles of death and rebirth, or *moksha*.")

Yoga claims physical and mental disciplines bring about union with God. According to Maharishi Mahesh (once associated with the Beatles), **Yogi meditation "brings us more ability for achieving something through right means, and very easily a sinner comes out of the field of sin and becomes a virtuous man."**

The Bible tells us: **"For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth [to be] a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God."**—*Romans 3:23-25*.

Planting Seeds of New Age Religion

I remember planting numerous seeds of new-age philosophy when I taught yoga classes—enough to make anyone without a firm foundation of Biblical knowledge doubt the veracity of God's Word and fall prey to Satan's question to Eve, "Has God indeed said . . .?" (Genesis 3:1).

For example, as a New Ager, **I was convinced that there was no such thing as "sin."** All we

had to do was “get in touch with god within and connect to Universal Mind.” One of my favorite new-age parrotisms was, “Nothing is good or bad, but thinking makes it so” (quoting Shakespeare like it was Bible!). Another favorite: “All is good. All is God.” And the real kicker, whenever something bad happened to someone, “Well, they obviously drew this to themselves on some level to learn something.” What insensitive nonsense!

If there is no such thing as sin, then there’s no need for a Saviour. And if there’s no need for a Saviour, then why did Jesus come? Oh, He was “just a good Teacher.” Then why didn’t I follow His teachings? In John 3:3 Jesus said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again (from above), he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

—*That concludes Laurette Willis’ article.*

FOR FURTHER READING

Today’s Christian Woman Magazine has ceased publication. It offered biblical perspectives to modern women; but, unfortunately, it is no longer in print and, apparently, no back copies are available.

The Truth about Yoga | Yoga led Laurette Willis into a new-age lifestyle. Now she’s warning others of the spiritual pitfalls—and offering an alternative (*Today’s Christian Woman*, March/April 2005).

Is Yoga Really So Bad? | The truth behind this exercise sensation (*Today’s Christian Woman*, September/October 2001).

Escape from the Spirit Guides | How one woman’s quest led to the dark side of the new age,

where she encountered spirits that wouldn't let her leave (*Today's Christian Woman*, July/August 1997).

EXAMPLES OF THIS MODERN SPIRITUALISM

“Through continuous spiritual consciousness, **death no longer exists.**”—*Dr. Bernie Siegel, Love, Medicine, and Miracles*, p. 220 (new age/occult writer endorsed by Norman Vincent Peale).

“**Sin is any act or thought that robs myself or another human being of his or her self-esteem.**”—*Robert Shuller, Self-Esteem: The New Reformation*, p. 14. (Peale was Shuller's inspiration for his work.)

“**To be born again means we must be changed** from a negative to a positive self-image—**from inferiority to self-esteem**, from fear to love, from doubt to trust.”—*Ibid.*, p. 68.

“In the mind of Jesus, self-esteem is the ultimate human value. Christ came to teach that simple truth, and He came to live it.”—*Robert Schuller, Hour of Power*, February 4, 2005.

“Jesus Christ knew, in reality, there is no evil. Therefore **evil is a false law man has made for himself.**”—*Florence Shinn, The Game of Life*, p. 30. (Shinn was a metaphysician; endorsed by Norman Vincent Peale on the cover).

“**All true believers are one with Christ and each other**, regardless of denominational background or beliefs.”—*Willow Creek Statement of Faith: The Church* (Bill Hybels, founding pastor).

“**‘If I accept Jesus Christ, is my salvation forever?’ Definitely!** Your salvation is through the most trustworthy being in the universe—Jesus Christ!

You didn't do anything to earn your salvation, and **you can't do anything to lose it.** Your salvation is maintained by God's trustworthiness and love, not by what you do."—*Saddleback Church Beliefs, Rick Warren.*

"When you stand before God, **He will not ask you about your religious background or doctrinal views.** The only thing that will matter is: Did you accept Jesus?"—*Rick Warren, The Purpose Driven Life, p. 34.*

"If you want Jesus to come back sooner, focus on fulfilling your mission, **not figuring out prophecies.**"—*Ibid., p. 286.*

"I invite you to bow your head and quietly whisper the prayer that will change your eternity: 'Jesus, I believe in you and receive you.' Go ahead. If you sincerely meant that prayer, congratulations. Welcome to the family of God."—*Ibid., pp. 58-59.*

— **SECTION THREE** —

**STATEMENTS
FROM INSPIRATION**

—————
**WHY THESE ERRORS
MUST BE RESISTED**

Are we solidly in the Scripture and beliefs handed down from the apostolic church to the "church in the wilderness"? Are we a remnant of that wilderness church,—or are we wandering confused in the spiritual desert wastelands of Egypt, in

search of the Buddhist lore that they began practicing back then?

BEWARE OF SATANIC DELUSIONS

“Those who oppose the teachings of spiritualism are assailing, not men alone, but Satan and his angels. They have entered upon a contest against principalities and powers and wicked spirits in high places. Satan will not yield one inch of ground except as he is driven back by the power of heavenly messengers. **The people of God should be able to meet him, as did our Saviour, with the words: ‘It is written.’** Satan can quote Scripture now as in the days of Christ, and he will pervert its teachings to sustain his delusions. **Those who would stand in this time of peril must understand for themselves the testimony of the Scriptures.**

“Many will be confronted by the spirits of devils personating beloved relatives or friends and declaring the most dangerous heresies. These visitants will appeal to our tenderest sympathies and will work miracles to sustain their pretensions. **We must be prepared to withstand them with the Bible truth that the dead know not anything, and that they who thus appear are the spirits of devils.**

“Just before us is ‘the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.’ Revelation 3:10. **All whose faith is not firmly established upon the Word of God will be deceived and overcome.** Satan ‘works with all deceivableness of unrighteousness’ to gain control of the children of men; and his deceptions will continually increase. **But he can gain his object only as men voluntarily yield to his temptations. Those who are earnestly seeking a knowledge of the truth and are striving to purify their souls through obedience, thus doing what they can to pre-**

pare for the conflict, will find, in the God of truth, a sure defense. ‘Because thou hast kept the word of My patience, I also will keep thee’ (verse 10) is the Saviour’s promise. He would sooner send every angel out of heaven to protect His people than leave one soul that trusts in Him to be overcome by Satan.”—*Great Controversy*, 559-560.

“Men of intelligence are infatuated with satanic sorcery as verily today as in the days of Paul. Thousands accept the opinion of the minister or obey the injunctions of the pope or priest, and neglect God’s Word and despise His truth. God would have His people learn their duty for themselves. The Bible declares His will to men, and it is as much our privilege and our duty to learn that will as it is that of ministers and popes and priests to learn it. What they can read from God’s Word, we can all read.”—*Signs*, May 18, 1882.

“It is true that spiritualism is now changing its form and, veiling some of its more objectionable features, is assuming a Christian guise . . . Even in its present form, so far from being more worthy of toleration than formerly, **it is really more dangerous, because it is a more subtle deception. While it formerly denounced Christ and the Bible, it now professes to accept both.** But the Bible is interpreted in a manner that is pleasing to the unrenewed heart, while its solemn and vital truths are made of no effect. **Love is dwelt upon as the chief attribute of God,** but it is degraded to a weak sentimentalism, **making little distinction between good and evil.** God’s justice, His denunciations of sin, the requirements of His holy law, are all kept out of sight. The people are taught to regard the Decalogue as a dead letter. **Pleasant, bewitching fables captivate the senses** and lead men to reject the Bible as the foundation of their faith.

Christ is as verily denied as before; but **Satan has so blinded the eyes of the people that the deception is not discerned.**—*Great Controversy*, 557-558.

“The line of distinction between professed Christians and the ungodly is now hardly distinguishable. Church members love what the world loves, and are ready to join with them; and Satan determines to unite them in one body, and thus strengthen his cause by sweeping all into the ranks of spiritualism. Papists who boast of miracles as a certain sign of the true church will be readily deceived by this wonder-working power; and Protestants, having cast away the shield of truth, will also be deluded. Papists, Protestants, and worldlings will alike accept the form of godliness without the power, and **they will see in this union a grand movement for the conversion of the world, and the ushering in of the long-expected millennium.**”—*Great Controversy*, 588-589.

“There is a spurious experience prevailing everywhere. **Many are continually saying, ‘All that we have to do is to believe in Christ.’ They claim that faith is all we need.** In its fullest sense, this is true; but they do not take it in the fullest sense. To believe in Jesus is to take Him as our Redeemer and our pattern. If we abide in Him and He abides in us, we are partakers of His divine nature, and are doers of His Word. **The love of Jesus in the heart will lead to obedience to all His commandments.**

“But the love that goes no farther than the lips is a delusion; it will not save any soul. Many reject the truths of the Bible, while they profess great love for Jesus; but the apostle John declares, ‘He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.’ While Jesus has done all in the way of merit, **we ourselves have something to do in**

the way of complying with the conditions. 'If ye love Me,' said our Saviour, 'keep My commandments.'"—*Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of SDAs, 188 (1886).*

"They separate Christ and the Law, and regard faith as a substitute for obedience. They separate the Father and the Son, the Saviour of the world. **Virtually they teach, both by precept and example, that Christ, by His death, saves men in their transgressions.**"—*Signs, February 25, 1897.*

"Satan is presenting worldly attractions. The churches are teaching for doctrine the commandments of men. **Ministers are crying, 'There is no law,' failing to see that if there is no law, there is no transgression.** It is time for us to show that we have a message from the Lord, a message of no human invention. **Workers who will present the truth in its simplicity are greatly needed. The last message of warning is to be given to the world.** As God's people bring the truths of His message into the daily life, practical godliness, purity, and holiness will be seen."—*5 Manuscript Releases, No. 53 (Manuscript 99, 1902).*

"Many of the revivals of modern times have presented a marked contrast to those manifestations of divine grace which in earlier days followed the labors of God's servants. It is true that a widespread interest is kindled, many profess conversion, and there are large accessions to the churches; nevertheless the results are not such as to warrant the belief that there has been a corresponding increase of real spiritual life. The light which flames up for a time soon dies out, leaving the darkness more dense than before.

"Popular revivals are too often carried by appeals to the imagination, by exciting the emotions, by grati-

fyng the love for what is new and startling. Converts thus gained have little desire to listen to Bible truth, little interest in the testimony of prophets and apostles. Unless a religious service has something of a sensational character, it has no attractions for them. A message which appeals to unimpassioned reason awakens no response. The plain warnings of God's Word, relating directly to their eternal interests, are unheeded.

“With every truly converted soul the relation to God and to eternal things will be the great topic of life. **But where, in the popular churches of today, is the spirit of consecration to God? The converts do not renounce their pride and love of the world. They are no more willing to deny self, to take up the cross, and follow the meek and lowly Jesus, than before their conversion.** Religion has become the sport of infidels and skeptics because so many who bear its name are ignorant of its principles. The power of godliness has well-nigh departed from many of the churches.”—*Great Controversy*, 463.

PREPARING FOR WHAT IS COMING

“The truths most plainly revealed in the Bible have been involved in doubt and darkness by learned men, who, with a pretense of great wisdom, teach that the Scriptures have a mystical, a secret, spiritual meaning not apparent in the language employed. These men are false teachers. It was to such a class that Jesus declared, ‘Ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God’ [Mark 12:24]. The language of the Bible should be explained according to its obvious meaning, unless a symbol or figure is employed. Christ has given the promise, ‘If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine’ [John 7:17].

“If men would but take the Bible as it reads, if there

were no false teachers to mislead and confuse their minds, a work would be accomplished that would make angels glad, and that would bring into the fold of Christ thousands upon thousands who are now wandering in error.”—*Great Controversy*, 598-599.

“Hath a nation changed their gods, which are yet no gods? but **My people have changed their glory for that which doth not profit.** Be astonished, O ye heavens, at this, and be horribly afraid, be ye very desolate, saith the Lord. **For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.**” “Wherefore I will yet plead with you, saith the Lord, and with your children’s children will I plead.”—*Jeremiah 2:11-13*, 9.

“**Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit,** after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.”—*Colossians 2:8*.

“**Satan has long been preparing for his final effort to deceive the world.** The foundation of his work was laid by the assurance given to Eve in Eden: ‘Ye shall not surely die.’ **In the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods,** knowing good and evil.’ Genesis 3:4, 5. Little by little he has prepared the way for his masterpiece of deception in the development of spiritualism. **He has not yet reached the full accomplishment of his designs; but it will be reached in the last remnant of time . . . Except those who are kept by the power of God, through faith in His Word, the whole world will be swept into the ranks of this delusion.**”—*Great Controversy*, 561-562.

“**In a special sense Seventh-day Adventists have**

been set in the world as watchmen and light-bearers. To them has been entrusted the last warning for a perishing world. On them is shining wonderful light from the Word of God. They have been given a work of the most solemn import,—the proclamation of the first, second, and third angels' messages. There is no other work of so great importance. **They are to allow nothing else to absorb their attention.**

“The most solemn truths ever entrusted to mortals have been given us to proclaim to the world. **The proclamation of these truths is to be our work. The world is to be warned, and God's people are to be true to the trust committed to them.**”—*Evangelism*, 119-120.

“**We are as a people in danger of giving the third angel's message in such an indefinite manner that it does not impress the people . . . Our message is a life-and-death message, and we must let this message appear as it is,—the great power of God.** Then the Lord will make it effectual. We are to present it in all its telling force.”—*Evangelism*, 230.

“**Satan has devised a state of things whereby the proclamation of the third angel's message shall be bound about.** We must beware of his plans and methods. **There must be no toning down of the truth, no muffling of the message for this time.** The third angel's message must be strengthened and confirmed. The eighteenth chapter of Revelation reveals the importance of presenting the truth in no measured terms but with boldness and power . . . **There has been too much beating about the bush in the proclamation of the third angel's message. The message has not been given as clearly and distinctly as it should have been.**”—*Evangelism*, 230.

“**The followers of Christ are to combine in a strong**

effort to call the attention of the world to the fast-fulfilling prophecies of the Word of God.”—*Evangelism*, 193.

“If ministers who are called upon to preach the most solemn message ever given to mortals evade the truth, they are unfaithful in their work, and are false shepherds to the sheep and the lambs. The assertions of man are of no value. Let the Word of God speak to the people. **Let those who have heard only traditions and maxims of men, hear the voice of God.**”—*Review*, March 11, 1902.

“The truth of God has never been popular with the world. The natural heart is ever averse to the truth. I thank God that we must renounce the love of the world, and pride of heart, and everything which tends to idolatry, in order to be followers of the Man of Calvary. **Those who obey the truth will never be loved and honored by the world . . .** Follow our Exemplar. Was He seeking for praise and honor of men? Oh, no! Shall we then seek for honor or praise from worldlings?”—*2 Testimonies*, 491.

“As the people of God approach the perils of the last days, Satan holds earnest consultation with his angels as to the most successful plan of overthrowing their faith. He sees that the popular churches are already lulled to sleep by his deceptive power. By pleasing sophistry and lying wonders he can continue to hold them under his control. Therefore **he directs his angels to lay their snares especially for those who are looking for the second advent of Christ and endeavoring to keep all the commandments of God.**

“Says the great deceiver: ‘We must watch those who are calling the attention of the people to the Sabbath of Jehovah; they will lead many to see the claims of the law

of God; and the same light which reveals the true Sabbath reveals also the ministration of Christ in the heavenly sanctuary, and shows that the last work for man's salvation is now going forward. **Hold the minds of the people in darkness till that work is ended, and we shall secure the world and the church also.**

“The Sabbath is the great question which is to decide the destiny of souls. We must exalt the sabbath of our creating. We have caused it to be accepted by both worldlings and church members; now the church must be led to unite with the world in its support. **We must work by signs and wonders to blind their eyes to the truth, and lead them to lay aside reason and the fear of God and follow custom and tradition.**

“**I will influence popular ministers to turn the attention of their hearers from the commandments of God.** That which the Scriptures declare to be a perfect law of liberty shall be represented as a yoke of bondage. **The people accept their minister's explanations of Scripture and do not investigate for themselves. Therefore, by working through the ministers, I can control the people** according to my will.

“**But our principal concern is to silence this sect of Sabbathkeepers. We must excite popular indignation against them.** We will enlist great men and worldly-wise men upon our side, and induce those in authority to carry out our purposes. Then the sabbath which I have set up shall be enforced by laws the most severe and exacting. Those who disregard them shall be driven out from the cities and villages, and made to suffer hunger and privation. **When once we have the power, we will show what we can do with those who will not swerve from their allegiance to God.** We led the Romish church to inflict imprisonment, torture, and death upon those who refused to yield to her decrees; and now that

we are bringing the Protestant churches and the world into harmony with this right arm of our strength, we will finally have a law to exterminate all who will not submit to our authority. When death shall be made the penalty for violating our sabbath, then many who are now ranked with commandment keepers will come over to our side.

“**But before proceeding to these extreme measures, we must exert all our wisdom and subtlety to deceive and ensnare those who honor the true Sabbath.** We can separate many from Christ by worldliness, lust, and pride. They may think themselves safe because they believe the truth, but indulgence of appetite or the lower passions, which will confuse judgment and destroy discrimination, will cause their fall.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, 472-473.

“**So subtle and untiring are the efforts of the enemy of souls, that God’s people need to be very watchful, and to labour earnestly and unceasingly to counterwork evil in the church and in the world.** Satan and his agencies are laying out special lines of labour for those who are controlled by his power. **Deceptions of every kind and degree are arising, so that if possible he would deceive the very elect.** With the same subtle power that he plotted for the rebellion of holy beings in heaven before the fall, **Satan is working today to operate through human beings for the fulfillment of his purposes of evil.**”—*Australian Conference Record*, April 15, 1912.

“**The time is not far distant when Satan will come down having great power, and will work wonderful signs and great miracles; and with his delusions he will sweep away every one who does not stand upon the rock of eternal truth.** God is even now proving us.”—

Signs, December 10, 1885.

“The days are fast approaching when there will be great perplexity and confusion. Satan, clothed in angel robes, will deceive, if possible, the very elect. There will be gods many and lords many. Every wind of doctrine will be blowing. Those who have rendered supreme homage to ‘science falsely so called’ will not be the leaders then. Those who have trusted to intellect, genius, or talent will not then stand at the head of rank and file. They did not keep pace with the light. Those who have proved themselves unfaithful will not then be entrusted with the flock. **In the last solemn work few great men will be engaged.** They are self-sufficient, independent of God, and He cannot use them. **The Lord has faithful servants, who in the shaking, testing time will be disclosed to view.** There are precious ones now hidden who have not bowed the knee to Baal. **They have not had the light which has been shining in a concentrated blaze upon you.** But it may be under a rough and uninviting exterior the pure brightness of a genuine Christian character will be revealed. In the day time we look toward heaven but do not see the stars. They are there, fixed in the firmament, but the eye cannot distinguish them. In the night we behold their genuine luster.

“The time is not far distant when the test will come to every soul. The mark of the beast will be urged upon us. **Those who have step by step yielded to worldly demands and conformed to worldly customs will not find it a hard matter to yield to the powers that be,** rather than subject themselves to derision, insult, threatened imprisonment, and death. **The contest is between the commandments of God and the commandments of men. In this time the gold will be separated from the dross in the church.** True godliness will be clearly

distinguished from the appearance and tinsel of it. **Many a star that we have admired for its brilliancy will then go out in darkness. Chaff like a cloud will be borne away on the wind, even from places where we see only floors of rich wheat.** All who assume the ornaments of the sanctuary, but are not clothed with Christ's righteousness, will appear in the shame of their own nakedness.

"When trees without fruit are cut down as cumberers of the ground, **when multitudes of false brethren are distinguished from the true, then the hidden ones will be revealed to view, and with hosannas range under the banner of Christ.** Those who have been timid and self-distrustful will declare themselves openly for Christ and His truth. The most weak and hesitating in the church will be as David—willing to do and dare. **The deeper the night for God's people, the more brilliant the stars. Satan will sorely harass the faithful; but, in the name of Jesus, they will come off more than conquerors.** Then will the church of Christ appear 'fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.'"—*5 Testimonies*, 80-82.

"As the storm approaches, a large class who have professed faith in the third angel's message, but have not been sanctified through obedience to the truth, abandon their position and join the ranks of the opposition. By uniting with the world and partaking of its spirit, they have come to view matters in nearly the same light; and when the test is brought, they are prepared to choose the easy, popular side.

"Men of talent and pleasing address, who once rejoiced in the truth, employ their powers to deceive and mislead souls. They become the most bitter enemies of their former brethren. When Sabbathkeepers are brought before the courts to answer for their faith, these

apostates are the most efficient agents of Satan to misrepresent and accuse them, and by false reports and insinuations to stir up the rulers against them.

“In this time of persecution the faith of the Lord’s servants will be tried. **They have faithfully given the warning, looking to God and to His Word alone. God’s Spirit, moving upon their hearts, has constrained them to speak.**”—*Great Controversy*, 608.

“Who is it that is ruling the world today, and who is it that have chosen to stand under the banner of the prince of darkness? Why, it is nearly the whole world at large. All the world that have not accepted Jesus Christ have chosen for their leader the prince of darkness; and just as soon as they stand under his banner, they have connection with evil angels. **Either the evil angels or the angels of God are controlling the minds of men.** Our minds are given to the control of God, or to the control of the powers of darkness; and **it will be well for us to inquire where we are standing today**—whether under the blood-stained banner of Prince Emmanuel, or under the black banner of the powers of darkness.

“We must make every preparation in our power in order to resist the enemy of souls. Every provision has been made; everything in God’s plan has been arranged so that man should not be left to his own impulses, to his own finite powers, to carry on the warfare against the powers of darkness in his own finite strength; because he would certainly fail if he were thus left to himself.”—*Manuscript 1, 1890; 6 Bible Commentary*, 1120.

“Satan is constantly seeking to deceive men and lead them to call sin righteousness, and righteousness sin. How successful has been his work! How often cen-

sure and reproach are cast upon God's faithful servants because they will stand fearlessly in defense of the truth!"—*Great Controversy*, 192-193.

"The theory of mind controlling mind was originated by Satan, to introduce himself as the chief worker, to put human philosophy where divine philosophy should be. Of all the errors that are finding acceptance among professedly Christian people, none is a more dangerous deception, none more certain to separate man from God."—*Ministry of Healing*, 243.

"God has placed in His Word no command which men may obey or disobey at will and not suffer the consequences. **If men choose any other path than that of strict obedience, they will find that 'the end thereof are the ways of death.'** Proverbs 14:12."—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, 360-361.

"The Bible should be your guide. **There can be no greater deception than for a man to think that he can find a better guide, when in difficulty, than the Word of God.** The blessed Word must be a lamp to our feet. Bible precepts must be carried into the everyday life."—*5 Testimonies*, 559.

DELIVERANCE FROM THE OCCULT

**THE ONLY ONE POWERFUL ENOUGH
TO HELP YOU**

Only Christ is powerful enough to deliver us from Satan's power. Only He can forgive our sins, and strengthen and keep us safe, so we can live with Him

forever.

“For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God [is] eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”—*Romans 6:23*.

“Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by Me.”—*John 14:6*.

“And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.”—*1 John 5:11-12*.

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life.”—*John 3:36*.

Christ can do for us that which we cannot do for ourselves.

“Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.”—*1 Timothy 1:15*.

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.”—*Acts 4:12*.

“Wherefore He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.”—*Hebrews 7:25*.

“We are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.”—*Romans 8:16-17*.

“I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me.”—*Galatians 2:20*.

“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world:

and this is the victory that overcometh the world, [even] our faith.”—*1 John 5:3-4*.

The power of God is in the Bible. Through the enabling grace of Christ, we study and obey it.

“And they were astonished at His doctrine: for His word was with power.”—*Luke 4:32*.

“He sent His word, and healed them, and delivered [them] from their destructions.”—*Psalms 107:20*.

“Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth forever.”—*1 Peter 1:23*.

“Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to Thy Word.”—*Psalms 119:9*.

“Thy Word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee.”—*Psalms 119:11*.

“Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world.”—*2 Peter 1:4*.

HOW TO BE DELIVERED OR HELP SOMEONE ELSE BE DELIVERED

First, recognize the sovereignty of God. Christ, and Christ alone, is the source of deliverance from spiritist bondage. The worldly methods (psychology, ritual, hypnosis, meditation, etc.) will only add to the problem!

The prayerful help of a godly counselor, pastor, or earnest Christian friend should be sought. He should be a person who is fully dedicated to God and has no personal problems which the spirits can take advantage of. Full deliverance may take a period of time. But, with united prayer of a few faithful friends, it can occur rather quickly.

All paraphernalia of occultism must be destroyed (*Acts 19:19*). This includes even little figures made out of precious stones. They often originate from heathen temples.

All occult contacts and friendship must be broken, and not even gifts from occultists should be accepted.

In the difficult case of a person living with parents who are occultists, it may be necessary to secure other living arrangements. Conditions must be right before the prayer of faith and intercession can succeed. Because the powers of darkness may attempt to strike back without mercy, battles should be undertaken only when the participant is fully prepared.

Deliverance from the power of the occult requires complete surrender to Christ on the part of both counselor and the one needing help. Our first responsibility must be to Christ and our relationship to Him. We cannot help others in so difficult an area until we ourselves are securely grounded as Christians. Every person who really wants to be delivered from the hold of the occult must be prepared to commit his life entirely to Christ.

When a person is delivered from a state of occult subjection, he must withhold nothing in his life from the Lord. Those areas which are not surrendered to his Lord will soon be occupied again by the enemy.

If we have truly made Jesus Christ our Lord, then He will protect us from the lordship of others or secret sins. Our commitment cannot be half-hearted.

The occultly oppressed person must acknowledge and confess his participation in occult activity as sin, because such practices are indeed sinful before God and require confession (*Deut. 18:9-12; 1 John 1:9*). This confession must be voluntary, or it is worthless. The purpose of the confession is to bring into the light that which is occult (hidden, secret), as well as to renounce the horrid thing and put it away. Open confession of every single hidden thing in the life should be made, in order to remove the very last foothold of the enemy. This confession should not only cover the occult, but also every other area of departure from the Lord and His will in his life. Nothing should be allowed to build up or develop which may give the devil an opportunity to return (*Prov. 28:13; 1 Chron. 28:9*). A prayer renouncing everything occult is important.

Frequently, the subjected person finds it difficult to grasp the fact that his sins have been forgiven. A barrier seems to lie in his way. Therefore explain that he must pray the prayer of renunciation of the occult first of all. This is because every sin connected with sorcery is basically a contract with the powers of darkness. By means of sorcery, the archenemy of mankind gains the right of ownership over a person's life.

The person may be unable to give this prayer, to bring his hands together to pray, or his lips or vocal chords may be unusable. He may fall into a trance when it comes to renouncing the devil. What should be done?

One can either command the evil powers to leave in the name of Jesus or else call some other Chris-

tian brothers to join him in praying for the subjected person.

Renunciation may be followed by a remarkable change for the better. But not everyone experiences such elated feeling after deliverance; yet the change of ownership is still valid no matter how one feels.

It is vital to assure the individual that in Christ his sins have been forgiven. No matter how bad a person's sins may have been, they can be forgiven.

Scriptures may be read which will help him. These could include John 5:24; 6:47; 20:31; Galatians 1:4; Ephesians 1:7, 13-14; Colossians 1:14; 1 Peter 1:3-5, 18; Isaiah 53:4-7; 1 Peter 2:24; 1 John 1:7-9. *All of these will be quoted in full at the end of this chapter.*

Counseling should involve teamwork. The support of other Christians, church elders, etc. is important. Counseling the occultly oppressed is generally a matter of teamwork. The individual counselor is far too weak to take upon his own shoulders all the problems he will meet.

This is because **people with occult subjection will often suffer their first attacks from the demons after they first seek to follow Christ and serve Him.** In other words, the battle often does not begin until a person tries to receive Christ or actually does so.

Prayer will continue to be important afterward. Even after a person is delivered from the occult, he is still vulnerable. It is thus vital that a small group of Christians continue to pray for him and

care for him after his conversion. Many times a converted occultist has struggled tremendously because he could find no one in the church to help him.

If necessary, this group need only consist of two Christians. They should meet together two or three times a week for prayer. The best thing is for the subjected person to be present; yet this is not absolutely necessary. Neither is it necessary that the oppressed person have made an open confession before all the members of the group. His renunciation of the occult may only have been made before the counselor at the very start.

When a person is delivered from occult oppression, it is crucial that he grow as a Christian! Through the enabling grace of Christ, he must obey the Ten Commandments, the Moral Code which God gave to mankind. He must continually read in the Bible and submit to its teachings. He should fellowship with fellow Christians each week. He should know and share with others basic Christian doctrine and how to come to Christ and live with Him.

Sometimes it will be found that demons have returned into a person's life; and, at this point, it seems the battle is greater. Very often this occurs when the liberated one leaves the Christian atmosphere and returns to a home where others are involved in occultism and sorcery.

Those who have been delivered from occult oppression and then returned to live in a spiritistic atmosphere never find real peace. It is best that those folk stay away from their parents or other relatives or former friends who they know are into

occultism.

Warn them that anyone who fails to remain close to Christ and act on all that the Bible says for our protection will live in continuous danger of falling victim once more to the influence of the spirits who earlier left them.

Christian counselors and those they seek to help must **keep in mind that the victory is won because of the power of Christ**, *through His enabling strength alone*, to complete submission and obedience to His Written Word, the Bible and the Ten Commandments. **We must believe God's promises and act in faith, even in what may seem to be hopeless situations.** But none are finally hopeless; for, with God, all things are possible—if, in his heart, the possessed person really wants to be delivered.

Furthermore, **just because a battle may continue to rage is not evidence that the battle will be lost.** Many times, in Biblical history and church history, spiritual battles have been undertaken which have required great endurance, perseverance, patience, and faith.

It is urgent that each of us remain close to Christ every day. Each person that seeks our prayers, encouragement and help is not just “another case,” but a special individual who we must earnestly pray for and help to come to Christ and His saving power.

Several years ago, I learned of this incident: David Gates, a missionary to South America, met a warlock (male witch) in Georgia who told Gates that he did what people asked him to do. “They mainly ask me to get them someone else’s wife, and

I can do it 100% of the time! I can take your wife away too!”

David replied, “No, you can’t; I’m a Christian.”

“Sure I can; I do it to lots of people, including some Christians.”

David replied, “You can’t touch me or my wife.”

The warlock replied, “Yes, I can, and I’ll prove it to you: Do you go to the movies or watch soap operas on TV?” “No.” “Do you listen to rock music?” “No.” “Do you have novels in your home?” “No.”

“Well, then, you’re right; I can’t touch you.”

“Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; He also is become my salvation.”—*Isaiah 12:2*.

“The Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly.”—*Psalms 84:11*.

“Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and He shall sustain thee: He shall never suffer the righteous to be moved.”—*Psalms 55:22*.

“The Lord thy God in the midst of thee is mighty; He will save, He will rejoice over thee with joy; He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing.”—*Zephaniah 3:17*.

“The Lord is with you, while ye be with Him, and if ye seek Him, He will be found of you; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you.”—*2 Chronicles 15:2*.

“They cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and He saveth them out of their distresses.”—*Psalms 107:19*.

“Be ye strong therefore, and let not your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded.”—*2 Chronicles 15:7*.

“O come, let us sing unto the Lord: let us make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation.”—*Psalms 95:1*.

“Thou art my God, and I will praise Thee: Thou art my God, I will exalt Thee.”—*Psalm 118:28*.

“O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good: for His mercy endureth forever.”—*Psalm 118:29*.

“But know that the Lord hath set apart him that is godly for Himself: the Lord will hear when I call unto Him.”—*Psalm 4:3*.

“As we near the close of time, there will be greater and still greater external parade of heathen power; heathen deities will manifest their signal power, and will exhibit themselves before the cities of the world; and this delineation has already begun to be fulfilled.”—*Testimonies to Ministers, 117-118.*

“Conformity to worldly customs converts the church to the world; it never converts the world to Christ. Familiarity with sin will inevitably cause it to appear less repulsive. He who chooses to associate with the servants of Satan, will soon cease to fear their master. When in the way of duty we are brought into trial, as was Daniel in the king’s court, we may be sure that God will protect us; but **if we place ourselves under temptation, we shall fall sooner or later.**”—*Great Controversy, 509.*

“The people adopted many of the customs of their heathen neighbors **and thus sacrificed to a great degree their own peculiar, holy character. Gradually they lost their reverence for God and ceased to prize the honor of being His chosen people.**”—*Patriarchs and Prophets, 603.*

“Among the more serious of the evils that had developed among the Corinthian believers, was that of a return to many of the debasing customs of heathenism.”—*Acts of the Apostles, 303.*

THIS IS GENUINE CHRISTIANITY!

THIS IS GENUINE MEDITATION

It is a slur on God's Inspired Books to claim that we obtain truth, for guidance, by going instead to so-called "holy men of India" and the writings of monks who lived in the Dark Ages.

It is blasphemous to teach that we are to draw closer to God by aping the methods of heathen worshipers.

It is the worst type of error to instruct the people of God that, instead of Bible study and prayer, they must empty their minds in order to gain deeper light and truth.

It is disastrous to the soul to believe teachers, even though they may be leaders in our own denomination, when they tell us that we must mindlessly repeat mantras in order to make contact with Heaven.

WHAT IS THE TRUTH? *It is found in the Inspired Writings which God has given to us. The Word of God is to be the authority in our lives, and it is to stand superior to all the theories and maxims of men.*

Let us briefly examine the truth about study, meditation, prayer, and obedience, and their relation to one another. These are important principles at the center of genuine worship and a true connection with Heaven. — Vance Ferrell

THIS IS GENUINE MEDITATION

True meditation is not found in emptying the mind, so a demon can enter. God's plan is for us to read a passage in His Inspired Word;—carefully consider what it involves, and talk to our kind Father about it. If it is a command, then we decide to obey it and we tell God that, through the enabling grace of Christ, we are going to do it. If it is a promise, we rejoice at what it offers us now and later on, and praise God for giving it to us. Thus we see that genuine meditation is a combination of reading God's Word, thinking about it, and talking to Him about it. **Study, meditation, and prayer are closely intertwined.** The next step is act on it, and share it with others! **So obedience is also closely connected to genuine meditation.**

“This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success.

“Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest.”—*Joshua 1:8-9.*

“Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer.”—*Psalms 19:14.*

“Be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity. Till I come, **give attendance to reading, to**

exhortation, to doctrine . . . Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all. **Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them:** for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.”—*1 Timothy 4:12-13, 15-16.*

“My mouth shall speak of wisdom; and **the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.**”—*Psalms 49:3.*

“I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live: **I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. My meditation of Him shall be sweet:** I will be glad in the Lord.”—*Psalms 104:33-34.*

“Those who have grown and expanded, **whose reasoning faculties have been improved by deep searching of the Scriptures, that they may know the will of God,** will come into positions of usefulness; for the Word of God has had an entrance into their life and character. It must do its peculiar work, even to the piercing asunder of the joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart. **God’s Word is to become the nourishment by which the Christian must grow strong in spirit and in intellect,** that he may battle for truth and righteousness.

“**Why is it that our youth, and even those of maturer years, are so easily led into temptation and sin? It is because the Word of God is not studied and meditated upon as it should be.** If it were appreciated, there would be an inward rectitude, a strength of spirit, that would resist the temptations of Satan to do evil. **A firm, decided will-power is not brought into the life and character because the sacred instruction of God is not made the study, and the subject of meditation.** There is not the effort put forth that there

should be to associate the mind with pure, holy thoughts and to divert it from what is impure and untrue. There is not the choosing of the better part, the sitting at the feet of Jesus, as did Mary, to learn the most sacred lessons of the divine Teacher, that they may be laid up in the heart, and practiced in the daily life. **Meditation upon holy things will elevate and refine the mind.**—*Fundamentals of Education*, 132.

“The words and the character of Christ should be often the subject of our thoughts and of our conversation, and **each day some time should be especially devoted to prayerful meditation upon these sacred themes.**”—*Review*, May 3, 1881.

“**Instead of strengthening their faith by prayer and meditation on the words of Christ**, they had been dwelling on their discouragements and personal grievances.”—*Desire of Ages*, 431.

Even when we do not have the Bible opened before us, we can prayerfully meditate—even as we go about our daily work.

“**While you are engaged in labor, while your hands and minds are employed in doing useful work, there is a necessity for meditation and reflection and earnest prayer.** You want this light that comes down from heaven to do something for you. You want that faith that is represented as gold. You want to cultivate the love of Jesus in your heart, and **you want to bear in mind that the very angels that appeared to Abraham and to Lot may be in your midst**, though you may not see them.”—*Christ Triumphant*, 80.

We should keep our minds on heavenly things. If we ask for divine help in doing this, it will be given.

“There are enough profitable subjects upon

which to meditate and converse. **The conversation of the Christian should be in heaven**, whence we look for the Saviour. **Meditation upon heavenly things is profitable, and will ever be accompanied with the peace and comfort of the Holy Spirit.** Our calling is holy, our profession exalted. God is purifying unto Himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works. He is sitting as a refiner and purifier of silver. When the dross and tin are removed, then His image will be perfectly reflected in us.”—*2 Testimonies*, 317.

Consider the glorious future that is offered to us, if we will but meditate the way God wants us to!

“With the Word of God in his hands, every human being, wherever his lot in life may be cast, may have such companionship as he shall choose. **In its pages he may hold converse with the noblest and best of the human race, and may listen to the voice of the Eternal** as He speaks with men. **As he studies and meditates upon the themes into which ‘the angels desire to look’ (1 Peter 1:12), he may have their companionship.**

“He may follow the steps of the heavenly Teacher, and listen to His words as when He taught on mountain and plain and sea. **He may dwell in this world in the atmosphere of heaven, imparting to earth’s sorrowing and tempted ones thoughts of hope and longings for holiness;** himself coming closer and still closer into fellowship with the Unseen; like him of old who walked with God, **drawing nearer and nearer the threshold of the eternal world, until the portals shall open, and he shall enter there.** He will find himself no stranger. The voices that will greet him are the voices of the holy ones, who, unseen, were on earth his companions—voices that here he learned to distinguish

and to love. **He who through the Word of God has lived in fellowship with heaven, will find himself at home in heaven's companionship.**—*Education*, 127.

GENUINE MEDITATION, PRAYER, AND STUDY OF GOD'S WORD ARE CONNECTED

True meditation, genuine prayer, and thoughtful study of the Word of God go hand in hand. They strengthen and educate the soul, and lead to a clearer understanding of duty and to definite action in service for God.

Meditation must frequently be combined with prayer and the study of God's Inspired Writings.

“The Christian life is not made up of unceasing activity, or of continual meditation. **Christians must work earnestly for the salvation of the lost, and they must also take time for contemplation, for prayer, and the study of the Word of God.** It will not do to be always under the strain of the work and excitement, for in this way personal piety is neglected, and the powers of mind and body are injured.”—*Christian Service*, 249.

“The work of teachers is an important one. **They should make the Word of God their meditation.** God will communicate by His own Spirit with the soul. Pray as you study, ‘**Open Thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.**’ Psalm 119:18. **When the teacher will rely upon God in prayer, the Spirit of Christ will come upon him, and God will work through him** by the Holy Spirit upon the mind of the student. The Holy Spirit fills mind and heart with hope and courage and Bible imagery, which will be communicated to the student. **The words of truth will grow in importance, and will assume a breadth and fullness**

of meaning of which he has never dreamed. The beauty and virtue of the Word of God have a transforming influence upon mind and character; the sparks of heavenly love will fall upon the hearts of the children as an inspiration. We may bring hundreds and thousands of children to Christ if we will work for them.”—*Counsels to Parents and Teachers*, 172.

“As activity increases and men become successful in doing any work for God, there is danger of trusting to human plans and methods. **There is a tendency to pray less, and to have less faith. Like the disciples, we are in danger of losing sight of our dependence on God**, and seeking to make a savior of our activity. **We need to look constantly to Jesus, realizing that it is His power which does the work.**”

“**While we are to labor earnestly for the salvation of the lost, we must also take time for meditation, for prayer, and for the study of the Word of God.** Only the work accomplished with much prayer, and sanctified by the merit of Christ, will in the end prove to have been efficient for good.”—*Desire of Ages*, 362.

“**We should come with reverence to the study of the Bible, feeling that we are in the presence of God.** All lightness and trifling should be laid aside. While some portions of the Word are easily understood, the true meaning of other parts is not so readily discerned. **There must be patient study and meditation, and earnest prayer.** Every student, as he opens the Scriptures, should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, and the promise is sure, that it will be given.”—*Messages to Young People*, 261.

“Ministers should **devote time to reading, to**

study, to meditation and prayer. They should store the mind with useful knowledge, committing to memory portions of Scripture, tracing out the fulfillment of the prophecies, and learning the lessons which Christ gave to His disciples.”—*Gospel Workers*, 278-279.

“**The youth often urge that they need something to enliven and divert the mind. The Christian’s hope is just what is needed.** Religion will prove to the believer a comforter, a sure guide to the fountain of true happiness. **The young should study the Word of God, giving themselves to meditation and prayer.** They will find that their spare moments cannot be better employed. Wisdom’s ‘ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.’ ”—*Messages to Young People*, 368.

“The more urgent his duties and the greater his responsibilities, the greater the physician’s need of divine power. Time must be redeemed from things temporal, for meditation upon things eternal. He must resist an encroaching world, which would so press upon him as to separate him from the Source of strength. **Above all other men should he, by prayer and the study of the Scriptures, place himself under the protecting shield of God. He is to live in hourly contact and conscious communion with the principles of truth,** righteousness, and mercy that reveal God’s attributes within the soul.

“**Just to the degree in which the Word of God is received and obeyed** will it impress with its potency and touch with its life every spring of action, every phase of character. **It will purify every thought, regulate every desire.** Those who make God’s Word their trust will quit themselves like men and be strong. They will rise above all baser

things into an atmosphere free from defilement.”—*Ministry of Healing*, 136.

“We must look to Jesus, study His words, pray for His spirit. We should be more frequently alone with God in meditation and prayer. Let us pray more and talk less. **We cannot trust to our own wisdom, our own experience,** our own knowledge of the truth; **we must be daily learners,** looking to our heavenly Teacher for instruction, **and then, without regard to ease, pleasure, or convenience, we must go forward,** knowing that He is faithful who has called.”—*Our High Calling*, 362.

“Those who will put on the whole armor of God and **devote some time every day to meditation and prayer and to the study of the Scriptures** will be connected with heaven and will have a saving, transforming influence upon those around them. **Great thoughts, noble aspirations, clear perceptions of truth and duty to God, will be theirs. They will be yearning for purity, for light, for love, for all the graces of heavenly birth.** Their earnest prayers will enter into that within the veil. This class will have a sanctified boldness to come into the presence of the Infinite One. **They will feel that heaven’s light and glories are for them, and they will become refined, elevated, ennobled by this intimate acquaintance with God.** Such is the privilege of true Christians.”—*5 Testimonies*, 112-113.

“Churches are not wholly composed of pure, sincere Christians. Not all the names that stand registered upon the church books are worthy to be there. The life and character of some as compared with others is as gold with worthless dross. It need not be so. **Those who are valuable in life and influence have felt the importance of following Jesus closely, of making the life of Christ their**

study and example. This will require effort, meditation, and earnest prayer. It requires exertion to obtain the victory over selfishness and to make the interest of God's cause primary. Some have made the effort and practiced close discipline of self, and they have gained precious victories."—2 *Testimonies*, 637.

"We should come with reverence to the study of the Bible, feeling that we are in the presence of God. All lightness and trifling should be laid aside. While some portions of the Word are easily understood, the true meaning of other parts is not so readily discerned. **There must be patient study and meditation and earnest prayer. Every student, as he opens the Scriptures, should ask for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit;** and the promise is sure that it will be given.

"The spirit in which you come to the investigation of the Scriptures will determine the character of the assistant at your side. Angels from the world of light will be with **those who in humility of heart seek for divine guidance.**"—*Testimonies to Ministers*, 108.

"Those who seek by earnest study of God's Word and fervent prayer the guidance of His Spirit, will be led by Him. The pillar of cloud will guide them by day, the pillar of fire by night; and with an abiding sense of God's presence it will not be possible to disregard His holy law. **The reason why there is so much transgression is that little time is devoted to meditation and prayer.**"—*Review*, June 3, 1880.

PRAYER, MEDIATION, AND OBEDIENCE

Prayer, meditation, and obedience are closely connected in the life of the earnest, dedicated Chris-

tian whose highest delight is to please God.

"I have more understanding than all my teachers: **for Thy testimonies are my meditation.** I understand more than the ancients, because **I keep Thy precepts.** I have refrained my feet from every evil way, **that I might keep Thy Word.**"—*Psalm 119:99-101.*

"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. **But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in His law doth he meditate day and night.** And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.

"**The ungodly are not so: but are like the chaff which the wind driveth away.** Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment, nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous. **For the Lord knoweth the way of the righteous: but the way of the ungodly shall perish.**"—*Psalm 1:1-6.*

"**God will preserve all who walk in the path of obedience;** but to depart from it is to venture on Satan's ground. There we are sure to fall. The Saviour has bidden us, 'Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.' Mark 14:38. **Meditation and prayer would keep us from rushing unbidden into the way of danger,** and thus we should be saved from many a defeat."—*Desire of Ages, 126.*

"Let all who profess to be members of Christ's body, look at the facts candidly and carefully, and put the question to their souls, '**Am I living in obedience to the first four commandments? Do I love God supremely?**' . . . We should criticize our motives, test our thoughts. **Is God the subject of our meditation? Do we love the Bible? Do we**

love the hour of prayer?"—*Review, June 2, 1891.*

THIS IS GENUINE COMMUNION WITH GOD

There is not one word anywhere in the Bible or Spirit of Prophecy about repeating mantras, or trying to empty the mind. **The closest relationship to God is often referred to as communion with Him. Here is what we are told about this sweet experience.** Notice that the brain is very much awake.

"To the consecrated worker there is wonderful consolation in the knowledge that **even Christ during His life on earth sought His Father daily for fresh supplies of needed grace; and from this communion with God He went forth to strengthen and bless others.** Behold the Son of God bowed in prayer to His Father! Though He is the Son of God, **He strengthens His faith by prayer, and by communion with heaven gathers to Himself power to resist evil and to minister to the needs of men . . .** He knows that the messengers whom He sees fit to send are weak, erring men; but **to all who give themselves wholly to His service He promises divine aid.** His own example is an assurance that **earnest, persevering supplication to God in faith—faith that leads to entire dependence upon God, and unreserved consecration to His work—** will avail to bring to men the Holy Spirit's aid in the battle against sin . . .

"Morning by morning, **as the heralds of the gospel kneel before the Lord and renew their vows of consecration to Him,** He will grant them the presence of His Spirit, with its reviving, sanctifying power. As they go forth to the day's duties, they have the assurance that the unseen agency of the Holy Spirit enables them to be 'laborers together with God.'"—*Acts of the Apostles, 56.*

“As the enemy presses the attack against him, **he turns to the stronghold for aid, and as he brings to the Lord the promises of the Word, he is strengthened for the duties of the hour.** He realizes his need of strength from above. The victories that he gains do not lead to self exaltation, but cause him to lean more and more heavily on the Mighty One. Relying upon that Power, he is enabled to present the message of salvation so forcibly that it vibrates in other minds.

“**He who teaches the Word must himself live in conscious, hourly communion with God through prayer and a study of His Word, for here is the source of strength.** Communion with God will impart to the minister’s efforts a power greater than the influence of his preaching. Of this power he must not allow himself to be deprived. **With an earnestness that cannot be denied, he must plead with God to strengthen and fortify him for duty and trial,** and to touch his lips with living fire.”—*Acts of the Apostles, 362-363.*

“**Let mothers come to Jesus with their perplexities. They will find grace sufficient to aid them** in the management of their children. **The gates are open for every mother who would lay her burdens at the Saviour’s feet . . .** He . . . still invites the mothers to lead up their little ones to be blessed by Him. **Even the babe in its mother’s arms may dwell under the shadow of the Almighty through the faith of the praying mother.** John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth. **If we live in communion with God, we too may expect the divine Spirit to mould our little ones,** even from their earliest moments.”—*Adventist Home, 274-275.*

“**There is no safety for any man, young or old, unless he feels the necessity of seeking God for**

counsel at every step. Those only who maintain close communion with God will learn to place His estimate upon men . . . Then temptations to depart from integrity will be met with decision: 'How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' "—*Adventist Home*, 331.

"God bids us fill the mind with great thoughts, pure thoughts. He desires us to meditate upon His love and mercy, to study His wonderful work in the great plan of redemption. Then clearer and still clearer will be our perception of truth, higher, holier, our desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought. **The soul dwelling in the pure atmosphere of holy thought will be transformed by communion with God through the study of Scriptures.**"—*Christ's Object Lessons*, 60.

"The idea that prayer is not essential is one of Satan's most successful devices to ruin souls. **Prayer is communion with God**, the Fountain of wisdom, the Source of strength, and peace, and happiness."—*Child Guidance*, 518.

"God's Word is full of precious promises and helpful counsel. It is infallible; for God cannot err. It has help for every circumstance and condition of life, and God looks on with sadness when His children turn from it to human aid. **He who through the Scriptures holds communion with God will be ennobled and sanctified.** As he reads the inspired record of the Saviour's love, his heart will melt in tenderness and contrition. He will be filled with a desire to be like his Master, to live a life of loving service."—*My Life Today*, 27.

"There is nothing more needed in the work than the practical results of communion with God. We should show by our daily lives that we have peace and rest in God. His peace in the heart will shine

forth in the countenance. It will give to the voice a persuasive power. **Communion with God will impart a moral elevation to the character and to the entire course of action.** Men will take knowledge of us, as of the first disciples, that we have been with Jesus . . . **Communion with God through prayer and the study of His Word** must not be neglected . . . **If men will walk with God,** He will hide them in the cleft of the Rock. Thus hidden, they can see God, even as Moses saw Him. With the power and light that God imparts, they can comprehend more and accomplish more than they had before deemed possible.”—*6 Testimonies*, 47.

“**Communion with God through prayer and a study of His Word** is neglected. They forget that Christ has said, ‘Without Me ye can do nothing.’ John 15:5. **They walk apart from Christ, their life is not pervaded by His grace,** and the characteristics of self are revealed. Their service is marred by desire for supremacy, and the harsh, unlovely traits of the unsubdued heart.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, 52.

“And as we behold the beautiful and grand in nature, our affections go out after God. While the spirit is awed, the soul is invigorated by coming in contact with the Infinite through His works. **Communion with God through prayer develops the mental and moral faculties, and the spiritual powers strengthen as we cultivate thoughts upon spiritual things.**”—*Desire of Ages*, 70-71.

“**When the mind of man is brought into communion with the mind of God, the finite with the Infinite, the effect on body and mind and soul is beyond estimate. In such communion is found the highest education.** It is God’s own method of development. **‘Acquaint now thyself with Him’** (Job

22:21), is His message to mankind.”—*Acts of the Apostles*, 126.

“There is need of prayer,—most earnest, fervent, agonizing prayer,—such prayer as David offered when he exclaimed: ‘As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God.’ ‘I have longed after Thy precepts;’ ‘I have longed for Thy salvation.’ ‘My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.’ ‘My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto Thy judgments.’ This is the spirit of wrestling prayer, such as was possessed by the royal psalmist . .

“Communion with God imparts to the soul an intimate knowledge of His will . . True prayer engages the energies of the soul and affects the life. He who thus pours out his wants before God feels the emptiness of everything else under heaven. ‘All my desire is before Thee,’ said David, ‘and my groaning is not hid from Thee.’ ‘My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God: when shall I come and appear before God?’ ‘When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me.’ ”—*4 Testimonies*, 534-535.

You have just viewed an accurate picture of the true nature of meditation, prayer, and communion with God. Is this what you want for your life? If you instead choose Buddhist/Hindu rituals, you will lose out on eternal life entirely! —*vf*

“Some years ago, Arnold Toynbee declared that when the historian of a thousand years from now comes to write the history of our time, he will be preoccupied not with the Vietnam war, not with racial strife, but with what happened when for the first time Christianity and Buddhism began to penetrate one another deeply. This remark is profoundly interesting and, I believe, profoundly true. Christianity and Buddhism are penetrating one another, talking to one another, learning from one another. Even the stubborn old Catholic Church, in a flush of post-conciliar humility, feels that she has something to gain by sitting at the feet of the *Zen roshi* [Zen master] and imbibing the age-old wisdom of the East.”

—William Johnston, *Christian Zen*, p. 1

Arnold J. Toynbee (1889-1975) was a British historian whose twelve-volume analysis of the rise and fall of civilizations, *A Study of History*, was a synthesis of world history.

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