

THE GOD OF END-TIME MYSTICISM

By David Cloud

This book is copyrighted but it is published for free distribution in electronic formats and posting on web sites and blogs as long as it is kept intact.

Way of Life Literature
P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061
866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org
<http://www.wayoflife.org>

Canada: Bethel Baptist Church, 4212 Campbell St. N., London, Ont. N6P 1A6
866-295-4143, info@bethelbaptist.ca

CONTENTS

What Is Mysticism?
The Bible's Warning about End-times Mysticism
Where Do We See Mysticism?
<i>Rock & Roll</i>
<i>The Pop Culture</i>
<i>Television</i>
<i>The Internet</i>
<i>Modern Advertising</i>
<i>Pagan Religions</i>
<i>The Human Potential Field</i>
<i>Positive Thinking</i>
<i>New Age</i>
<i>Evolution</i>
<i>Psychology</i>
<i>Contemplative Prayer</i>
<i>Charismatic Movement</i>
<i>Contemporary Christian Music</i>
How Effectively Does Mysticism Unite?
The Case of Sue Monk Kidd
Conclusion

INTRODUCTION

“Mysticism is no longer irrelevant; it is in the air we breathe” --*William Johnston*

The world is running pell mell toward judgment, yet the unbeliever has no idea where he is headed. He is the blind following the blind. The pied piper is Satan and his master plan is “the mystery of iniquity” (2 Thessalonians 2:6-12), which is his program to put his man on the throne of the world. God will allow this to come to pass for a brief period of time in the midst of the worst judgments the world has ever experienced, and then Christ will return and establish His righteous kingdom.

Mysticism is a major element of the mystery of iniquity. Through mysticism men are drawn toward Satan and his program under the guise of “spirituality.” They are captured by lies under the guise of truth.

Mysticism takes many forms. It is the secular rocker understanding that “music is a spiritual thing of its own” (Jimi Hendrix). It is the Christian rocker seeking to experience “the presence” of God. It is the charismatic yielding to the “flow of the Spirit” and refusing to “put God in a box.” It is Timothy Leary seeking enlightenment through LSD. It is the Catholic or evangelical contemplative seeking God in the silence. It is the New Ager channeling spirits. It is the Buddhist seeking Nirvana through the five-fold path. It is the Hindu pursuing unity with God through yoga. It is the psychology counselee seeking to perfect his self-esteem by practicing unconditional forgiveness.

Leonard Sweet says:

“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’” (*Quantum Spirituality*, 1991, pp. 11, 76).

Ursula King observes that “recent years have seen a greater interest and fascination with the mystics of all ages and faiths than any previous period in history” (*Christian Mystics*, p. 22).

The 1950s Beat generation and the 1960s Hippie generation were hooked on mysticism, both through Eastern religious practices and hallucinogenic drugs, and this attraction has since spread through every level of society. In August 2005 *Newsweek* reported that “Americans are looking for personal, ecstatic experiences of God.”

Mysticism has permeated education, business, government, medicine, athletics and sports, even the military.

Mystical New Age gurus such as M. Scott Peck and Deepak Chopra sell tens of millions of books.

Oprah Winfrey's popular message is the message of mysticism. Look deeply within yourself and discover your true self; learn that you can accomplish anything you wish through the power of positive thinking and positive confession and connecting with your "guardian angel" or spirit guides.

The point of this report is that mysticism of every type leads to the same type of god, and it is not the God of the Bible. The god of mysticism is non-judgmental, doesn't punish people with eternal hell fire, doesn't require regeneration through repentance and faith in Christ, doesn't put obligations on people and doesn't make them feel guilty for disobedience. This god's love is "unconditional."

WHAT IS MYSTICISM?

Mysticism is an attempt to commune experientially with God or some "life force" and to find spiritual understanding beyond words and ideas through various means and practices.

Following are three fundamental, interrelated characteristics of mysticism:

First, mysticism emphasizes a direct experience of God.

Chamber's Dictionary defines mysticism as "the habit or tendency of religious thought and feeling of those who seek direct communion with God or the divine."

Leonard Sweet defines mysticism as an "experience with God" in the metaphysical realm that is achieved through "mind-body experiences" (*Quantum Spirituality*, 1991, p. 11).

Anthony de Mello says: "... we are, all of us, endowed with a mystical mind and mystical heart, a faculty which makes it possible for us to know God directly, to grasp and intuit him in his very being..." (*Sadhana: A Way to God*, p. 29).

Ursula King says, "Mystics seek participation in divine life, communion and union with God" (*Christian Mystics*, p. 4).

Thomas Merton says: "Meditation is for those who are not satisfied with a merely objective and conceptual knowledge about life, about God--about ultimate realities. They want to enter into an intimate contact with truth itself, with God" (*Spiritual Direction and Meditation*, p. 53).

Second, mysticism emphasizes the discovery of spiritual insight beyond ideas and doctrine.

Mysticism is focused on experience, feeling, emotion, intuition, and human perception.

Anne Bancroft, author of *Twentieth-Century Mystics and Sages*, defined a mystic as someone who senses “a need to go beyond words and to experience the truth about themselves” (p. vii).

Leonard Sweet says, “Mysticism begins in experience; it ends in theology” (*Quantum Spirituality*, p. 76).

Thomas Merton defined mysticism as an experience with wisdom and God apart from words.

“... the deepest level of communication is not communication, but communion. IT IS WORDLESS. IT IS BEYOND WORDS, and it is BEYOND SPEECH, and it is BEYOND CONCEPT” (*The Asian Journal of Thomas Merton*, 1975 edition, p. 308).

Christianity Today says that young evangelicals are tired of “traditional Christianity” and want “a renewed encounter with God” that goes BEYOND “DOCTRINAL DEFINITIONS” (“The Future Lies in the Past,” *Christianity Today*, Feb. 2008).

This is a good definition of mysticism. It is an attempt to experience God beyond Scripture, beyond doctrine, beyond theology, beyond ideas and words.

Emerging church leader Spencer Burke of the OOze says: “A move away from intellectual Christianity is essential; we must move to the mystical” (*Emerging Churches*, p. 230).

Observe that he contrasts mysticism with the intellect. Mysticism tries to reach beyond that which can be understood with the mind, beyond the teaching of Scripture.

We realize that the believer does not grasp spiritual truths with his intellect alone, but the intellect should always be in gear, and this is what the contemplative mystics renounce.

Third, mysticism accepts extra-scriptural dreams and visions and insights as revelations from God and, in fact, expects them as a natural product of the contemplative experience.

Richard Foster says, “Christian meditation, very simply is the ability to hear God’s voice and obey his word” (*Celebration of Discipline*, 1998, p. 17), and he is not talking here about hearing God’s voice through Scripture alone.

In the book *Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home*, Foster, quoting Thomas Merton, says that contemplative prayer “offers you an understanding and light, which are like nothing you ever found in books or heard in sermons” (p. 160).

The “spiritual insights” that the practitioner obtains through mystical practices becomes truth to him that is at least equal in authority to Scripture.

The Catholic “saints” who developed mystical contemplative practices received countless extra-biblical revelations.

This is the mystical approach that has permeated every level of modern society and is fast becoming an acceptable means of “spirituality” in all branches of Christianity.

THE BIBLE’S WARNING ABOUT END-TIMES MYSTICISM

Revelation 17:1-6 And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters: 2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. 3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. 4 And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication: 5 And upon her forehead was a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH. 6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

Mystery Babylon is the end-times incarnation of the ancient Babylonian system of idolatry that was founded in Shinar or Mesopotamia (between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers) about 4,200 years ago. From here the system of idolatry, astrology, and goddess worship spread to all nations. The end-times Babylon is called a “mystery,” because this aspect of ancient Babylon was not revealed in the Old Testament. (The term “mystery” in the New Testament refers to doctrine that was hidden in Old Testament times and now revealed, Romans 16:25-26.)

Babylonian religion was highly mystical. The religious towers or ziggurats that began at Babel and proliferated throughout that part of the ancient world, were mystical paths to spiritual enlightenment. The practices included devotion to idols, climbing and circumnavigating the towers, studying the stars, mindless meditation, asceticism, hedonism, and temple prostitution.

The book of Revelation explains that the ancient Babylonian system has always existed in the world and will reappear in its ancient glory in the kingdom of the Antichrist.

The Roman Catholic Church is a major element of end-times Babylon, in that it is Rome who sits on the seven mountains or hills (Rev. 17:9), is decked in purple and scarlet and has a golden cup in her hand (Rev. 17:4), and is drunken with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus (Rev. 16:6).

According to Revelation, end-times Babylon is characterized by spiritual drunkenness. Babylon herself is drunk and she, in turn, has made mankind drunk. “The inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication” (Rev. 17:2). Her fornication refers first to spiritual fornication in giving the affection to idols that belongs to Almighty God alone. (It also

refers to physical fornication and the immorality that has always characterized Babylonianism.) The fornication refers to Mystery Babylon's communion with Satan through false gods, false christ, false spirits, and false gospels. It also refers to the mystical doctrines and practices that intoxicate people spiritually so that they do not think soberly about God and salvation and eternity. Two of the chief of Rome's mystical practices are the Mass and Mariolatry. All of the Catholic "saints" who devised the contemplative prayer practices that are now spreading throughout evangelicalism were captivated by these dark mystical practices. They dwelt in ascetic monasteries, attending the Mass daily to participate in its idolatrous "mysteries" (e.g., changing a piece of bread into the very Christ) and meditating upon Mary for hours at a time. They beat themselves, starved themselves, isolated themselves from human society, and sat in contemplative silence. In this manner they communed with devils and learned doctrines of devils. I recall a visit to a cloistered nunnery in Montreal in the 1990s. The nuns were devoted to Mary and they sat in the chapel in shifts to meditate upon and pray to Mary. A sign at the entrance of the chapel said, "You are now entering to adore the Jesus-Host." This identifies the consecrated wafer of the Mass with Jesus Himself. To adore the wafer is to adore Jesus. This is pure idolatry, unvarnished spiritual fornication.

Psalms 2:2-3 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, 3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.

This Psalm describes a global end-times rebellion against the true and living God and Christ ("his anointed"), and God's absolute holy Law ("their bands ... their cords"). This rebellion is evident on every hand today, and one of the fundamental elements that is uniting the world, as we will see, is mysticism.

2 Corinthians 4:4 In whom 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.

Satan is called "the god of this world" because his power extends throughout the earth because of the rebellion of fallen man. Satan is not God; he is a little "g" god only in the sense that the world has been given over to his power for a short time and most men serve him rather than the true and living God. But the fact remains that Satan's influence and power is currently global in reach.

2 Corinthians 11:1-4 Would to God ye could bear with me a little in my folly: and indeed bear with me. 2 For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. 3 But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ. 4 For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him.

We see that it is wise and godly for Christian leaders to be passionately concerned about the spiritual welfare of the churches. There are great, ever-present spiritual dangers.

Paul did not praise the church at Corinth for their doctrinal “tolerance” (“if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus ... spirit ... gospel ... ye might well bear with him”). He saw this “broadmindedness” as evidence of carnality rather than spirituality. He said they were in imminent danger of being deceived by the Devil.

We see that Satan is subtle. He is tricky, deceitful, clever. We must exercise keen spiritual discernment in order to have victory over him.

We see that there are false christs, false spirits, and false gospels. Just because someone loves “Jesus” and flows with “the spirit” and is passionate about “the gospel” does not mean they are of God.

The absolute standard of truth is the faith once delivered to the saints in the New Testament Scripture. Jesus personally chose and prepared the apostles and the Spirit of God led them into all truth (John 16:13) and gave them the words that are recorded in the Bible (1 Corinthians 2:13). By these infallible words we are to test every doctrine so that we will not be led astray.

2 Corinthians 11:13-15 For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. 14 And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. 15 Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.

Satan has sent his ministers into the world for 2,000 years, pretending to be Christians and teaching doctrines of devils in order to confuse the gospel and lead people astray. Satan comes as an “angel of light” and his ministers as “ministers of righteousness.” Thus, the keenest spiritual discernment is necessary to avoid being deceived. To be biblically ignorant, to be spiritually gullible, to be doctrinally tolerant, to refuse to “prove all things,” is the recipe for spiritual disaster.

Ephesians 2:1-3 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2 Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: 3 Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others.

Satan is the spiritual power that operates in unsaved men who unknowingly do his bidding. He is the father of “the course of this world.” He is this world’s prince. Unsaved men are unknowingly communing with this “spirit.”

2 Thessalonians 2:6-12 And now ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed in his time. 7 For the mystery of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way. 8 And then shall that Wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: 9 Even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, 10 And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. 11 And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: 12 That they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

The mystery of iniquity is Satan's program to place his man on the throne of this world. The man is called "that Wicked." He is elsewhere called the Antichrist and the Man of Sin. He will operate in Satan's power and his coming is associated with global spiritual delusion. A major element of this spiritual deception is the mysticism that we document in this report.

1 Timothy 4:1-3 Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; 2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; 3 Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth.

There are seducing spirits in the world who teach doctrines of devils. These doctrines are departures from the faith once given in Scripture. Paul gives two examples: forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats. The Roman Catholic Church has taught both of these heresies. Many within the New Age movement promote vegetarianism and other forms of legalistic dieting.

2 Timothy 4:3-4 For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; 4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

This prophecy describes the essence of end-times apostasy. It is characterized by a rejection of sound Bible doctrine and a multiplication of teachers who will entertain the people with new doctrine and fables. Certainly contemplative mysticism is one of these fables, because it was not taught by Christ and the apostles. The turning away of the ears from the truth reminds us of the contemplative principle that revelation can be found experientially beyond Scripture. When one tries to hear truth beyond Scripture, he encounter's Satan's fables.

1 John 2:18-19 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time. 19 They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

1 John 4:1-6 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world. 2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: 3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. 4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world. 5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them. 6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

There is an antichrist, singular, who will sit on the throne of the world at the end of the age, and there are antichrists, plural, who have been operating in the world since the days of the apostles. Thus, there is the urgent necessity of trying spirits and testing prophets. This is exactly what mysticism *does not* do.

The spirit of antichrist denies that Jesus is the Christ or Messiah promised in Old Testament Scripture. This means that the spirit of antichrist is characterized by such heresies as denying that Jesus is the only Lord God, denying that Jesus is the Saviour, denying the Trinity, denying Jesus' supernatural miracles, denying that Jesus rose from the dead, denying that Jesus paid a propitiatory atonement through His blood, denying that Jesus is still a man, and denying that Jesus is the eternal Son of God.

WHERE DO WE SEE MYSTICISM?

Mysticism is everywhere.

As Leonard Sweet says, "Mysticism ... is now situated in postmodernist culture near the center" (*Quantum Spirituality*, 1991, p. 11).

Rock & Roll and Mysticism

I begin with rock & roll because I believe it is the most effective form of mysticism operating in modern society. It is the sound track for end-times apostasy and Mystery Babylon.

Rock & roll is all about being "hooked on a feeling." The lyrics have never been the most important element. Rock is not so much about thinking as it is about emoting. It is enjoyed more with the body than the mind. As Ozzy Osbourne recently said, "If it tickles my spine, I listen. When I'm writing, if the hair on my arm stands up, I think, oh, it's good. I don't work it out mathematically" ("Osbourne Spins a Case for Vinyl on Record Store Day," *USA Today*, April 15, 2011, p. 6D).

It is not surprising that rock & roll has been adapted for contemporary Christian worship because it has the power that contemporary worshippers are looking for: the power to create strong emotional experiences, the power literally to take control of you and to carry you into spiritual realms.

Rock & rollers have long described their music in glowing spiritual and religious terms, but the spiritual fervor described in the following quotes does not pertain to the Spirit of God; it pertains to the "god of this world" who masquerades as an angel of light (2 Cor. 4:4; 11:14).

Rock historian Michael Moynihan says: "In spiritual terms MUSIC IS A MAGICAL OPERATION, A VEHICLE FOR MAN TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE GODS" (*Lords of Chaos: The Bloody Rise of the Satanic Metal Underground*, p. 1).

Craig Chaquico of the Jefferson Airplane says, "Rock concerts are the churches of today. *Music puts them on a spiritual plane*. All music is God" (Dan and Steve Peters, *Why Knock Rock?* p. 96).

Jimi Hendrix understood the power of rock & roll as mysticism:

“Rock music is more than music, IT’S LIKE CHURCH” (Jimi Hendrix, *The Dick Cavett Show*, July 21, 1969).

“We’re making the music into ELECTRIC CHURCH MUSIC, A NEW KIND OF BIBLE you can carry in your hearts” (Hendrix, quoted in *Crosstown Traffic* by Charles Murray, p. 161).

“... THE MUSIC IS A SPIRITUAL THING of its own” (Hendrix, interview with Robin Richman “An Infinity of Jimis,” *Life* magazine, Oct. 3, 1969).

“ATMOSPHERES ARE GOING TO COME THROUGH MUSIC, because the music is a spiritual thing of its own ... The music flows from the air; that’s why I CONNECT WITH A SPIRIT, and when they come down off THIS NATURAL HIGH, they see clearer, feel different things” (Hendrix, *Life*, Oct. 3, 1969, p. 74).

Bruce Springsteen used to open his concerts with these words: “WELCOME TO THE FIRST CHURCH OF THE ROCK, BROTHERS AND SISTERS” and has stated that he was dead until rock and roll changed his life. *USA Today* described a Springsteen concert in these words: “Displaying an awesome musical chemistry, Springsteen and his E Streeters at times turned the Meadowlands’ Continental Airlines Arena [in East Rutherford, New Jersey] into a raucous revival tent, playing off themes of redemption, salvation and resurrection via rock ‘n’ roll throughout the nearly three-hour show” (*USA Today*, July 19, 1999, p. 9D).

Robbie Kreiger, guitarist for the Doors, said the band members were “revivalists and WANTED OUR AUDIENCE TO UNDERGO A RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE” (*Break on Through: The Life and Death of Jim Morrison*, p. 190).

Remembering Bob Marley’s rock concerts, Judy Mowatt, one of his backup singers said: “ON TOUR THE SHOWS WERE LIKE CHURCH; Bob delivering the sermon. There were mixed emotions in the audience: you see people literally crying, people in a frenzy, on A SPIRITUAL HIGH ... These concerts were powerful and HIGHLY SPIRITUAL. There was A POWER THAT PULLED YOU there. It was a clean feeling ... For months and maybe years it stays with you” (Sean Dolan, *Bob Marley*, p. 95).

Grateful Dead concerts have been described as “A PLACE TO WORSHIP.” “The band was the high priest, the audience the congregation, the songs the liturgy, and the dancing the prayer” (Gary Greenberg, *Not Fade Away: The Online World Remembers Jerry Garcia*, p. 42).

A music reviewer described a Backstreet Boys concert as “worship” (*Express Writer*, August 16, 1998).

Jim Morrison of the Doors said, “I FEEL SPIRITUAL UP THERE PERFORMING” (*Newsweek*, Nov. 6, 1967, p. 101).

Michael Jackson said, “On many an occasion WHEN I AM DANCING, I HAVE FELT TOUCHED BY SOMETHING SACRED. In those moments, I felt my spirit soar, and become one with everything that exists” (Steve Turner, *Hungry for Heaven*, p. 12).

George Harrison said, “Through the music you reach the spiritual. MUSIC IS VERY INVOLVED WITH THE SPIRITUAL, as we know from the Hare Krishna mantra” (Turner, p. 71).

Brian Eno says that WHEN HE DISCOVERED ROCK AND ROLL, IT WAS “A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE” to him and IT OCCUPIED THE RELIGIOUS PART OF HIS LIFE (Turner, *Hungry for Heaven*, p. 150).

Sting, of the rock band Police, said, “The pure essence of music is very spiritual” (Musician, Feb. 1987, p. 41). He says: “MY RELIGION WOULD BE MUSIC, AND I HAD JUST RECEIVED MY FIRST SACRAMENT [WHEN HE FIRST HEARD THE BEATLES AT AGE 11]” (*USA Today*, Jan. 27, 1984, p. 2D).

Dancing at raves “may be construed as the method by which ravers WORSHIP THE GOD OF ALTERED CONSCIOUSNESS” (Russell Newcombe, *The Guardian*, Jul. 22, 1995).

A fan of Andrew WK testified: “Andrew WK truly helped me let go. HIS SHOWS WERE LIKE CHURCH SERVICES, I felt rejuvenized, and for weeks following them I was happier and made people around me happier (which in turn made me feel even better)” (Andrew WK Paradigm Shift, <http://www.dontstopthenoise.com/josh.html>).

Rock My Religion is a documentary by Dan Graham that describes the nature of rock & roll as religion to multitudes of people.

The memorial to John Lennon in Central Park, across the street from the Dakota building where he was murdered, has heavy religious overtones. A steady stream of fans place flowers and other offerings on the monument, which is inscribed with the title of his song “Imagine.”

What is it about rock & roll that has produced such spiritual fervor? What is the mysticism in rock?

It is a combination of the heavy sensual syncopation and the “me first” philosophy.

The most mystical element of rock, though, is not the lyrics; it is the music itself.

“What is undeniable about rock is *its hypnotic power*. It has gripped millions of young people around the world and transformed their lives” (William Schafer, *Rock Music*, 1972, p. 79).

“Rock music is an ideal vehicle for individual or mass *hypnosis*” (Andrew Salter, cited in *Pop Goes the Gospel*, p. 20).

“Rock music in particular has been demonstrated to be *both powerful and addictive*, as well as *capable of producing a subtle form of hypnosis* in which the subject, though not completely under trance, is still in a highly suggestive state” (John Fuller, *Are the Kids All Right?* 1981).

“An incessant beat does erode a sense of responsibility in much the same way as alcohol does. ... *You feel in the grip of a relentless stream of sound to which something very basic and primitive in the human nature responds*” (David Winter, *New Singer, New Song*).

“Heavy rock is body music designed to bypass your brain and with an unrelenting brutality *induce a frenzied state* amongst the audience” (Dave Roberts, *Buzz* columnist, Christian rock magazine in Britain, April 1982).

“Don’t listen to the words, it’s the music that has its own message. ... *I’ve been stoned on the music many times*” (Timothy Leary, New Age guru and promoter of LSD, *Politics of Ecstasy*).

“[Rock music] is THE STRONGEST DRUG IN THE WORLD” (Steven Tyler of Aerosmith, *Rock Beat*, Spring 1987, p. 23).

“Rock ‘n’ roll is *like a drug*. When you’re singing and playing rock ‘n’ roll, you’re on the leading edge of yourself. ... It’s like there’s somethin’ alive and exposed” (Neil Young, cited by Mickey Hart, *Spirit into Sound*).

Janis Joplin, who died young from the rock & roll lifestyle, describes her first big concert in these words: “I couldn’t believe it, all that rhythm and power. I got stoned just feeling it, like IT WAS THE BEST DOPE IN THE WORLD. It was SO SENSUAL, so vibrant, loud, crazy” (Joel Dreyfuss, “Janis Joplin Followed the Script,” *Wichita Eagle*, Oct. 6, 1970, p. 7A).

Another element of mysticism in rock & roll mysticism is the widespread use of drugs. In this connection consider Aldous Huxley (1874-1963).

Huxley was a British-born mystic who believed that he was enlightened through drug usage. As a young man he “discarded dogmatic religion altogether” (Anne Bancroft, *Twentieth-Century Mystics and Sages*, p. 8). He leapt from one mystical path to another “like a grasshopper.” He studied hypnosis, psychic phenomena, meditation, automatic writing, and other things, but he was particularly drawn to Hinduism and Buddhism. In 1925 he visited India. He knew J. Krishnamurti and Swami Prabhavananda.

In the 1930s, while studying Vedantic Hinduism under the direction of Gerald Heard, the founder of Trabusco College in California, Huxley wrote *The Perennial Philosophy*. In this he discussed the teachings of various mystics and described his religious views at that time. He said they were based “on direct experience,” which is the mystical approach. But it was in 1952 when Huxley claimed to have finally achieved enlightenment. This was through the ingestion of mescaline. He said that this experience cleansed the “doors of perception.” He continued to use drugs, including LSD, to the end of his life. On his deathbed his wife gave him LSD and sat beside him reading the very occultic *Tibetan Book of the Dead*.

In his books *The Doors of Perception* and *Heaven and Hell*, Huxley described his drug experiences in terms of spiritual enlightenment. He thought that the brain acted as a filter or a

“reducing valve” that did not allow man to readily connect with the “mind at large.” Through drugs, yoga, and ascetic practices the brain’s filtering function was weakened, allowing the individual to tap into the “truth.”

Huxley has had a great influence on rock & roll and on the modern world at large. The 60s rock group The Doors were named after his theory. They, too, used music and drugs as a door to “another world,” to “break on through to the other side.” The band’s lead singer, Jim Morrison, was described as an electric shaman. One of the band members said:

“When the Siberian shaman gets ready to go into his trance, all the villagers get together... and play whatever instruments they have to send him off. ... It was the same way with The Doors when we played in concert... I think that our drug experience let us get into it... [the trance state] quicker” (Doors keyboardist Ray Manzarek, cited by Jerry Hopkins and Daniel Sugerman, *No One Here Gets out Alive*, pp. 158-60).

Rock & roll has been intimately associated with end-times mysticism since its inception. To think that Satan is not behind the modern pop music craze is to reject the plain teaching of the Bible which says that the devil is “the god of this world” (2 Corinthians 4:4) and the “spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2) and the power behind the “mystery of iniquity” that is working in the world (2 Thessalonians 2:6-10).

The Pop Culture and Mysticism

Rock & roll is only one aspect (though a major one) of the Western pop culture that has spread to practically every part of the globe since the 1950s. The same pop culture influences young people in Atlanta, Seattle, Toronto, Mexico City, Rio Di Janeiro, London, Sydney, Moscow, Jerusalem, Kathmandu, and Pretoria.

And it’s all very mystical. There is no serious analytical thinking when it comes to picking out a pair of jeans or choosing a beer or listening to a punk band or watching a football match or enjoying a sitcom or playing a video game or discussing the pop culture with your friends. It’s all about what’s popular and cool and what suits my “fancy” at the moment. It’s a very shallow, mindless lifestyle.

And the rock-driven pop culture leads to the god of end-times mysticism, which is the god of non-judgmentalism and the confirmation of self.

Television and Mysticism

Television viewing is largely a mystical practice because the technological medium lends itself far more to titillating and entertaining and moving the emotions than to logical, critical thinking. And the dominance of television in American society from the 1960s forward affected every aspect of society and prepared the way for the Internet age.

This was documented by Neil Postman in his 1985 book *Amusing Ourselves to Death*. He said that in the 20th century American society moved from the Age of Exposition to the Age of Show Business and television was at the very heart and soul of the change.

He observed that the influence of television has moved public discourse from “coherent, serious and rational” to “shriveled and absurd.”

“Our politics, religion, news, athletics, education and commerce have been transformed into congenial adjuncts of show business, largely without protest or even much popular notice. The result is that we are a people on the verge of amusing ourselves to death” (*Amusing Ourselves to Death*, Kindle location 237).

Postman describes America society from its inception until the twentieth century as a highly literate one dominated by a rational, objective literary way of thinking.

“From its beginning until well into the nineteenth century, America was as dominated by the printed word and an oratory based on the printed word as any society we know of” (location 781).

This can be illustrated by the political debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen Douglas. These debates lasted for many hours and the common people followed the serious discussions easily. In October 1854 in Peoria, Illinois, Douglas delivered a three-hour opening address, Lincoln followed with a three hour rebuttal, and this was followed by further comments by Douglas.

This was typical of debates in that day, and lengthy discussions were conducted on a wide variety of topics at country and state fairs and in many other venues throughout the year. In 1835 there were more than 3,000 lecture halls operated by the Lyceum Movement which were used for adult education. By 1853 it was said that “practically every village had its lecture hall.”

The discourse was aimed at the intellect rather than the emotions. After a lengthy applause at one debate, Douglas said:

“My friends, silence will be more acceptable to me in the discussion of these questions than applause. I desire to address myself to your judgment, your understanding, and your consciences, and not to your passions or your enthusiasms.”

There was nothing mystical here. Everything was geared to reaching the intellect, not bypassing it. What a dramatic difference this is compared with political discourse in America today, which is nearly entirely geared to reaching the emotions and which seeks to avoid serious rational analysis.

Postman observed:

“Is there any audience of Americans today who could endure seven hours of talk? or five? or three? Especially without pictures of any kind? Second, these audiences must have had an equally extraordinary capacity to comprehend lengthy and complex sentences aurally. In Douglas’ Ottawa

speech he included in his one-hour address three long, legally phrased resolutions of the Abolition platform. Lincoln, in his reply, read even longer passages from a published speech he had delivered on a previous occasion. For all of Lincoln's celebrated economy of style, his sentence structure in the debates was intricate and subtle, as was Douglas.' The Lincoln-Douglas audience apparently had a considerable grasp of the issues being debated, including knowledge of historical events and complex political matters" (location 849-862).

Until well into the 20th century, social discourse was controlled by the written word and it was the opposite of the mystical orientation that began to dominate during the 20th century.

"The written word, and an oratory based upon it, has a content: a semantic, paraphrasable, propositional content. [In contrast] much of our discourse today has only a marginal propositional content. ... Whenever language is the principal medium of communication--especially language controlled by the rigors of print--an idea, a fact, a claim is the inevitable result. ... almost every scholar who has grappled with the question of what reading does to one's habits of mind has concluded that the process encourages rationality; that the sequential, propositional character of the written word fosters what Walter Ong calls the 'analytic management of knowledge. .. In a culture dominated by print, public discourse tends to be characterized by a coherent, orderly arrangement of facts and ideas" (location 909-933).

The great change began in the 19th century with the invention of the telegraph. The Associated Press was founded in 1848, only four years after Morse opened the first telegraph line, and "news from nowhere, addressed to no one in particular, began to criss-cross the nation." It created a "decontextualized information environment." It created the "information glut." It "dignified irrelevance."

"But this was not all: Telegraphy also made public discourse essential incoherent. It brought into being a world of broken time and broken attention. ... The telegraph is suited only to the flashing of messages, each to be quickly replaced by a more up-to-date message. Facts push other facts into and then out of consciousness at speeds that neither permit nor require evaluation. ... Its language was the language of headlines--sensational, fragmented, impersonal. News took the form of slogans to be noted with excitement, to be forgotten with dispatch. Its language was also entirely discontinuous" (Postman, location 1196-1208).

With the invention of daguerreotype and the easy publication of photos and images, the "graphic revolution" began and public discourse was further launched to the realm of mysticism.

"Unlike words and sentences, the photograph does not present to us an idea or concept about the world, except as we use language itself to convert the image to idea. By itself, a photograph cannot deal with the unseen, the remote, the internal, the abstract" (Postman, location 1232).

Whereas language presents the world as idea, photography presents the world as object.

"The new imagery, with photography at its forefront, did not merely function as a supplement to language, but bid to replace it as our dominant means for construing, understanding, and testing reality" (location 1269).

The combination of instant news and photography created a "peek-a-boo" world.

"Photography and telegraphy was a 'language' that denied interconnectedness, proceeded without context, argued the irrelevance of history, explained nothing, and offered fascination in place of

complexity and coherence. There was a duet of image and instance, and together they played the tune of a new kind of public discourse in America. ... Together, this ensemble of electronic techniques called into being a new world--a peek-a-boo world where now this event, now that, pops into view for a moment, then vanishes again. It is a world without much coherence or sense; a world that does not ask us, indeed, does not permit us to do anything; a world that is, like the child's game of peek-a-boo, entirely self-contained. But like peek-a-boo, it is endlessly entertaining" (Postman, location 1318).

Postman demonstrates that television "transformed our culture into one vast arena for show business."

This is true even for programs that are supposed to be serious and educational.

Consider the typical news broadcast. It is packaged as entertainment. It's not about thinking; it's about feeling. The snippets of actual news are disjointed and are presented so quickly that there is no time for serious analysis or reflection. And the news is delivered in the context of sensual music, powerful graphics, advertising blurbs, and the cheerful personalities and attractive appearance of the news people.

Postman describes the television approach to news as "Now ... This."

"'Now ... this' is commonly used on radio and television newscasts to indicate that what one has just heard or seen has no relevance to what one is about to hear or see, or possibly to anything one is ever likely to hear or see. The phrase is a means of acknowledging the fact that the world as mapped by the speeded-up electronic media has no order or meaning and is not to be taken seriously. There is no murder so brutal, no earthquake so devastating, no political blunder so costly--for that matter, no ball score so tantalizing or weather report so threatening--that it cannot be erased from our minds by a newscaster saying, 'Now ... this.' ... we are presented not only with fragmented news but news without context, without consequences, without value, and therefore without essential seriousness; that is to say, news as pure entertainment. ... I should go so far as to say that embedded in the surrealistic frame of a television news show is a theory of anticomunication, featuring a type of discourse that abandons logic, reason, sequence and rules of contradiction. In aesthetics, I believe the name given to this theory is Dadaism; in philosophy, nihilism; in psychiatry, schizophrenia" (Postman, location 1593-1604, 1677).

Consider *USA Today*, the nation's most popular newspaper. It is designed on the television format. The text is brief and the content is overwhelmingly graphical oriented. There is no real substance. A large portion of the paper is devoted to pure entertainment, while even the "serious" part is delivered in an entertainment format.

As a result of the mystical Age of Entertainment, the average person is hugely ill-informed and does not even know how to think analytically. This is the perfect preparation for the coming of the Antichrist.

Consider politics. The average person who even puts aside his pursuit of entertainment long enough to vote does not base his momentous decision on carefully-researched and well-considered facts but on his feelings about the candidates and vaguely-defined issues. Many

decisions are made strictly on the appearance of the individual and the mindless content of 30 second television or radio commercials.

The Internet and Mysticism

This mystical approach to discourse, which affects the emotions more than the intellect, has increased in reach and intensity with each quarter century since the invention of the telegraph. Television took it to new levels, but the Internet has surpassed even television.

Surfing the web is largely about entertainment and the titillating of the emotions and baser desires.

There are still people who think and who use the Internet for serious research, of course, but the vast majority of people simply move with the flow of the times and allow the culture to control them rather than seeking to be in control of the culture. They allow the culture to define “cool” and they pursue this definition in their daily lives.

When it comes to serious information, the average person doesn’t look any further than *Wikipedia* or the top hits of a Google search.

The most popular sites on the Internet have nothing to do with serious thinking and the rational pursuit of truth. These include Facebook, YouTube, Twitter, Yahoo, and Blogspot. While you can listen to sermons and documentaries and debates and instructional clips on YouTube and while there are serious blogs, the vast majority of people use these Internet tools for pure entertainment interspersed with snippets of news.

Consider Twitter. It is called “microblogging” and the sender is limited to near-mindless snippets of text 140 characters in length. These are called “tweets.” The most popular tweets are those pertaining to entertainment figures or the publication of banal Zen-like messages such as LoveableWords (“love is a feeling for an object, if it’s not perfect don’t live it”) and ItsThingsInLife (“life is made of years that mean nothing and moments that mean everything”). Twitter founder Jack Dorsey says the term “twitter” refers to “a short burst of inconsequential information” and “that’s exactly what the product was.” A 2009 analysis of Twitter content by Pear Analytics found that 50% was “pointless babble” or “self-promotion.”

The very concept of tweeting the details of your life to a band of followers and subscribing to the tweets of other people illustrates the mindless, self-centered entertainment focus of modern society. As Clive Thompson observed:

“Why would you subject your friends to your daily minutiae? And conversely, how much of their trivia can you absorb? The growth of ambient intimacy can seem like modern narcissism taken to a new, supermetabolic extreme—the ultimate expression of a generation of celebrity-addled youths who believe their every utterance is fascinating and ought to be shared with the world” (“I’m So Totally, Digitally Close to You,” *New York Times Magazine*, Sept. 5, 2009).

The average youth is drunk on the omnipresent pop culture which is broadcast so effectively through the the Internet and is accessed so readily via the cell phone (which typically combines an mp3 player with texting and e-mailing and web browsing), the iPad, and the laptop.

Modern Advertising and Mysticism

Modern advertising is not about moving the intellect and reaching the rational part of man; it is about manipulating human emotions and baser lusts. Advertisers don't want you to think; they want you to feel. It is blind mysticism.

“By the turn of the [20th] century, advertisers no longer assumed rationality on the part of their potential customers. Advertising became one part depth psychology, one part aesthetic theory. Reason had to move itself to other areas. ... [By the 1950s] the television commercial made linguistic discourse obsolete as the basis for product decisions. By substituting images for claims, the pictorial commercial made linguistic discourse obsolete as the basis for product decisions. By substituting images for claims, the pictorial commercial made emotional appeal, not tests of truth, the basis of consumer decisions. The distance between rationality and advertising is now so wide that it is difficult to remember that there once existed a connection between them. ... A McDonald's commercial, for example, is not a series of testable, logically ordered assertions. It is a drama--a mythology, it you will--of handsome people selling, buying and eating hamburgers, and being driven to near ecstasy by their good fortune” (Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, location 1070, 2005).

Consider the Smiley logo, which was created in the 1960s and has become ubiquitous within the pop culture. Today it is part of a series of “emoticons,” the very name (*emotional icons*) pointing to the fact that they are about the manipulation of the emotions. The emoticons are even built into most computer word processing programs today. What does the Smiley logo mean? Nothing, really. It ha a vague message of “be happy; think positively; have a good day,” but there is really no definite meaning. It is even used to mock happiness. The fact is that it can mean anything or nothing.

To walk through a modern mall is an exercise in mysticism. Through slogans and displays, sound and color, the individual is encouraged to buy stuff so that he will feel good, be happy, be proud, be cool, have friends, be satisfied, be true to himself, be successful. The message is imparted not only through words and slogans but also through the ever-present images of beautiful, happy, popular, “successful” people.

This is blind mysticism.

Pagan Religions and Mysticism

Pagan religions are mystical at heart. They teach that god is some sort of universal power and the way to connect with him/it is through mystical practices.

Hinduism has its yoga, which means “union” and refers to the union of man with God in his innermost being through occultic practices. It is “the science of uniting the individual soul with the Cosmic Spirit.” It is called transcendental meditation, self-realization, Krishna consciousness, and many other things.

Yoga has many forms and yogic mystical practices include thoughtless mantra-driven meditation (such as the Hare Krishna Maha mantra), chanting, singing, meditation on idols, visualization and guided imagery, alternative health practices that seek to balance the “five essential elements” and manipulate the “flow of vital energy,” and living one’s life under the direction of the stars (astrology).

Buddhism in its myriad of forms has many mystical practices, including thoughtless mantra-driven meditation, prayer wheels, prayer beads, circumnavigating stupas, communion with the dead, asceticism, living in the “present,” vegetarianism, and contemplating Zen puzzles.

The Buddhism that is popular in the West incorporates elements of Buddhism with pop New Age.

One of its early gurus, Alan Watts, observed that Zen Buddhism “appealed to the youth because it did not preach or scold as did Hebrew-Christian beliefs” (David Stuart, *Alan Watts*, p. 181). Stuart observes that the Watts’ way was “women and ideas, and liquor and LSD and pot and irreverent people who were all doing their own thing” (*Alan Watts*, p. 205).

The essence of Watts’ Zen was “me, myself, and I,” and as such he was a fitting guru for the ME generation.

Pagan mysticism always leads the practitioner to the non-judgmental, universalistic, pantheistic or panentheistic, unconditional love god.

The Human Potential Field and Mysticism

The massive “Human Potential” field is mystical to the core. It is also called Self Help, Personal Development, Personal Enhancement, Personal Empowerment, Personal Success, Spiritual Growth, Life Coaching, Motivational, Human Dynamics, Self Actualization, Self Empowerment, and Transpersonal Psychology. Human Potential books fill the shelves of bookstores. Its gurus are often called “life coaches.” There are both secular and Christian varieties.

Based on the older New Thought movement, the theme is that man has the potential within him to do anything, and the mystical elements of its practice include positive thinking, positive confession, guided imagery, anchoring, and visualization. These things have been called “willpower-building metaphysics.”

Human Potential has influenced countless professing Christians, but it is New Age to the core and can easily lead to the god of end-times apostasy.

Whereas the Bible says man is a fallen sinner who is corrupt in his morals and thinking, the Human Potential message is that man is not so bad and just needs a little self-improvement. Whereas the Bible says man is estranged from God because of sin and can only be reconciled through the atoning cross-work of Christ, the Human Potential message is that man and God are already buddies and man simply needs to recognize and capitalize on this reality. Whereas the Bible warns that Satan seeks to deceive and destroy and we must therefore be sober and vigilant,

Human Potential urges the individual to participate in dangerous practices such as visualization and guided imagery, which are mystical paths to spiritual deception.

Positive Thinking and Mysticism

Intimately associated with the Human Potential field is Positive Thinking, which was popularized by Norman Vincent Peale beginning in the 1950s. It is rife with New Age mysticism and it leads to the New Age god.

Peale was one of the most popular preachers of the twentieth century. His famous book *The Power of Positive Thinking* has sold almost 20 million copies in 41 languages. It was on the United States best-seller list for a full year following its publication in 1952 and has been in print continuously ever since. For 54 years Peale's weekly radio program, *The Art of Living*, was broadcast on NBC. His sermons were mailed to 750,000 people a month. His popular *Guidepost* magazine has a circulation of more than 4.5 million, the largest of any religious publication.

Peale's positive-thinking gospel was an unholy mixture of humanistic psychology, eastern religion, and Bible.

In 1952 Peale published his famous book on positive thinking. The first paragraph begins with the words, "Believe in yourself! ... this book will help you believe in yourself and release your inner powers." It is a universalistic approach that assumes in the Fatherhood of God.

Peale was a promoter of New Age "**positive imaging.**" He claimed that mental imaging worked for anyone, regardless of religious faith. A group of Merrill Lynch real estate associates gave Peale a standing ovation after he told them the following:

"I believe, and I've tested it out in so many cases that I'm sure of its validity, that if a person has a business and images that business at a certain level and fights off his doubts ... it will come out that way--all because of the power of the positive image" (Jeanne Pugh, "The Eternal Optimist," St. Petersburg Times, St. Petersburg, Florida, Religion Section, June 8, 1985).

This doctrine has been a part of the New Age from its inception. Man has the power to accomplish whatever he desires by learning how to visualize it into reality.

In *You Can If You Think You Can*, Peale wrote:

“The world you live in is mental and not physical. Change your thought and you change everything. ... All the resources you need are in your mind” (p. 224).

Peale gave testimonies of people who used positive imaging and visualization to heal diseases, build large corporations, obtain business promotions, improve marriages, pay off debts, create a more healthy personality, build large churches, whatever. He describes how that he used imaging techniques in his second church when the attendance was low:

“I visualized that pew full, and all the other pews full, and the church filled to capacity. I held that image in my mind. ... And the day came when the image became a reality” (*Positive Imaging*, p. 25).

Peale’s positive thinking/positive imaging mysticism put him in touch with the New Age God, who is non-judging and only-loving. He came to see God as energy.

“The spiritual power is demonstrated by the principle, ‘you can if you think you can’ in other words your willpower along with your mind becomes God. ... Who is God? ... God is energy. As you breathe God in, as you visualize His energy, you will be reenergized” (*You Can If You Think You Can*).

Peale denied the need for the new birth and said that God is the God of all religions. In an interview with Phil Donahue in 1984, Peale said: “It’s not necessary to be born again. You have your way to God; I have mine. ... I’ve been to the Shinto shrines, and God is everywhere.” Donahue exclaimed, “But you’re a Christian minister; you’re supposed to tell me that Christ is the Way and the Truth and the Life, aren’t you?” Peale replied, “Christ is one of the ways! God is everywhere” (*Sword of the Lord*, Dec. 14, 1984).

Peale’s God was non-judgmental. In an interview with *USA Today* he said, “I don’t believe God spends his time revenging himself on people. These things [AIDS, herpes] come about because of scientific methodology. God is too big to spend his time in revenge” (July 22, 1983).

Peale taught that men are inherently good. “People are inherently good--the bad reactions aren’t basic. Every human being is a child of God and has more good in him than evil--but circumstances and associates can step up the bad and reduce the good. I’ve got great faith in the essential fairness and decency--you may say goodness--of the human being” (*Modern Maturity magazine*, December-January 1975-76).

Peale denied that Jesus is God. He told *Modern Maturity* magazine, “I like to describe him as ... the nearest thing to God.”

Peale even promoted the New Age christ that Jane Palzere and Anna Brown encountered through occultic automatic writing. He endorsed their book *The Jesus Letters*, which professes to be

messages from Jesus. Yet this “Jesus” said such things as, “God does not see evil; He sees only souls at different levels of awareness.”

Of this “Jesus,” Peale wrote the following amazing endorsement: “You will bless many by this truly inspired book. ... It little matters if these writings come from Jesus of Nazareth or Jesus of Jane [Jane Palzere] they are all the same consciousness and that consciousness is God. I am a part of God, and Jane and Anna are part of that same God” (advertisement for *The Jesus Letters and Your Healing Spirit*)

New Age and Mysticism

Mysticism is at the heart of the New Age movement, which has permeated every level of society.

With the turn of the twenty-first century there has been a dramatic increase in the popularity and influence of New Age thought. It is also called New Spirituality, Self Spirituality, Self Empowerment, Alternative Spirituality, and Global Transformation.

The New Age philosophy has permeated the self-help, personal transformation field; it has leavened education and reached deeply into business, health care, psychological counseling, drug and alcohol rehabilitation, politics, government, sports, even the military.

Neil Anderson says: “It is safe to say that the prevailing religion in America ... is no longer Christianity but is instead New Age” (*Christ Centered Therapy*, 2000, p. 61).

A trip to the average national-chain book store will verify this. New Age philosophy is found not just in the religious, spiritual, and metaphysical sections.

At its essence, the New Age is a bold rejection of the Bible’s doctrine that God is the Almighty thrice-holy Creator, that man is a sinner estranged from God, that salvation is only through the cross-work of God’s Son Jesus Christ, and that heaven or hell is man’s eternal destiny, depending upon what he does with Jesus Christ in this life.

The New Age is the casting off of God and His restraints. It is a fulfillment of the ancient prophecy in Psalm 2:

“Why do the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying, Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us” (Psalm 2:1-3).

The New Age is rife with mysticism. Practices include mantra-driven meditation, visualization, guided imagery, positive thinking, positive confession, clairvoyance, astrology, vegetarianism, and hypnosis.

Evolution and Mysticism

While some evolutionists claim to be out-and-out atheists, many others believe in some sort of pantheistic mystical power.

Erasmus Darwin, Charles Darwin's grandfather, preached the doctrine of evolution in a popular two-volume set of books entitled *Zoonomia; or, the Laws of Organic Life* (1794-96). He promoted the very concepts later popularized by the grandson Charles: natural selection, survival of the fittest, sexual selection, gradual transformation of species, homology, and vestigial organs. But Erasmus also worshiped God as "the vast Unknown" and "adored in the Temple of Nature" (Adrian Desmond, *Darwin*, pp. 5, 9). He thought of himself as a free thinker, but his religion was nothing more than ancient goddess-earth worship. His book *The Temple of Nature* presented the doctrine of evolution under the guise of lessons he supposedly learned from the goddess Urania, Priestess of Nature.

One of Thomas Huxley's students, **C. Lloyd Morgan**, developed the concept of Emergent Evolution, which saw "God" as "the Creative Source of evolution." Morgan believed that "all observable change is due to some form of Spiritual Activity," as a part of "a scheme" directed by God and leading upward toward God.

This is not the God of the Bible, of course, but a pantheistic Higher Power that is mysteriously working throughout the material world toward some unknown objective.

Alfred Russel Wallace, who co-founded the theory of Natural Selection with Charles Darwin, believed in a universe permeated with "cosmic intelligence." He proposed "a reconciliation of Science with Theology." While rejecting the sovereign Creator God of the Bible, Wallace believed in a pantheistic "Power," an "Overruling Intelligence" that is evolving everything toward an objective.

Beginning in his fifties, Wallace delved deeper and deeper into the occult. In 1876, he published *Miracles and Modern Spiritualism*, promoting practices such as seances, automatic writing, trance speaking, and clairvoyance.

Charles Darwin's foremost German disciple, **Ernst Haeckel**, believed in a pantheistic Nature-God that energizes everything. While rejecting the "concept of the personal creator," Haeckel defined God as "the universal law of causality. ... the sum of all forces, thus also of all matter" (Mario Di Gregorio, *From Here to Eternity*, p. 200). Haeckel held to the pantheistic "unity of God within the whole of nature." Matter and spirit are one.

Henry Fairfield Osborn, head of the American Museum of Natural History in New York City, who hated the Genesis account of creation, believed in a God who is "with us, in us, and everywhere around us" (*The Earth Speaks to Bryan*, 1925, p. 86). He believed that a "purpose

pervades all Nature, from nebula to man,” and he called it the “Wisdom and Spirit of the Universe.” This “Spirit” keeps everything in “everlasting motion.”

In *The Meaning of Evolution*, **Gaylord Simpson** acknowledged that science cannot explain many things about life, so he allowed for a “hidden First Cause.” He said, “We may, if we are so inclined, worship it in our own ways, but we certainly do not comprehend it.”

Theodosius Dobzhansky, who rejected the existence of a Creator God, was nonetheless called “a religious man” by geneticist Francisco Ayala, because he believed that evolution has “transcended itself into the realm of self-awareness” (*Journal of Heredity*, Vol. 68, No. 3, 1977, p. 3).

This is the New Age pantheistic god that considers nature to be self-aware and self-evolving.

George Wald, a Darwinist who “used to state that he didn't even like to use the word ‘God’ in a sentence,” now holds to a form of pantheism. He claims that “the universe wants to be known” (Dietrick Thomsen, “A Knowing Universe Seeking to Be Known,” *Science News*, Feb. 19, 1983).

Jeremy Rifkin described this New Age evolutionary god as follows:

“Evolution is no longer viewed as a mindless affair, quite the opposite. It is mind enlarging its domain up the chain of species. ... In this way one eventually ends up with the idea of the universe as a mind that oversees, orchestrates, and gives order and structure to all things” (*Algeny*, 1983, p. 188, 195).

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955) is a prime example of the bridge between Darwinian evolution and New Age mysticism.

Teilhard (pronounced tay-yar) was both a Jesuit priest and an evolutionary paleontologist. He was one of the discoverers of the so-called Peking man. But Teilhard didn't believe in blind evolution. He was “a leading proponent of orthogenesis, the idea that evolution occurs in a directional, goal driven way” (“Pierre Teilhard de Chardin,” Wikipedia).

Teilhard taught that God is the consciousness of the universe, that everything is one, and that everything is evolving toward an ultimate point of perfection. He called this perfection CHRIST and THE OMEGA POINT. Thus, man is part of the divine and will eventually merge with it. Teilhard claimed that the Omega Point is drawing the universe to itself so that it is being guided toward ever higher states of consciousness.

In *The Phenomenon of Man* (1968) Teilhard claimed that man is on the verge of an evolutionary leap in consciousness similar to that allegedly achieved when man emerged from the animal kingdom. He “believed the new consciousness would be similar to mystical enlightenment in that

it was likely to have collective and cosmic elements which would have the effect of drawing individuals closer to God” (*The Aquarian Guide to the New Age*).

New Agers such as Barbara Hubbard have latched onto this doctrine as foundational to their program.

Teilhard was a mystic and described his practice of meditation as “going down into my innermost self, to the deep abyss” (*The Divine Milieu*, p. 76). He said: “At each step of the descent a new person was disclosed within me of whose name I was no longer sure, and who no longer obeyed me.” At the end of the journey he found “a bottomless abyss at my feet.”

This is a loud warning to those who have ears to hear. Though the mystic believes that he is touching light and truth through contemplative practices, in reality he is fellowshipping with darkness and devils. Who were these “persons” who were distinct from Teilhard himself and who did not obey him? From a biblical perspective, we would have to conclude that the man was communicating with demons.

Teilhard said he was led along by a spirit all his life.

“Ever since my childhood an enigmatic force had been impelling me” (Teilhard, *The Heart of the Matter*, 1979, p. 53).

Because of his communion with devils through mysticism, Teilhard rejected the Christ of the Bible and salvation through Christ’s blood atonement, and adopted a pantheistic view of God.

“I believe that the Messiah whom we await, whom we all without any doubt await, is the universal Christ; that is to say, the Christ of evolution” (*Christianity and Evolution*, p. 95).

“What I am proposing to do is to narrow that gap between pantheism and Christianity by bringing out what one might call the Christian soul of pantheism or the pantheist aspect of Christianity” (*Christianity and Evolution*, p. 56).

The New Age merger of “scientific” evolution with a pantheistic or panentheistic god has spread widely in our day. It is even promoted in the Spitzer Hall of Human Origins at the American Museum of Natural History. The displays depict man as a product of blind Darwinian evolution and brashly contradict the Bible’s account of creation, but a video presentation features prominent evolutionists claiming that science and religion are friends.

Francis Collins, director of the Human Genome Project, says, “I’m a scientist that believes the tools of science are the way to understand the natural world and one needs to be rigorous about that. But I’m also a believer in a personal God. I find the scientific worldview and the spiritual worldview to be entirely complementary. And I find it quite wonderful to be able to have both of those worldviews existing in my life in a given day, because each illuminates the other.”

This might sound respectful toward “religion,” but in fact it is a bold repudiation of the Bible, because the Bible refuses to speak only about “religious things.” The Bible begins with the account of how the material universe was made, so it refuses to leave such things to “science.” And if the Bible is wrong about the material universe there is no reason to believe it is right about anything else and no reason to “respect” its teachings on any other subject.

Psychology and Mysticism

Psychology has been permeated with mysticism since its inception in the 19th century.

Carl Jung

Carl Jung (1875-1961), the founder of analytical psychology, has been called “the psychologist of the 21st century” (Merill Berger, *The Wisdom of the Dreams*, front cover.” Jung (pronounced Young) has been influential, not only in society at large, but also in the New Age movement and within almost all aspects of Christianity. Jung has influenced both modernists and evangelicals. His writings are influential within the contemplative movement. He has been promoted by Paul Tillich, Morton Kelsey, John Sanford, Thomas Moore, Joseph Campbell, John Spong, Richard Foster, Agnes Sanford, and Gary Thomas, to name a few. Jung’s psychological typing provides the underpinning for the Personality Profiling part of Rick Warren’s SHAPE program, which is used by countless churches and institutions.

Jeffrey Satinover says:

“Jung’s direct and indirect impact on mainstream Christianity--and thus on Western culture--has been incalculable. It is no exaggeration to say that the theological positions of most mainstream denominations in their approach to pastoral care, as well as in their doctrines and liturgy--have become more or less identical with Jung’s psychological/symbolic theology” (*Homosexuality and the Politics of Truth*, p. 240, quoted from Ed Hird, “Carl Jung, Neo-Gnosticism,” March 18, 1998).

At the same time, Jung was deeply involved in pagan mysticism. He has been called the “Father of the New Age Movement” (Ed Hird).

Jung explored Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, I Ching, astrology, Spiritualism, Gnosticism, alchemy, dream interpretation, mandala symbolism, Theosophy, Greek Mythology, and more. Even as a boy, he was drawn to Hindu gods because he “had an obscure feeling of their affinity with my ‘original revelation’” (Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Vintage Books, 1989, p. 17). He spent time in India studying eastern religion and folk lore. He wrote the first introduction to Zen Buddhism. He amassed one of the largest collections of spiritualistic writings found on the European continent (Jeffrey Santinover, *The Empty Self*, p. 28).

In the pursuit of communion with spirits and a pantheistic “all pervading power,” Jung used a wide variety of mystical practices, including the divination methods of I Ching, idolatry, astrological horoscopic calculations, meditation, communion with spirits, clairvoyance, séances,

dream interpretation, and channeling. Jung's book *Septem Sermones (The Seven Sermons to the Dead)* was dictated from spirits.

Jung believed that the secret of life is found "at the mystical heart of all religions" and that it consists of a "journey of transformation" to find the true self and bring it into harmony with the Divine.

The god that Jung encountered through mystical practices was not the God of the Bible. He was the pantheistic, universalistic, syncretistic, non-judgmental god of Self.

Jung said that Jesus, Mani, Buddha, and Lao-Tse are all "pillars of the spirit" (John Dourley, *C.G. Jung and Paul Tillich*, p. 65).

Jung believed in pantheism. "Nothing could persuade me that 'in the image of God' applied only to man. In fact it seemed to me that the high mountains, the rivers, lakes, trees, flowers, and animals far better exemplified the essence of God than men..." (*Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, p. 45). He carried a little stone and secretly adored it. He says, "What I dimly felt to be my kinship with stone was the divine nature in both, in the dead and the living matter" (p. 68).

Jung believed that "nothing separated man from God" (p. 45). This, of course, is the non-judgmental god who is not a holy lawgiver and judge.

Abraham Maslow

Maslow (1908-90) predicted a "fourth force" in psychology, which "has become known as transpersonal psychology with a strong New Age element" (E.S. Williams, *The Dark Side of Christian Counselling*, p. 57).

Maslow promoted mystical "peak experiences" as the means of connecting with "god" and achieving self-actualization. By such experiences the individual feels "a part of the infinite and the eternal" (Williams, p. 63).

His mysticism led him to the god of end-times apostasy.

Maslow rejected the God of the Bible and hated Bible Christianity, considering it a major enemy of true spirituality. He denied divine revelation and absolute truth. He wanted to lead men to a new god. He saw himself "as a secular prophet who will deliver modern man from the tyranny of traditional religion and lead us to the promised land of human self-actualisation" (Williams, p. 59).

Maslow's god was "not a person, but a force, a principle, a gestalt-quality of the whole of Being, an integrating power that expresses the unity and therefore the meaningfulness of the cosmos" (Maslow, *Religions, Values, and Peak Experiences*, chapter 8).

His god was a non-judgmental god who does not give laws and judge disobedience. He denied the doctrine of original sin and taught that man is basically good and has the potential within himself for perfection or “actualization.” This is called “human potential” psychology.

It is mysticism, and the mystical practice is psychological counseling. Man can realize his potential through non-directive psychological counseling.

Observing that the mysticism of all religions leads to the same type of god, Maslow concluded that “all religions are the same in their essence and have always been the same” (*Religions, Values, and Peak Experiences*, p. 20).

Carl Rogers

Rogers (1902-98) was ranked the number one most influential psychotherapist in 1982 by the *American Psychologist* journal. William Kilpatrick said, “I don’t think any other psychologist has had as much influence on our culture and ways of thinking” (*Experiments in Moral Education*, 1997, cited from E.S. Williams, *The Dark Side of Christian Counselling*, p. 71).

Rogers had a massive influence on public education. “In the 50s and 70s these counselling techniques which Rogers had developed were introduced into schools with the result that teachers began to take a non-directive, non-judgmental attitude toward values. Each person would have to discover his own values, and no one could say that one value was superior to another” (William Kirkpatrick, cited from Williams, p. 71).

Rogers also had a huge influence on the abortion counseling movement. “Virtually all abortion counseling services, both Christian and secular, follow Rogers’ non-directive approach. The aim is to provide a pregnant woman with the facts about her options (abortion, adoption, keeping the pregnancy) in an impartial way that helps her to make up her mind as to what she wants to do with the unwanted pregnancy. Whatever choice she makes is the right choice for her” (Williams, p. 71).

After attending the liberal Union Theological Seminary and participating in the liberal World Student Christian Federation Conference, Rogers rejected his parents’ Christian faith.

He rejected the God of the Bible and pursued the god of end-times apostasy.

He became his own authority, his own god, and “experience” was the channel to truth. Rogers wrote:

“Experience is, for me, the highest authority. The touchstone of validity is my own experience. No other person’s ideas and none of my own ideas, are as authoritative as my experience. It is to experience that I must return again and again, to discover a closer approximation to truth as it is

in the process of becoming in me. *Neither the Bible nor the prophets--neither Freud nor research--neither the revelations of God nor man--can take precedence over my own direct experience*" (Rogers, *On Becoming a Person*).

He became an enemy of the God of Bible Christianity. He wrote:

"Religion, especially the Protestant Christian tradition, has permeated our culture with the concept that man is basically sinful, and only by something approaching a miracle can his sinful nature be negated" (Rogers, *On Becoming a Person*, 1961, p. 91).

Rogers was one of the movers and shakers in the Humanist movement and in 1964 was elected Humanist of the Year by the American Humanist Association.

His god was a "life-force" that is present in all forms of life that individuals can tap for "self-actualization" (Williams, p. 66).

He rejected the fallenness of man and the necessity of the new birth, believing that man has the ability to perfect himself through trusting his experiences and following his feelings. The means to this is "non-directive" counseling which is non-judgmental and morally relativistic.

This is another mystical path to the end-times apostasy god.

By pursuing the "light within" and trusting his own feelings and experiences, Rogers was drawn farther and farther into spiritual darkness. Toward the end of his life, he became entangled with the occult, dabbling in such things as thought transference, clairvoyance, human auras, out-of-body experiences, and séances.

Psychology's God of Self-esteem and Unconditional Love

Two of the fundamental principles of modern psychology are self-esteem and unconditional love.

These are blatant denials of Bible Christianity and are a rejection of the God of the Bible and are thus a pursuit of a false god -- the very god of end-times apostasy.

The doctrine of self-esteem was developed by the fathers of the psychological counseling movement and has spread throughout that field and beyond to every level of modern society.

According to the doctrine of self-esteem, man must pursue his own self-love or self-confidence for the sake of psychological wholeness, and anything that damages self-esteem is wrong. The mystical path to the development of self-esteem is psychological counseling. Since absolute rules produce guilt in those who don't live up to them, the pursuit of self-esteem emphasizes the need for "new rules which will allow us more freedom of movement and encourage us to accept ourselves just as we are" (E.S. Williams, *The Dark Side of Christian Counselling*, p. 116).

Atheist Abraham Maslow emphasized the need for self-esteem in books such as *A Theory of Human Motivation* (1943), *Motivation and Personality* (1954), and *Toward a Psychology of Being* (1955). He taught that a lack of self-esteem can lead to “neurotic trends.” Rejecting the doctrine of the Fall, he believed that man is basically good and there is “a positive, self-actualising force within each person that is struggling to assert itself” (Williams, *The Dark Side*, p. 114). If it is “permitted to guide our life, we grow healthy, fruitful, and happy” (*Motivation and Personality*, 1970, p. 122).

Dr. Nathaniel Branden has had a massive influence in the promotion of self-esteem through books such as *Psychology of Self-Esteem* (1969), *How to Raise Your Self-Esteem* (1987), and the *Six Pillars of Self-Esteem* (1995). He treats self-esteem as a basic human need that is essential for mental health. He says, “The first love affair we must consummate successfully in this world is with ourselves; only then are we ready for a relationship.”

Douglas Groothuis identifies the self-esteem doctrine as New Age in character.

“Maslow’s past-breaking efforts cleared the way for an exodus from the old psychological view of humanity toward a new human that is essentially good and has within himself unlimited potential for growth. A whole host of thinkers--Erich Fromm, Rollo May, Carl Rogers and others--sound this call. In humanistic psychology the self is seen as the radiant heart of health, and psychotherapy must strive to get the person in touch with that source of goodness. ... This is the message at the core of New Age teaching” (*Unmasking the New Age*, 1986, p. 78).

The pursuit of self-esteem puts one into contact with the god of end-times apostasy.

The doctrine of self-esteem is at the heart of the “Christian” homosexual movement which claims that God accepts homosexuals as they are without the necessity of repentance. At the founding of the Metropolitan Community Churches in 1968, Troy Perry preached a message entitled “Be True to You,” from a line in Shakespeare’s play Hamlet, “This above all: To thine own self be true.”

The self-esteem doctrine was borrowed from humanistic God haters like Maslow and Rogers and has been promoted far and wide in Christian circles by a slew of Christian psychologists, with James Dobson leading the way.

Dobson claims that “lack of self-esteem produces more symptoms of psychiatric disorders than any other factor yet identified” (*Confident Healthy Families*, 1987, pp. 73-74). His 1974 book *Hide and Seek* was designed “to formulate a well-defined philosophy--and approach to child rearing -- that will contribute to self-esteem from infancy onwards.” He says, “If I could write a prescription for the women of the world, I would provide each one of them with a healthy dose of self-esteem and personal worth (taken three times a day until the symptoms disappear). I have no doubt that this is their greatest need” (*What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew about Women*, p. 35). He says, “... lack of self-esteem is a threat to the entire human family, affecting children,

adolescents, the elderly, all socioeconomic levels of society, and each race and ethnic culture” (*What Wives Wish*, p. 24).

Dobson believes that lack of self-esteem is the cause of every social ill.

“Thus, whenever the keys to self-esteem are seemingly out of reach for a large percentage of the people, as in twentieth-century America, then widespread mental illness, neuroticism, hatred, alcoholism, drug abuse, violence, and social disorder will certainly occur. Personal worth is not something humans are free to take or leave. We must have it, and when it is unattainable, everybody suffers” (*Confident, Healthy Families*, p. 67).

To the contrary, the Bible lays the ills of society at the feet of fallen man and his rebellion against God. Jesus taught that murder, adultery, fornication, covetousness, deceit, theft, and such come from man’s wicked heart (Mark 7:21-23).

David Seamands is another pioneer of the Christian self-esteem movement. His hugely popular books *Healing for Damaged Emotions* and *Healing of Memories* seek to heal the believer of “Satan’s most powerful psychological weapon” which is “low self-esteem.” He aims to take the client back into the past to recover and heal memories of events that injured one’s self-esteem.

Seamands has been widely recommended by evangelicals, including James Dobson and George Verwer (Youth With A Mission), who wrote the foreword to *Healing for Damaged Emotions*.

Seamands’ mystical path toward self-esteem is “healing of memories” through psychological counseling and New Age techniques. He promotes things as positive visualization, guided imagery, dream analysis, and venting of emotions. Through visualization, the individual is taught to imagine painful past events in perfect detail and to imagine Jesus entering the scenes to bring healing. This is not only vain fantasy; it is occultic and it is a recipe for communing with deceiving spirits masquerading as angels of light.

The self-esteem doctrine downplays and redefines sin.

The very popular and influential Robert Schuller, who was a pioneer in the “Christian” self-esteem movement, defines sin as “any act or thought that robs myself or another human being of his or her self-esteem” (*Self-Esteem: The New Reformation*, p. 14). He defined the new birth as “being changed from a negative to a positive self-image--from inferiority to self-esteem” (p. 68). He even said that Christ was “self-esteem incarnate” (p. 135). Schuller has been praised and promoted by a whose-who of evangelicalism, including Billy Graham, W.A. Criswell, R.C. Sproul, *Christianity Today*, National Association of Evangelicals, World Vision, Promise Keepers, James Dobson, Tony Campolo, Bill Bright, Paul Yonggi Cho, Jack Hayford, Ralph Reed, Bill Hybels, Paul Crouch, John Wimber, Ravi Zacharias, Lee Strobel, Chuck Colson, and Rick Warren, to name a few. (See “Evangelicals and Heretic Robert Schuller” at the Way of Life web site.)

The self-esteem doctrine promotes an unscriptural view of the conscience. While acknowledging that the conscience (an “inner voice”) produces guilt and negative thoughts, the proposed solution is not the biblical path of regeneration through repentance and faith followed by a Christian walk of obedience and confession. The proposed solution, instead, is to lower the standards of morality.

The atheist founders of the self-esteem doctrine hated the holy God of the Bible and His holy Law and sought to destroy His authority over men by denying His existence and teaching moral relativism and the pursuit of Self. Christian counsellors who have borrowed the self-esteem doctrine also tend to downplay the absoluteness of God’s Law, the necessity of strict obedience, and they replace the biblical means of soothing the conscience with psychological mumbo-jumbo.

Crusade for World Revival (CWR), founded by Selwyn Hughes, says, “If our standards are so high as to be almost unobtainable we will put ourselves forward for failure.”

Chris Leger and Wendy Bray say that “Bible verses which remind us of God’s command to be obedient may cause guilt to arise. ... We continually strive to please God, yet never feel that we have pleased him--our self-esteem tumbles down the ladder” (*Insight into Self-Esteem*, p. 57). Leger and Bray claim that God always accepts our best because His voice is always one of “grace, love and acceptance” (pp. 43, 44).

Dr. E.S. Williams warns:

“In all that has been written and taught about self-esteem, both Christian and secular, there is never any suggestion that the root cause of man’s low self-esteem is God’s moral law which condemns sinful behaviour” (*The Dark Side of Christian Counselling*, p. 140).

The self-esteem movement twists Scripture out of context. A major proof-text is Matthew 22:39, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” This is interpreted to mean that man needs to love himself just as he needs to love his neighbor, but Christ was not saying there is a need for self-love and He was not encouraging any sort of self-esteem program. He was saying that *men already love themselves!* Paul said the same thing in Ephesians 5:29, “For no man ever yet hated his own flesh...” The fallen man’s problem is not a lack of self-esteem but far too much of it and a gross lack of God-esteem! Fallen man is an idolater who worships himself in the place of the Almighty Creator. The very essence of sin is that we’ve “turned every one to his own way” (Isaiah 53:6).

The modern self-esteem doctrine is heresy and apostasy. The very first characteristic of end-times apostasy is that “men shall be lovers of their own selves” (2 Timothy 3:1-2).

The twisting of Scripture in the self-esteem movement reaches frightful heights for the simple fact that the doctrine of self-esteem is not taught in Scripture but is derived from modern psychology and is then forced upon Scripture.

David Seamands claims that in the Parable of the Talents, the man with one talent was paralyzed by fear and lack of self-esteem! And the reason the Israelites didn't enter the Promised Land was low self-esteem! Seamands applies this as follows: "Where is the vision God put before you? What wrecked it? Your sins and transgressions and bad habits? I doubt it. Probably your dream has been delayed or destroyed because Satan tricked you into thinking of yourself as a grasshopper or a worm" (*Healing for Damaged Emotions*, p. 50).

So man's problem is not sin but lack of self-esteem. Man is not a sinner; he is a victim. He doesn't need salvation and sanctification; he needs psychological counseling.

Unconditional Love

The doctrine of self-esteem is intimately associated with that of unconditional love. To have the highest self-esteem we must know that we are loved unconditionally, no strings attached.

We must see God as a merciful Father who "accepts us totally, exactly as we are" (Chris Leger and Wendy Bray, *Insight into Self-Esteem*, 2006, p. 12).

As Larry Crabb says, "I am completely acceptable to him regardless of my behavior" (*Effective Biblical Counseling*, 1977, p. 70).

Like the doctrine of self-esteem, unconditional love is promoted both by secular counselors and Christian. It is taught by Rick Warren, James Dobson, Philip Yancy, Joyce Meyer, Larry Crabb, Gary Smalley, Selwyn Hughes, David Seamands, Gary Chapman, Charles Stanley, and a host of other popular Christian leaders and authors.

James Dobson said that his book *Love for a Lifetime* is designed to "sum up the importance of selfless, unconditional love" ("Loving Focus: Dr. James and Shirley Dobson," Christianitytoday.com, Sept. 12, 2008).

Dr. E.S. Williams observes: "While self-esteem attempts to make man feel good about his sin, unconditional love attempts to make sinful man feel that he will not face judgment or punishment" (*Christ or Therapy?* p. 71).

Like the doctrine of self-esteem, the doctrine of unconditional love was developed by the fathers of the psychological counseling movement and New Agers. Erik Fromm was the first to use the phrase "unconditional love," while Carl Rogers coined the term "unconditional positive regard," by which "he meant the granting of love and approval regardless of an individual's behaviour" (E.S. Williams, *Christ or Therapy?* pp. 65, 66).

The doctrine of unconditional love is a major theme of New Age thought. The god of unconditional love puts no obligations on people and does not punish sin. Harold Becker says the

human race is “becoming consciously aware of unconditional love” (*Unconditional Love--An Unlimited Way of Being*, 1007, p. 7). It is “an energy and power” that is “transforming the course of all humanity.” Roy Klienwachter says, “Unconditional love means unconditional freedom. ... Retribution is a lie, it was all made. ... Anyone who tells you different, is not coming from unconditional love” (*Unconditional Love*, 2008). Deepak Choprah says, “A God capable of being pleased and displeased isn’t a God of grace, since the essence of grace is unconditional love” (*The Third Jesus*, p. 54)

Unconditional love is a theme of the occult. Consider Aleister Crowley, who has had a massive influence on the rock & roll culture and whose photo appeared on the cover of the Beatles’ *Sargent Pepper’s* album. His system was based on two principles: “Do what thou wilt shall be the whole of the law” and “Love is the law, love under will.” Crowley’s “love” was unconditional love with no obligations. The Voice of Lucifer website proclaims that “unconditional love is an unlimited way of being” and “as a way of changing our world for the better” and “the sole vehicle for our salvation.”

Unconditional love is a theme of the “Christian” homosexual movement. God accepts them as they are.

Unconditional love is also a fundamental principle of the emerging church.

In *An Emerging Church Primer* Justin Taylor says we must proclaim “God’s message of unconditional love.”

The God of unconditional love is not the God of Scripture. The love of the sovereign Creator God is unfathomable and unmerited, but not unconditional. God’s love is demonstrated in Christ and the Cross and to benefit from God’s love one must repent and receive Christ as Lord and Saviour. Consider the following statements by Jesus Christ himself:

“He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him” (John 14:21).

“Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in Heaven. Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity” (Matthew 7:21-23).

“He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him” (John 3:36).

“I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3).

Repent or perish is not the message of unconditional love!

The doctrine of unconditional love as typically defined denies the absolute holiness of God, the fall of man, the necessity of the atonement of Christ, the requirement of the new birth, God's call to repentance and faith, the existence of eternal hell for those outside of Christ, and God's call to holy living in the Christian life.

The true grace of God leads men to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts and to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world (Titus 2:11-12). The believer is to lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings (1 Peter 2:1). We are to abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul (1 Peter 2:11). We are to eschew evil and do good (1 Peter 3:11). We are to be holy as God is holy (1 Peter 1:15-16). That is the strictest, highest calling! And though the born again believer is accepted in Christ and eternally safe because of the perfect Atonement, he is subject to discipline in this present life and loss at the judgment seat of Christ if he walks in unrepentant carnality and disobedience. There is even a sin unto death (1 Corinthians 11:30; 1 John 5:17).

There are some who preach unconditional love that say that they believe the aforementioned Bible doctrines, but the message of unconditional love is contradictory to these truths and those who try to reconcile them are living in a fantasy world.

The god of self-esteem and unconditional love is not the God of Scripture; he is the god of end-times apostasy. As Dr. E.S. Williams observes:

"The concept of unconditional love only exists in a mythological world in which there is no sin, no evil and no law, in which people are free to live as they like without fear of judgment and punishment. In the real world, unconditional love is no more and no less than licentiousness -- an attitude that denies the accepted rules and morals that govern human behaviour. It is an attitude that allows us to do what we want without sanction or control. It is the essential message of pagan morality and New Age salvation" (*Christ or Therapy?* p. 69).

"The permissive god of 'Christian' self-esteem dogma longs to satisfy the needs and desires of the human heart. He delights in meeting our needs and likes to make us feel good about ourselves, no matter what. He is careful not to set standards too high or too difficult for us to meet. He is satisfied with our behaviour so long as we do our best. He is a god who is 'mighty to save' mankind from a lifetime cycle of low self-esteem. And if the truth were known, he does not really hate evil and sin all that much, for he accepts us totally, exactly as we are. He has commanded us to love ourselves and he loves everybody unconditionally no matter how they behave" (Williams, *The Dark Side of Christian Counselling*, p. 141).

Unconditional Forgiveness

Closely associated with the doctrine of unconditional love is unconditional forgiveness. Over the past two decades it has become a major element of the psychological counseling movement. A form of therapy, it is not about reconciliation between people; it is about personal inner healing and self-esteem.

A major force behind the spread of therapeutic forgiveness is the Templeton Foundation, which is New Age to the core. Though a committed Presbyterian, John Templeton was an evolutionist,

pantheist, and universalist. He rejected the Bible as divine revelation, brazenly claiming that the Bible was written by men who “were limited by cosmologies long since discredited” and whose writings were “ignorant and primitive” (*The Humble Approach*, 1995, p. 135). His biographical sketch says that “Templeton’s goal has been nothing less than to change mindsets about the concept of divinity.” Templeton said, “God is all of you and you are a little part of him,” and, “No one should say that God can be reached by only one path” (*The Humble Approach*, pp. 38, 55).

Templeton’s books have been recommended by Norman Vincent Peale (he called Templeton “the greatest layman of the Christian church in our time”), Robert Schuller (he put Templeton’s picture on the cover of his *Possibilities* magazine), and Rick Warren (he was one of the judges of Templeton’s Power of Purpose worldwide essay competition).

Since the 1990s, the Templeton Foundation has funded “scientific studies” on the power of forgiveness, and there has been an associated explosion of teaching on this subject, such as Colin Tipping’s *Radical Forgiveness* (1997); Robert Enright’s *Forgiveness Is a Choice* (2001); Fred Luskin’s *Forgive for Good* (2002); and Martin Seligman’s *Authentic Happiness* (2002). There is the Worldwide Forgiveness Alliance, the International Forgiveness Institute, the Institute for Radical Forgiveness, and the Forgiveness Project. Many of these people and organizations are New Age in perspective. The Worldwide Forgiveness Alliance is “open to all religions, creeds, and beliefs” and uses forgiveness as an instrument of building a New Age of joy and peace. Colin Tipping’s mission is “to raise the consciousness of the planet through forgiveness.”

In light of the wholesale “repudiation of separatism” that characterizes modern evangelicalism and the charismatic movement, it is not surprising that Christian counselors have been quick to jump on the unconditional forgiveness bandwagon. There is *The Art of Forgiving* (1996) by Lewis Smedes, professor emeritus of theology and ethics at Fuller Theological Seminary, and *The Importance of Forgiveness* (1997) by John Arnot of Toronto Airport Church, and *The Choosing to Forgive Workbook* by Frank Minirth and Les Carter, and *The New Freedom of Forgiveness* (2000) by David Augsburg, and *Total Forgiveness* (2002) by R.T. Kendall, and *Choosing Forgiveness* (2006) by Hancy Leigh DeMoss.

The movement of therapeutic forgiveness is all about Self. It is unconditional forgiveness for *my* sake, to help *me* feel good about *myself*, to have personal peace of mind, to have personal self-esteem and psychological wholeness, even to gain “good karma points” and to avoid “inhibiting our very life-force.”

Not only am I taught to forgive others unconditionally, but also to forgive myself and even to forgive God. R.T. Kendall says that since “God has allowed bad things to happen ... He has allowed us to suffer when we didn’t do anything that we know of to warrant such ill-treatment ... We therefore must forgive him--but not because he is guilty, but for allowing evil to touch our lives” (*Total Forgiveness*, p. 33).

What blasphemy, what foolish audacity, for a mere man to think that he can forgive Almighty God! This is definitely the worship of a false god.

Like unconditional love, unconditional forgiveness is unscriptural. Biblical forgiveness is predicated on confession and repentance.

This is true vertically, between man and God. God's forgiveness is not unconditional; it required the payment of a great price on God's part (the giving of His Son on the Cross) and obtaining God's forgiveness requires repentance. Jesus twice said, "except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish" (Luke 13:3, 5).

There is a repentance that is necessary for the once-for-all eternal forgiveness of justification, and there is daily confession and repentance necessary for fellowship with God in the Christian life. "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Adam and Eve weren't automatically and unconditionally forgiven when they sinned. They were driven out of the Garden of Eden and required to live in a God-cursed world and then die, death being "the wages of sin" (Romans 6:23). They and their children were required to repent and put their faith in the coming Saviour as prophesied in the promise that the woman's seed (Christ) would bruise the serpent's head (Genesis 3:15) and signified by Abel's lamb. Of the first two sons of Adam, Cain and Abel, one believed and one did not, and one was justified and the other was not (Genesis 4:7; Hebrews 11:4). Ever since then, God's forgiveness has been predicated upon repentance and faith, and those who reject the witness of God's Spirit and God's Word in these matters are destined for eternal punishment.

This is also true with forgiveness at the horizontal level, forgiveness between men. We are to be quick to forgive and we are to love our enemies, but this does not mean that we are to forgive unconditionally. As Jesus said:

"Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and IF HE REPENT, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I REPENT; thou shalt forgive him" (Luke 17:3-4).

The apostle Paul did not unconditionally forgive Alexander the Coppersmith (2 Tim. 4:14) or the heretics at Galatia (Gal. 5:7-10). He did not teach the unconditional forgiveness for those who sin against the testimony of Christ in the church (1 Corinthians 5).

Not only is unconditional forgiveness wrong, it is hurtful. As Dr. E.S. Williams writes:

"Nowhere in Scripture is the Christian told to unconditionally forgive an unbeliever who sins against him. To do so is only a meaningless gesture; for by what authority does a Christian forgive sin? This only leads to a false view of forgiveness, and the world will gain the idea that Christians practise cheap forgiveness, like New Age adherents. For Christians to offer unconditional forgiveness to all and sundry is to make a mockery of the Cross of Christ. ... The moral wrongness

of unconditional forgiveness is that it condones sin and wrongdoing. The wrongdoer is not held accountable for his sin, but actually encouraged to believe that it is a light matter” (*Christ or Therapy?* pp. 99, 100).

Unconditional love and unconditional forgiveness are attributes of a false god, and not surprisingly, this god is encountered through mysticism.

Emergent leader Nanette Sawyer says that she encountered this god through contemplative prayer. She said that while “sitting in meditation, in a technique similar to what Christians call Centering Prayer, I encountered love that is unconditional, yet it called me to responsible action in my life” (*An Emergent Manifesto of Hope*, p. 44). This occurred AFTER she had rejected biblical Christianity and the gospel that Jesus died for our sins (p. 43).

She said that she found love and Jesus through meditation, but it is not the Jesus of the Bible nor is it the love of God as described in the Bible.

It is another god, another Jesus, another gospel, and another spirit (2 Cor. 11:4).

It is the god who is found through mysticism.

Catholic Contemplative Prayer and Mysticism

The contemplative prayer movement which is sweeping through evangelicalism is pure mysticism and it leads to the god of end-times apostasy.

Thomas Keating, one of its chief proponents, says:

“Contemplative prayer is the opening of mind and heart, our whole being, to God, the Ultimate Mystery, BEYOND THOUGHTS, WORDS, AND EMOTIONS. It is a process of interior purification THAT LEADS, IF WE CONSENT, TO DIVINE UNION” (Keating interview with Kate Olson, “Centering Prayer as Divine Therapy,” *Trinity News*, Trinity Church in the City, New York City, volume 42, issue 4, 1995).

Contemplative prayer manuals are big sellers in Christian bookstores. The practices are taught as part of the curriculum in most Christian colleges and seminaries, including Southern Baptist.

One of the chief gurus of contemplative mysticism is Richard Foster, whose book *Celebration of Discipline* has sold multiple millions of copies and was selected by *Christianity Today* as one of the top ten books of the 20th century. Foster has popularized the writings and practices of Roman Catholic mystics such as Brother Lawrence, Thomas Aquinas, Francis of Assisi, Julian of Norwich, Bernard of Clairvaux, Teresa of Avila, Ignatius of Loyola, Meister Eckhart, Henri Nouwen, John Michael Talbot, the unknown author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, and Thomas Merton.

Consider Ignatius of Loyola, whose spiritual practices have become popular throughout evangelicalism. He was the founder of the Jesuits who were at the forefront of Rome's Counter-Reformation. He was "converted" by seeing a vision of Mary and the baby Jesus; he devoted himself to Mary; he taught blind obedience to the pope ("we must put aside all judgment of our own").

The contemplative prayer practices, which are borrowed from Rome's dark past and its spiritually deluded "saints," are unadulterated blind mysticism.

Tony Campolo describes contemplative spirituality as mystical stillness and communing with God without words:

"I get up in the morning a half hour before I have to and spend time in absolute stillness. I don't ask God for anything. I just simply surrender to His presence and yield to the Spirit flowing into my life. ... An interviewer once asked Mother Teresa, 'When you pray, what do you say to God?' She said, 'I don't say anything. I just listen.' So the interviewer asked, 'What does God say to you?' She replied, 'God doesn't say anything. He listens.' That's the kind of prayer I do in the morning" (*Outreach Magazine*, July/August 2004, pp. 88, 89).

(What Campolo doesn't say is that in her silent meditation Mother Teresa found only darkness. This is documented in the shocking book *Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light, the Private Writings of the Saint of Calcutta*, which contains statements made by the nun to her confessors and superiors over a period of more than 65 years. She said, "there is such terrible darkness within me ... all the holy things of spiritual life are all so empty -- so cold ... the silence and the emptiness is so great." Similar statements continued until her death.)

Catholic priest Anthony de Mello says:

"The head is not a very good place for prayer. ... You must learn to move *out of the area of thinking* and talking and move into the area of feeling, sensing, loving, intuiting. ... Contemplation for me is communication with God that makes a minimal use of words, images, and concepts or *dispenses with words, images, and concepts altogether*" (*Sadhana: A Way to God*, pp. 17, 29).

Consider **Centering Prayer**. This involves emptying the mind of conscious thoughts about God with the objective of entering into a non-verbal experiential union with God in the center of one's being. It is called "passive meditation," "a fourth state of consciousness," "savoring the silence," "this nothing," "the deep waters of silence," "this darkness," "this nowhere," the blind experience of contemplative love."

One of the popular contemplative prayer books is *The Cloud of Unknowing*, an ancient Roman Catholic centering prayer manual.

The practitioner is instructed to "... dismiss every clever or subtle thought no matter how holy or valuable. Cover it over with a thick cloud of forgetting because in this life only love can touch God as he is in himself, never knowledge" (chapter 8, pp. 59, 60). By delving into "the nothing"

the practitioner is supposed to “experience an intuitive understanding of everything material and spiritual without giving special attention to anything in particular” (*The Cloud of Unknowing*, chapter 68).

The Cloud of Unknowing encourages the use of a mantra to “seep all images and thoughts from the mind.”

“... focus your attention on a simple word such as sin or God ... and WITHOUT THE INTERVENTION OF ANALYTICAL THOUGHT allow yourself to experience directly the reality it signifies. Do not use clever logic to examine or explain this word to yourself nor allow yourself to ponder its ramifications. ... I do not believe reasoning ever helps in the contemplative work. This is why I advise you to leave these words whole, like a lump, as it were” (*Cloud of Unknowing*, chap. 36, p. 94).

This is blind mysticism, and to engage in this practice is to reject the God of the Bible and to worship an idol of one’s own imagination. It can result in the frightful confusion expressed by Thomas Merton: “In the end the contemplative suffers the anguish of realizing that he no longer knows what God is” (*The New Seeds of Contemplation*).

Amazingly, Deepak Chopra, a New Age Hindu who believes in the divinity of man, recommends the ancient Catholic contemplative manual *The Cloud of Unknowing*. He considers the centering prayer techniques to be the same as Hindu yoga.

“There is no doubt that people resist the whole notion of God being an inner phenomenon. ... Yet its importance is stated eloquently in the medieval document known as ‘The Cloud of Unknowing,’ written anonymously in the fourteenth century. ... The writer informs us that ANY THOUGHT IN THE MIND SEPARATES US FROM GOD, because thought sheds light on its object. ... Even though the cloud of unknowing baffles us, it is actually closer to God than even a thought about God and his marvelous creation. We are advised to go into a ‘cloud of forgetting’ about anything other than the silence of the inner world. For centuries this document has seemed utterly mystical, but it makes perfect sense once we realize that THE RESTFUL AWARENESS RESPONSE, WHICH CONTAINS NO THOUGHTS, is being advocated. ...

“We aren’t talking about the silence of an empty mind ... But the thought takes place against a background and nonthought. Our writer equates it with KNOWING SOMETHING THAT DOESN’T HAVE TO BE STUDIED. The mind is full of a kind of knowing that could speak to us about anything, yet it has no words; therefore we seek this knowingness in the background” (Chopra, *How to Know God*, 2000, pp. 94, 95, 98).

Chopra says, “I believe that God has to be known by looking in the mirror” (p. 9). Thus Chopra is describing meditative methods whereby the individual can allegedly come into contact with his “higher self” or divinity, yet he is using Catholic mysticism to get there! And the same manual, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, is a popular manual among contemplative evangelicals.

Chopra says that mantra-induced mind-emptying centering prayer techniques result in non-verbal revelation.

This is a loud warning to those who have ears to hear.

Consider the contemplative practice of **Visualizing Prayer**. This is from Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*. The practitioner is taught to enter into Bible scenes through his imagination by applying all five senses.

For example, to meditate on Christ's birth, the practitioner is supposed to imagine himself in the manger with Mary, Joseph, and Jesus. He does this by asking himself questions such as these: What do I see? What do I smell? What do I taste? What do I hear? What do I feel? The "visualizing prayer" practitioner is supposed to even try to have a conversation with the baby Jesus.

Richard Foster says: "As you enter the story ... you can ACTUALLY ENCOUNTER THE LIVING CHRIST in the event, BE ADDRESSED BY HIS VOICE and BE TOUCHED BY HIS healing power. It can be MORE THAN AN EXERCISE OF THE IMAGINATION it can be a GENUINE CONFRONTATION, Jesus Christ will actually COME TO YOU" (*Celebration of Discipline*, 1978, p. 26).

Calvin Miller says that "imagination stands at the front of our relationship with Christ." He says that in his conversation with Christ, "I drink the glory of his hazel eyes... his auburn hair. ... What? Do you disagree? His hair is black? Eyes brown? *Then have it your way.* ... His image must be real to you as to me, even if our images differ. The key to vitality, however, is the image" (*The Table of Inwardness*, InterVarsity Press, 1984, p. 93).

This is pure fantasy. It is presumptuous (Deuteronomy 29:29). It is spiritually dangerous to the highest degree. In fact, it is communion with demons.

Contemplative prayer is blind pagan mysticism, and it is no surprise that it is leading many of its practitioners not only to the adoption of a myriad of end-time heresies but even beyond that to universalism and pantheism. It leads not only to heresies but also to idolatry. We have already considered one example of this in Thomas Merton. We will describe another example at the end of the book when we examine the frightful case of Sue Monk Kidd.

The Charismatic Movement and Mysticism

Mysticism has been a major element of the Pentecostal-Charismatic movement throughout its history. Charismatic phenomena such as "spirit slaying" and seeking tongues through emptying the mind are forms of blind mysticism.

From the beginning, Pentecostal tongues were mere mind-numbing gibberish.

The *Topeka State Journal* recorded one of the "tongues" messages at Charles Parham's Bible School in Topeka, Kansas, in 1901 as follows:

“Mr. Parham called Miss Lilian Thistlethrate [Thistlethwaite] into the room and asked her if she could talk some. She at first answered that the Lord had not inspired her to say anything but soon began to utter strange words which sounded like this: ‘Euossa, Euossa, use rela sema calah mala kanah leulla ssage nalan. Ligle logle lazie logle. Ene mine mo, sah rah el me sah rah me.’ These sentences were translated as meaning, ‘Jesus is mighty to save,’ ‘Jesus is ready to hear,’ ‘and ‘God is love’” (“Hindoo and Zulu Both Are Represented at Bethel School,” *Topeka State Journal*, Jan. 9, 1901).

A newspaper reporting on William Seymour’s meetings at the Azusa Street Mission in Los Angeles, California, called it “Glibby Bluk,” to describe the fact that it was meaningless gibberish (Larry Martin, *The Life and Ministry of William J. Seymour*, p. 302).

“Gliggy Bluk” and “Ligle logle lazie logle” is the type of “tongues” that I have heard many times in charismatic conferences that I have attended with press credentials. They are not languages of any sort but mere repetitious mutterings that practically anyone could imitate.

Pentecostal Larry Lea’s “tongues” at Indianapolis ’90 went like this: “Bubblyida bubblyida hallelujah bubblyida hallabubbly shallabubblyida kolabubblyida gloooooory hallelujah bubblyida.” Nancy Kellar, a Roman Catholic charismatic nun who spoke at St. Louis 2000, said, “shananaa leea, shananaa higha, shananaa nanaa, shananaa leea...”

That is taken directly from the audiotapes of the messages. If these are languages, they certainly have a simple vocabulary!

To speak in a mindless manner is akin to New Age experiences of yogic meditation, mantras, chanting, and such!

At the heart of the charismatic practice of “tongues” is the idea that it can be learned and worked up. The procedure involves emptying one’s mind, releasing one’s tongue to “the spirit,” and speaking gibberish words with the intention of “priming the pump,” so to speak, to get the “spirit” to take control.

The first step is to stop analyzing things carefully by the Scriptures and to open up to new experiences. A chapter in the influential book *These Wonderful Gifts* by Michael Harper is entitled “Letting Go and Letting God,” in which the believer is instructed to stop analyzing experiences, to stop “setting up alarm systems” and “squatting nervously behind protective walls.” He says the believer should step out from behind his “walls and infallible systems” and just open up to God. That is the necessary but altogether unscriptural and exceedingly dangerous step one must take if he wants to receive charismatic experiences.

The same practice is used by psychics and wiccans and New Agers in general. They are taught to trust their feelings rather than their thinking. Brian Flynn, who was a psychic before he came to Christ, said his trainer told him he was thinking too much. She said, “Stop analyzing it all, and just trust your feelings. The more you let go, the more you will be open to the spirit guides’ abilities to teach you what you need to know” (*Running Against the Wind*, 2005, p. 67). Flynn

observes: “Logic, reason and thinking are anathema to the New Ager. Feelings and emotions guide all decisions in life” (p. 89).

The mindless practice of charismatic “tongues” is so grossly unscriptural and nonsensical it would seem unnecessary to refute it. There is absolutely nothing like this in the New Testament. To seek something that the Bible never says seek, in ways the Bible does not support, and to open oneself uncritically to religious experiences like this, puts one in imminent danger of receiving “another spirit” (2 Cor. 11:4). The Bible warns that there are deceiving spirits that attempt to influence Christians and they can appear as angels of light and ministers of God (2 Cor. 11:13-15; Mat. 24:24). Paul warned the believers at Corinth that they were in danger of receiving false spirits because of their carnal, broadminded, undiscerning condition (2 Cor. 11:3-4). The true Christian cannot be possessed by evil spirits, but he can certainly be influenced by them, and many professing Christians who are messing around with charismatic practices have never been born again, and they can be possessed!

Other forms of charismatic mysticism are spirit slaying, spiritual drunkenness, holy laughter, positive confession, and mental imaging prayer.

Charismatic leaders say, “Don’t worry about the manifestations,” but that is unscriptural and extremely dangerous advice. We are instructed to prove ALL things (1 Thess. 5:21). Charismatic leaders say, “Just open up and don’t be so uptight; lighten up and let God do what He pleases.” We want God to be in absolute control of our lives and churches, but it is folly and rebellion to ignore the fact that God’s Word warns repeatedly of false spirits and false teachers. We are to “try the spirits” (1 John 4:1). The apostle Peter did not counsel believers to open up and lighten up. Instead, he warned: “BE SOBER, BE VIGILANT; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8). To be vigilant is to be alert, on guard, cautious, on the outlook for enemies and deception. It means to be in control of your mind. This is the very opposite of the “spirit slaying” experience whereby the Christian allegedly “goes out under the power.” To be sober and vigilant means I will not submit myself to an experience whereby my consciousness and spiritual vigilance are violated.

David Yonggi Cho, pastor of the world’s largest church and one of the most influential Pentecostal preachers, promotes pure mysticism through his “Fourth Dimension” doctrine. A major element is mental imaging prayer. According to Cho, the “third dimension” is the material world, while the “fourth dimension” is the spiritual world. Through concentrating the effect of visions and dreams in the imagination in the fourth dimension, people can influence the third dimension by the power of the Spirit similar to what happened on the first day of creation when the Holy Spirit set to work on the earth.

Cho teaches that effective prayer requires visualizing the thing exactly in your mind before God and “incubating” the image in your heart by faith until you receive it. “Through visualization and dreaming you can incubate your future and hatch the results” (*The Fourth Dimension*, p. 44).

To a woman who was concerned because her prayers for a husband were not answered after ten years Cho replied, “Until you see your husband clearly in your imagination you can’t order, because God will never answer. You must see him clearly before you begin to pray.”

Cho admits that he borrowed some of his teaching from Buddhist sects.

The Pentecostal-Charismatic movement is shot through and through with mysticism.

Contemporary Christian Music and Mysticism

Contemporary worship music has a powerful mystical orientation.

It is designed to create an emotional experience, as opposed to the older sacred music style that edifies through the edifying of the mind and heart.

Graham Kendrick, one of the biggest names in Contemporary Christian Worship, says, “The old way of preaching and singing began to give way to an expectation that ... God would visit us, and we’d EXPERIENCE HIS PRESENCE IN A TANGIBLE SORT OF WAY” (interview June 11, 2002 with Chris Davidson of Integrity Music).

The mission of Integrity Music and Integrity Worship Ministries is “helping people worldwide EXPERIENCE THE MANIFEST PRESENCE OF GOD” (integritymusic.com).

Secret Place Ministries exemplifies the contemporary worship philosophy in that they “long for an encounter with the presence of God” and their worship music is said to “BRING DOWN THE PRESENCE OF GOD” (SecretPlaceMinistries.org).

Contemporary Christian Music’s lust for an experience is why it incorporates the backbeat and other forms of dance syncopation which have a sensual effect on the body. The heavy syncopation is highly stimulating.

Steven Tyler of Aerosmith testified that rock music “is the strongest drug in the world” (*Rock Beat*, Spring 1987, p. 23).

Describing her first experience performing at a rock show at the Avalon in San Francisco, Janis Joplin said: “I couldn’t believe it, all that rhythm and power. I got stoned just feeling it, like IT WAS THE BEST DOPE IN THE WORLD. It was SO SENSUAL, so vibrant, loud, crazy” (Joel Dreyfuss, “Janis Joplin Followed the Script,” *Wichita Eagle*, Oct. 6, 1970, p. 7A).

Sam Phillips, founder of Sun Records where Elvis’ first hit was recorded in 1954, described the sensual addictive power of rock and the reason why it literally transformed Western society. He said that it is the “INFECTIOUS BEAT” that made young people “FEEL GOOD” (“Sam Phillips, 80, Producer who Discovered Elvis Presley, Dies,” *Associated Press*, July 31, 2003).

Thus, rock music itself has the power to create the *experience* that CCM worshipers are seeking.

Other elements of the CCM “experience” are unresolving chords which create a tense, highly emotional atmosphere, repetitious lyrics which create a hypnotic effect, the sensuality of the vocal technique, and the rise and fall of the sound level of the music.

The listeners are taught to release themselves to the music, to let themselves go.

MercyMe’s popular “Word of God Speak” worship song is an example of the charismatic mysticism that characterizes CCM.

“Word of God speak, would you pour down like rain, washing my eyes to see your majesty. To be still and know that you’re in this place, please let me stay and rest in your holiness. ... Finding myself in the midst of you, beyond the music, beyond the noise. All that I need is to be with you and in the quiet I hear your voice.”

The “Word of God” here is not the Bible; it is a mystical feeling, a direct revelation. It is found in the “quiet,” “beyond the noise.” It is an experience of the “presence” of God.

This “open yourself to the flow of the Spirit” has led to all sorts of unscriptural doctrines and practices. It is this type of mysticism that led CCM songwriter Jack Hayford, author of “Majesty,” to say that while he was driving past a Catholic church God told him not to criticize it.

HOW EFFECTIVELY DOES MYSTICISM UNITE?

The “mystery of iniquity” is the pursuit of a global government and global church, and mysticism is a major vehicle toward this end. It is a great uniter.

Mysticism is Uniting Charismatics with Catholics

From its inception in the 1960s, the charismatic movement’s mysticism has brought it into close association with Roman Catholicism.

I have documented this extensively in *The Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements: The History and the Doctrine*, which is available from Way of Life Literature.

This was illustrated at the New Orleans ’87 conference that I attended with press credentials. The 35,000 attendees represented some 40 denominations, and one-half were Roman Catholic. Of the two main leaders of the conference, one was Pentecostal and the other Roman Catholic. Many of the speakers were Roman Catholic, and a Roman Catholic priest headquartered in Rome delivered the closing message the final evening of the conference. The bookstore area featured

titles about Mary visitations, papal authority, and salvation through the sacraments. There were books exalting Pope John Paul II and Mother Teresa. There were crucifixes and Madonnas and pictures of the saints for sell. Each morning there was a Roman Catholic mass, and the Pentecostal leader even urged everyone to attend mass the following Sunday.

What created this amazing unity? Mysticism. The crowd was not united in doctrine and not even in the gospel. The things that united them were spirit “baptism,” tongues, prophecies, spirit slaying, and above all, the powerful contemporary praise music that dominated the conference.

Mysticism is Uniting Evangelicals with Catholics

Evangelicals have been drawn into association with Roman Catholicism in a myriad of ways over the past 50 years.

It has happened through the ecumenical evangelism that was pioneered by Billy Graham. (See “The Sad Disobedience of Billy Graham” at the Way of Life web site.)

It has happened through parachurch organizations such as Campus Crusade, Youth for Christ, and Youth With A Mission. (See the report “New Evangelicalism: Its History, Characteristics, and Fruit” at the Way of Life web site.)

It has happened through the rapidly growing charismatic influence within evangelicalism.

It has happened through the wholesale adoption of mystical Contemporary Christian Music, which is radically ecumenical by nature and which has a strong Roman Catholic associational element.

And it is happening through the rapid spread of contemplative prayer.

Everywhere we look, evangelicals are turning to Roman Catholic styles of contemplative spirituality, such as rote prayers, chanting, silence, centering prayer, the use of prayer beads, the Stations of the Cross, *lectio divina*, labyrinths, and “the daily office.”

The cover story for the February 2008 issue of *Christianity Today* was “The Future Lies in the Past,” and it describes the “lost secrets of the ancient church” that are being rediscovered by evangelicals. The ancient church in question happens to be the Roman Catholic, beginning with the so-called “church fathers” of the early centuries.

The article observes that many young evangelicals dislike “traditional” Christianity. It is too focused on “being right,” too much into “Bible studies” and “apologetics materials.” Instead, the young evangelicals are lusting after “a renewed encounter with a God” that goes beyond “doctrinal definitions.”

This, of course, is a perfect definition of mysticism. It refers to experiencing God sensually beyond the boundaries of Scripture.

Christianity Today recommends that evangelicals “stop debating” and just “embody Christianity.” Toward this end they should “embrace symbols and sacraments” and dialogue with “Catholicism and Orthodoxy”; they should “break out the candles and incense” and pray the “lectio divina” and learn the Catholic “ascetic disciplines” from “practicing monks and nuns.”

Christianity Today says that this “search for historic roots” will lead “to a deepening ecumenical conversation, and a recognition by evangelicals that the Roman Catholics and Eastern Orthodox are fellow Christians with much to teach us.”

This is a no holds barred invitation to Catholic mysticism, and it will not lead to light but to the same darkness that has characterized Rome throughout its history, and it will lead beyond Rome to the paganism from which Rome originally borrowed its “contemplative practices” and with which Rome is ever more closely affiliated today.

Taizé

The mystical movement is strongly influenced by **Taizé** (pronounced teh-zay). This is a religious community that was formed in southeastern France during World War II. While the Taizé community itself is small, the Taizé philosophy has influenced churches throughout the world. Tens of thousands of congregations in the U.S. and elsewhere hold Taizé prayer services and sing Taizé songs.

Taizé is a major force for ecumenism. Each year tens of thousands of people make a pilgrimage to Taizé. These include Protestants, Baptists, Catholics, Jews, Buddhists, and others. The Roman Catholic connection is very strong. Taizé founder Roger Schutz participated in the Second Vatican Council, and Pope John Paul II visited Taizé in October 1986. In 2006, at John Paul II’s funeral, Schutz was given Eucharistic communion at the hands of Joseph Ratzinger, who a few days later became Pope Benedict XVI. Since Schutz’s death (he was stabbed to death by a deranged woman during a Taizé service), the community has been led by a Roman Catholic priest named Alois Loeser.

The Taizé services are non-dogmatic and non-authoritative. There is no preaching. “It does not dictate what people must believe. No confessions of faith are required. No sermons are given. No emotional, evangelical-style salvation testimonials are expected.” Schutz described the philosophy of Taizé as, “Searching together--not wanting to become spiritual masters who impose; God never imposes. We want to love and listen, we want simplicity” (“Taizé,” *Religion and Ethics Newsweekly*, Sept. 20, 2002).

This is blind mysticism loosed from the authority of Scripture. It is not building the true church of Christ; it is building the Mystery Babylon.

Taizé's non-doctrinal ecumenical Christianity is fueled by mystical practices. A "shadowy medieval" atmosphere is created with the use of such things as candles, icons, and incense (*Vancouver Sun*, April 14, 2000). The goal is to bring the "worshiper" into a meditative state, "to a place beyond words, a place of just being." There is a lot of repetition, with "one-line Taizé harmonies repeated up to 15 times each."

Schutz taught that truth is found through mysticism. In 1995 he told a group of 100,000 young people in Paris, "We have come here to search, or to go on searching through silence and prayer, to get in touch with our inner life" ("Brother Roger, 90, Dies," *New York Times*, Aug. 18, 2005).

Taizé is heavily involved in the same social-justice issues that are popular with youth today in the emerging church and in secular society (e.g., environmentalism, AIDS, African poverty, anti-nuclear proliferation, military disarmament).

The Taizé philosophy is spreading quickly throughout evangelicalism.

Richard Foster

More than any other individual, Richard Foster has spread Roman Catholic and Pagan mysticism throughout Protestant and Baptist churches.

Foster's book *Celebration of Discipline*, which has sold more than two and a half million copies, was selected by *Christianity Today* as one of the top ten books of the 20th century.

He grew up among the Quakers (the Religious Society of Friends), was trained at George Fox College, has pastored Quaker churches, and has taught theology at Friends University in Wichita, Kansas, and at George Fox College.

The Quaker connection is important, because one of their doctrines is direct revelation via an "inner light." This is defined in a variety of ways, since Quakerism is very individualistic and non-creedal, but it refers to a divine presence and guidance in every man. There is an emphasis on being still and silent and passive in order to receive guidance from the inner light.

Quaker founder George Fox claimed that he received the doctrine of the inner light without help from the Scriptures (*The Journal of George Fox*, revised by John Nickalls, 1952, pp. 33-35).

This is an unbiblical and very dangerous idea that opens the door for every sort of heresy. The Scripture is able to make the man of God perfect; obviously, then, nothing more is needed (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

It is easy to see how the Quaker philosophy paved the way for Foster to accept Catholic mysticism. It did this by its emphasis on an “inner light” and its tendency not to judge things in an exacting manner by Scripture.

Other Quakers have followed the same path, and some, like Mary Conrow Coelho, have followed it all the way to the New Age. Conrow believes in evolution, the oneness of the universe, and the unity of man with God, and she traces her New Age mysticism to deep third generation Quaker roots and its inner light teaching:

“The adults in our Quaker community spoke often of the Inner Light, the seed of God, the indwelling Christ. [Thomas Kelly] said, ‘It is a Light within, a dynamic center, a creative Life that presses to birth within us’” (“Of Leadings and the Inner Light: Quakerism and the New Cosmology,” <http://www.thegreatstory.org/QuakerMetarelig.html>).

(Richard Foster quotes Thomas Kelly favorably and frequently in his books, and the *Renovaré Spiritual Formation Bible* quotes Kelly as saying: “Deep within us all there is an amazing inner sanctuary of the soul, a holy place, a Divine Center.”)

Foster advocates Roman Catholic mysticism with absolutely no qualms, building his contemplative practices unequivocally upon this heretical foundation.

He recommends Ignatius of Loyola, Francis of Assisi, Benedict of Nursia, Teresa of Avila, Catherine of Genoa, Julian of Norwich, Brother Lawrence, Dominic, Catherine of Siena, John of the Cross, the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, Madame Guyon, Thomas à Kempis, Catherine Doherty, Meister Eckhart, Thomas Aquinas, Hildegard of Bingen, Francis de Sales, Alphonsus de Liguori, Bernard of Clairvaux, John Henry Newman, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, G.K. Chesterton, André Louf, Henri Nouwen, Dorothy Day, Karl Rahner, John Main, Mother Teresa, Thomas Merton, Brennan Manning, John Michael Talbot, and many others.

Foster’s recommendation of these Catholic mystics is not half-hearted. In the introduction to the 1998 edition of *Celebration of Discipline*, he says that they taught him spiritual depth and substance (pp. xiii, xiv), and he calls them “Devotional Masters of the Christian faith.” Of the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola, Foster says, “... it is a school of prayer for all of us” (*Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home*, p. 59).

There is no warning of the fact that these mystics trusted in a works gospel, venerated Mary, worshipped Christ as a piece of consecrated bread, believed in purgatory, honored the pope as the head of all churches, and held scores of other heresies. (For extensive documentation of this see our book *Contemplative Mysticism*, chapters “A Description of Catholic Monastic Asceticism” and “A Biographical Catalog of Contemplative Mystics.”)

Foster promotes centering prayer, visualization, guided imagery, mantras, silence, walking the labyrinth, Carl Jung’s interpretation of dreams, channelling the light of Christ, healing of

memories, direct experiential communion with God, even out-of-body experiences. (See “Richard Foster: Evangelicalism’s Mystical Sparkplug” at the Way of Life web site.)

In 1988 Foster founded RENOVARÉ (pronounced ren-o-var-ay), which has a radical ecumenical thrust. Its objective is “to work for the renewal of the Church of Jesus Christ *in all her multifaceted expressions*.” Its slogan is “Christian in commitment, international in scope, *ecumenical in breadth*.” Renovaré’s ministry team represents men and women “from Mennonite to Methodist, Roman Catholic to Church of God in Christ, Assembly of God to American Baptist.”

Foster describes the breadth of his ecumenical vision in these words:

“God is gathering his people once again, creating of them an all-inclusive community of loving persons with Jesus Christ as the community’s prime sustainer and most glorious inhabitant. This community is breaking forth in multiplied ways and varied forms. ... I SEE A CATHOLIC MONK FROM THE HILLS OF KENTUCKY STANDING ALONGSIDE A BAPTIST EVANGELIST FROM THE STREETS OF LOS ANGELES and together offering up a sacrifice of praise” (*Streams of Living Water*, 2001, p. 274).

At the October 1991 Renovaré meeting in Pasadena, California, Foster praised Pope John Paul II and called for unity in the Body of Christ” (*CIB Bulletin*, December 1991).

Richard Foster believes he is promoting a true spiritual revival within Christianity, but he is the blind leading the blind. His mysticism has brought him into contact with demons masquerading as angels of light and ministers of righteousness. His writings are an exceedingly dangerous mixture of truth and error. Pastors and teachers need to warn their people to stay away from him, for “a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Galatians 5:9).

Mysticism is Uniting Catholics with Pagans

At the same time that mysticism is bringing evangelicals and charismatics into ever-closer and ever-non-critical association with Roman Catholicism, it is bringing Roman Catholicism into ever-closer association with Pagan religions and New Age.

Catholic priest Tilden Edwards observes that “the mystical stream is the western bridge to Far Eastern spirituality” (*Spiritual Friend*, 1980, pp. 18, 19).

Since Eastern “spirituality” is idol worship and the worship of self and thus is communion with devils, what Edwards is unwittingly saying is that contemplative practices are a bridge to demonic realms.

Tony Campolo says that the growing unity between Catholics and Buddhists is found in mystical experiences such as contemplative silence.

“I got to meet the head of the Franciscan order. I met him in Washington. He said let me tell you an interesting story. He told me about one of their gatherings, where they bring the brothers of the Franciscan order together for a time of fellowship. About eight years ago they held it in Thailand and out of courtesy, they really felt they needed to show some graciousness to the Buddhists, because they were in a Buddhist country. So they got Buddhist theologians together and Franciscan theologians together and sent them off for three days to talk and see if they could find common ground. They also took Buddhist and Franciscan monastics and sent them off together to pray with each other. On the fourth day they all reassembled. The theologians were fighting with each other, arguing with each other, contending there was no common ground between them. The monastics that had gone off praying together, came back hugging each other. IN A MYSTICAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD, THERE IS A COMING TOGETHER OF PEOPLE WHERE THEOLOGY IS LEFT BEHIND AND IN THIS SPIRITUALITY THEY FOUND A COMMONALITY” (“On Evangelicals and Interfaith Cooperation,” Cross Currents, Spring 2005).

Jesuit priest Thomas Clarke admits that the Catholic contemplative movement has “BEEN INFLUENCED BY ZEN BUDDHISM, TRANSCENDENTAL MEDITATION, OR OTHER CURRENTS OF EASTERN SPIRITUALITY” (*Finding Grace at the Center*, pp. 79, 80).

Shambhala Publications, a publisher that specializes in Occultic, Jungian, New Age, Buddhist, and Hindu writings, also publishes the writings of Catholic mystics, including *The Wisdom of the Desert* by Thomas Merton, *The Writings of Hildegard of Bingen*, and *The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence.

Thomas Merton (1915-1969) is a prime example of the close association between Catholic contemplatives and Pagan/New Agers. Merton is highly recommended by “evangelical” contemplative promoter Richard Foster.

Merton was a Trappist monk who worshiped Mary and practiced contemplative meditation in the silence of an ascetic monastery where talking is usually prohibited.

Merton defined mysticism as an experience beyond words. In a speech to monks of eastern religions in Calcutta in October 1968 he said: “... the deepest level of communication is not communication, but communion. IT IS WORDLESS. IT IS BEYOND WORDS, and it is BEYOND SPEECH, and it is BEYOND CONCEPT” (*The Asian Journal of Thomas Merton*, 1975 edition, p. 308).

In the mystical silence Merton found unity with Zen Buddhism, Hinduism, Sufism, and New Age. Merton was a student of Zen master D.T. Suzuki and Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh. In fact, he claimed to be both a Buddhist and a Christian. The titles of Merton’s books include *Zen and the Birds of the Appetite* and *Mystics and the Zen Masters*. Merton said: “I see no contradiction between Buddhism and Christianity. I intend to become as good a Buddhist as I can” (David Steindl-Rast, “Recollection of Thomas Merton’s Last Days in the West,” *Monastic Studies*, 7:10, 1969, http://www.gratefulness.org/readings/dsr_merton_recol2.htm). When Merton visited ancient Buddha statues on the coast of Sri Lanka he had a dramatic mystical experience that he attributed to God. He wrote, “I don’t know when in my life I have ever had such a sense of beauty and spiritual validity running together in one illumination” (*The Asian*

Journal of Thomas Merton, 1975 edition, p. 235). *The Yoga Journal* observed: “MERTON WAS ABLE TO UNCOVER THE STREAM WHERE THE WISDOM OF EAST AND WEST MERGE AND FLOW TOGETHER, BEYOND DOGMA, IN THE DEPTHS OF INNER EXPERIENCE” (*Yoga Journal*, Jan.-Feb. 1999).

Merton came to believe that within every man is a pure spark of divine illumination and that men can know God through a variety of paths:

“At the center of our being is a point of nothingness which is untouched by sin and by illusion, a point of pure truth, a point or spark which belongs entirely to God. It is like a pure diamond blazing with the invisible light of heaven. It is in everybody. I have no program for saying this. It is only given, but the gate of heaven is everywhere” (*Soul Searching: The Journey of Thomas Merton*, 2007, DVD).

New Ager Caroline Myss (pronounced mace) has written a book based on Teresa of Avila’s visions. It is entitled *Entering the Castle: Finding the Inner Path to God and Your Soul’s Purpose*. Myss says, “For me, the spirit is the vessel of divinity” (“Caroline Myss’ Journey,” *Conscious Choice*, September 2003).

Mary Coelho, a third generation Quaker, pursued contemplative mysticism from the Quaker inner light through Catholic contemplative practices all the way to the New Age. Today she believes that man is a product of billions of years of evolution, a process that is reaching a new stage in our day. She denies the Bible’s teaching on creation, the fall of man, and salvation only through faith in the substitutionary atonement of Jesus Christ.

Catholic priest Anthony de Mello’s contemplative prayer has taught him to commune with inanimate objects.

“Choose some object that you use frequently: a pen, a cup ... Now gently place the object in front of you and speak to it. Begin by asking it questions about itself, its life, its origins, its future. And listen while it unfolds to you the secret of its being and of its destiny. Your object has some hidden wisdom to reveal to you about yourself. Ask for this and listen to what it has to say” (De Mello, *Sadhana: A Way to God*, p. 55).

Catholic priest Tilden Edwards learned through contemplative prayer that Buddha and Jesus are friends.

“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” (Edwards, “Jesus and Buddha Good Friends,” Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation newsletter, winter 2000, http://www.shalem.org/resources/publication/newsletter/archives/2000/2000_winter/article_05).

Many Catholics are affiliating with New Ager Ken Wilber, who believes in the divinity of man and a panentheistic god.

Wilber was invited to write the foreword to *The Common Heart*, a book that describes the interfaith dialogues conducted at St. Benedict's Monastery in Snowmass, Colorado, under the direction of Thomas Keating.

Wilber also conducted a Mystic Heart seminar series with Catholic contemplative monk Wayne Teasdale. In the first seminar in this series Teasdale said, "You are God; I am God; they are God; it is God" ("The Mystic Heart: The Supreme Identity," <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-7652038071112490301&q=ken+Wilber>).

In *Up from Eden: A Transpersonal View of Human Evolution* (1981, 2004), Wilber calls the Garden of Eden a fable" and the biblical view of history "amusing" (pp. xix, 3). He describes his "perennial philosophy" as follows:

"... it is true that there is some sort of Infinite, some type of Absolute Godhead, but it cannot properly be conceived as a colossal Being, a great Daddy, or a big Creator set apart from its creations, from things and events and human beings themselves. Rather, it is best conceived (metaphorically) as the ground or suchness or condition of all things and events. It is not a Big Thing set apart from finite things, but rather the reality or suchness or ground of all things. ... the perennial philosophy declares that the absolute is One, Whole, and Undivided" (p. 6).

Wilber says that this perennial philosophy "forms the esoteric core of Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Sufism, AND CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM" (p. 5).

Thus, this New Ager recognizes that Roman Catholic mysticism, which spawned the contemplative movement within Protestantism, has the same esoteric core faith as pagan idolatry! And there is no doubt that this is true. It is a blind leap into the dark.

Catholic priest Thomas Keating is involved in the Living Spiritual Teachers Project, a group that associates together Christians of various stripes, Zen Buddhist monks and nuns, universalists, occultists, and New Agers. Members include the Dalai Lama, who claims to be the reincarnation of an advanced spiritual entity; Marianne Williamson, promoter of the occultic A Course in Miracles; Marcus Borg, who believes that Jesus was not virgin born and did not rise from the grave; Catholic nun Joan Chittister, who says we must become "in tune with the cosmic voice of God"; Andrew Harvey, who says that men need to "claim their divine humanity"; Matthew Fox, who believes there are many paths to God; Alan Jones, who calls the gospel of the cross a vile doctrine and says there is no absolute authority; and Desmond Tutu, who says, "... because everybody is a God-carrier, all are brothers and sisters."

These are just a few examples of how that contemplative mysticism is uniting Roman Catholics with Pagan religionists and New Agers. They are finding and worshiping the same false god.

Mysticism is Uniting Emergents with New Agers

Mysticism is also uniting emerging church people with New Agers.

On April 15, 2008, emerging church leaders and contemplatives Rob Bell and Doug Pagitt joined the Dalai Lama for the New Age Seeds of Compassion InterSpiritual Event in Seattle. It brought together Episcopalians, Roman Catholics, Buddhists, Sikhs, Muslims, and others. The event featured a dialogue on “the themes common to all spiritual traditions.” The Dalai Lama said, “I think everyone, ultimately, deep inside [has] some kind of goodness” (“Emergent Church Leaders’ InterSpirituality,” *Christian Post*, April 17, 2008).

Rob Bell’s god is more akin to New Age panentheism than the God of the Bible. He describes God as “a force, an energy, a being calling out to us in many languages, using a variety of methods and events” (*Love Wins*, 2011, Kindle location 1710-1724).

“There is an energy in the world, a spark, an electricity that everything is plugged into. The Greeks called it zoe, the mystics call it ‘Spirit,’ and Obi-Wan called it ‘the Force’” (*Love Wins*, location 1749-1762).

Bell also worships a New Age christ. His Jesus is “supracultural ... present within all cultures ... refuses to be co-opted or owned by any one culture ... He doesn’t even state that those coming to the Father through him will even know that they are coming exclusively through him ... there is only one mountain, but many paths. ... People come to Jesus in all sorts of ways ... Sometimes people use his name; other times they don’t” (*Love Wins*, location 1827-1840, 1865-1878, 1918-1933).

It is not surprising, then, that Bell recommends that his readers sit at New Ager Ken Wilber’s feet for three months.

“For a mind-blowing introduction to emergence theory and divine creativity, set aside three months and read Ken Wilber’s *A Brief History of Everything*” (Rob Bell, *Velvet Elvis*, p. 192).

As we have seen, Wilber believes the Bible is a fable and holds to the pantheistic god of Hinduism.

Rick Warren has yoked up with mystic Ken Blanchard on various occasions even though Blanchard is intimately associated with New Age paganism. Blanchard visited Saddleback in 2003 and Warren told the church that he had “signed on to help with the P.E.A.C.E. Plan, and he’s going to be helping train us in leadership and in how to train others to be leaders all around the world” (Ray Yungen, *A Time of Departing*, pp. 162, 163). Warren teamed up with Blanchard in the Lead Like Jesus conferences and audio series. Warren used Blanchard’s materials in a Preaching and Purpose Driven Life Training Workshop for Chaplains at Saddleback in 2004 (*A Time of Departing*, p. 167). Warren also endorsed Blanchard’s book *Lead Like Jesus*.

Blanchard, in turn, has strong New Age associations. He wrote the foreword to the 2007 edition of Ballard’s book *Little Wave and Old Swell*, which is inspired by Hindu guru Paramahansa Yogananda. This book is designed to teach children that God is all and man is one with God. In

the foreword Blanchard makes the following amazing statement: “Yogananda loved Jesus, and Jesus would have loved Yogananda.” I was a disciple of Yogananda before I was saved, and there is no doubt that he did NOT love the Jesus of the Bible!

Blanchard’s recommendation appears on the back cover of Deepak Chopra’s *The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success*. He wrote the foreword to Ellen Ladd’s book *Death and Letting God*, which promotes clairvoyance. He endorsed the 2005 book *Zen of Business Administration*, which is subtitled “How Zen practice can transform your work and your life.”

Blanchard joined members of the New Age occultic project *The Secret* in January 2008 for a one-day seminar entitled “Your Best Year Ever” (“Ken Blanchard Joins ‘The Secret’ Team,” Lighthouse Trails, Jan. 14, 2008). Rhonda Byrne, the author of *The Secret*, thanked “Esther Hicks and the teachings of Abraham.” Abraham refers to a group of spirit guides that Hicks channels. *The Secret* teaches the New Age doctrines that man is god. “You are God in a physical body ... You are all power ... You are all intelligence ... You are the creator” (p. 164).

Lighthouse Trails wisely observes:

“Did Rick Warren know of Blanchard’s sympathies when he brought him in to help at Saddleback? Of course he did. And do you think that Rick Warren and Ken Blanchard are going to train their ‘billion’ soldiers for Christ how to practice New Age mysticism and learn how to go into altered states of consciousness? You bet. And that is definitely something to be concerned about” (“Rick Warren Teams up with New Age Guru,” Lighthouse Trails, April 19, 2005).

Warren is also closely associated with New Age mystic Leonard Sweet. He teamed up with Sweet in 1994 to produce the *Tides of Change* audio set published by Zondervan. A photo of Warren and Sweet are pictured on the cover. Warren endorsed Sweet’s book *Soul Tsunami*. Warren invited Sweet to speak at the 2008 Saddleback Small Groups Conference called *Wired*.

Sweet promotes a New Age spirituality that he calls New Light and “the Christ consciousness.” He describes it in terms of “the union of the human with the divine” which is the “center feature of all the world’s religions” (*Quantum Spirituality*, p. 235). He says it was experienced by Mohammed, Moses, and Krishna. He says that some of the “New Light leaders” that have led him into this thinking are New Agers Matthew Fox, M. Scott Peck, Willis Harman, and Ken Wilber, plus the Catholic-Buddhist Thomas Merton. In his book *Quantum Spirituality* Sweet defines the New Light as “a structure of human becoming, a channeling of Christ energies through mindbody experience” (p. 70). He says humanity needs to learn the truth of the words of Thomas Merton, “We are already one” (p. 13).

In 2011, Rick Warren yoked together with three men whose thinking is permeated with New Age principles in an alternative health care program for Saddleback Church. Called the “Daniel Plan,” the program was written by Mehmet Oz, Daniel Amen, and Mark Hyman. Oz is a follower of Emanuel Swedenborg, who entertained spirit guides and was deeply involved with Eastern mysticism (“Special Report,” Lighthouse Trails, Jan. 11, 2011). Amen, a professor of psychiatry

and founder of Amen Clinics, teaches Eastern meditation and deals in pop psychology and self-help. Both Oz and Amen promote Reiki, which is an occultic practice that allegedly channels “universal healing energy.” Amen told Warren that he intends to help Saddleback church members to have good “brain health.” What is this? Amen has written several books on this subject. *The Brain in Love* promotes Hindu Tantra, which is the pagan concept of combining yogic meditation with sex. *Making a Good Brain Great* promotes Hindu-style meditation through the vain repetition of the alleged primal sounds saa, taa, naa, maa, aa. We wonder if Amen will be teaching Hindu tantric yoga at Saddleback. This would go right along with the current emphasis on good sex programs in emerging churches (and some fundamental Baptist ones, as well). Even if these actual demonic practices are not part of the Saddleback health program, Rick Warren has brought his people into potential contact with such things by his unhesitating recommendation of these men. Mark Hyman also promotes meditation based on Buddhist principles. He claims that “diseases don’t exist; their symptoms are related to effects” (“Rick Warren’s Celebrity Health Plan Draws Thousands,” *The Orange County Register*, Jan. 16, 2011). To say that disease doesn’t exist apart from human causes is New Age nonsense. While it is true that diet and exercise can affect one’s health, all diseases are not the result of lifestyle. We are fallen sinners who live in a sin-cursed world, and disease and death are realities that affect every individual regardless of what type of “healthy lifestyle” he pursues. In the book *The New Age Tower of Babel*, we warn that the alternative health care field is permeated with New Age thought. A friend observed that health food stores are New Age chapels. Beware, friends. Though we know that health is important, the Bible itself doesn’t have much to say about it. What the Bible does have a lot to say about is spiritual health in general and not associating with paganism in particular! “Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord, and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord’s table, and of the table of devils” (1 Corinthians 10:21).

Observe, then, how close are the ties between evangelicals, emergents, and the New Age! And contemplative prayer practices are the bridge.

Mysticism is uniting Christian rockers with Secular rockers

Ever since we first began warning about Christian rock decades ago, we have observed that there is no separation between Christian rock and secular rock. Contemporary Christian musicians make no attempt to hide this fact and they have no shame for it. When asked in interviews about their musical influences and their favorite music, invariably they list a number of raunchy secular rock musicians.

The following examples could be multiplied endlessly:

FOURTH WATCH cites groups like U2, the Police, Genesis, Pete Townshend, and the Alarm as major influences. “MEMBERS LISTEN TO A GREAT DEAL OF MAINSTREAM MUSIC, MAKING NO APOLOGIES FOR IT, and they express a desire to play clubs and other non-church settings” (*CCM Magazine*, April 1987, p. 19).

RANDY STONEHILL “listens to all kinds of music,” including hard secular rock (Devlin Donaldson, “Rockin’ Randy,” *CCM Magazine*, August 1983).

PHIL KEAGGY performs an unholy combination of secular rock and Christian rock/folk, and those who listen to his music are drawn toward worldly rock & roll. On his 1993 *Crimson and Blue* album, for example, he pays “homage to the Beatles” by covering several of their songs.

When ASHLEY CLEVELAND was asked what music was on her stereo, she replied, “*Living With Ghosts*, Patty Griffin; *What’s The Story Morning Glory*, Oasis; *Exile On Main Street*, the Rolling Stones” (<http://www.ashleycleveland.com/acfacts.htm>). In her concerts, Ashley performs a very gritty rendition of the Rolling Stones hit “Gimme Shelter.”

CAEDMON’S CALL said their greatest love in music is secular rock. They mentioned Indigo Girls, Shawn Colvin, David Wilcox, The Police, Fishbone, 10,000 Maniacs (*Lighthouse Electronic Magazine*). The group often performs Beatles music. Cliff Young said one of his favorites is the foul-mouthed Alanis Morissette. He mocked a preacher who warns that Christian musicians should not listen to secular rock and said that he listens to secular rock & rollers because “they are being honest [about] struggles that they go through.”

AUDIO ADRENALINE’S *Bloom* album includes the song “Free Ride” from the Edgar Winter Group’s *They Only Come out at Night* album. Rock star Edgar Winter was featured on the cover of this wicked album dressed as a homosexual “drag queen.” The lyrics to “Free Ride” claim that “all of the answers come from within.” This is rank heresy, because we know that the answers do not come from within man’s fallen heart, but from God’s revelation in the Bible.

STEVE CAMP says, “I’ll have a Foreigner 4 album going in my car.” He also says: “I am dedicated to good music whether it’s pop, Christian, gospel, R&B, blues, jazz, classical, rock or whatever. I just love good music” (Steve Camp, *MusicLine* magazine, Feb. 1986, p. 22).

JARS OF CLAY names Jimi Hendrix and the Beatles as their inspiration (Dann Denny, “Christian Rock,” *Sunday Herald Times*, Bloomington, Ind., Feb. 8, 1998). The lead guitarist for Jars of Clay is said to be a “Beatles fanatic” (*Christian News*, Dec. 8, 1997). When asked by *Christianity Today* to list their musical influences, Jars of Clay members “listed no Christian artists” (*Christianity Today*, Nov. 15, 1999). Jars of Clay performs Ozzy Osbourne’s “Crazy Train” during their concerts. Osbourne is the filthy-mouthed former lead singer for the occultic rock group Black Sabbath.

Dana Key (of DEGARMO & KEY) says that he has been influenced most by B.B. King, Jimi Hendrix, and Billy Gibbons (of ZZ Top) (*CCM Magazine*, January 1989, p. 30).

POINT OF GRACE, on their *Life, Love and Other Mysteries* album, recorded “Sing a Song” by the occultic, antichrist rock group Earth, Wind and Fire.

The worldliness of DELIRIOUS is evident in their choice of “musical heroes,” which include “Radiohead, Blur and other big British modern rockers” (*CCM* magazine, July 1999, p. 39).

The group DELIVERANCE performs songs by secular rock groups. Their *What a Joke* album has the song “After Forever” by the vile, blasphemous, pagan rock group Black Sabbath.

When asked what is currently in her CD player, CRYSTAL LEWIS replied: “Michael Jackson, *Thriller*; Billy Holliday; Led Zeppelin; Radiohead, *Ok Computer*; Radiohead, *Kid A*; and Sting, *Nothing Like the Sun* (“Ten Questions with Chrystal Lewis,” *CCM Magazine*, March 2002).

The popular group THIRD DAY also loves secular rock. Michael Herman of *Christianity Today* asked the members of Third Day to “name a musician you’d pay to see in concert.” All five members of the band named secular rockers. Tai named U2; Brad, the Cars; David, Phil Collins; Mac, Tom Petty; and Mark, George Harrison (“Guy Talk” interview posted at *Christianity Today* web site, Feb. 26, 2002). Anyone familiar with the music and atmosphere at secular rock concerts should know that a Bible believer has no business there. “And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Eph. 5:11).

In the video for the *Rock & Worship Roadshow Tour* (2011), MERCYME covers the Beatles song “Ob-La-Di, Ob-La-Da.”

Why is it that contemporary Christian musicians can be so comfortable with secular rock? I believe it is because so many CCM artists worship a false god.

As a new Christian in 1973, one of the first things that God dealt with me about was my music. I could see from my daily Bible reading that rock music is wrong. It is the very definition of the “world” that we are not to love as described in 1 John 2:15-17.

“Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.”

Rock music is clearly characterized by “the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life.” A better definition has never been written.

James warned that it is spiritual adultery to love the world and God, too.

“Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God” (James 4:4).

Therefore, I knew that I had a clear choice. I could love rock or I could love God, but I could not love both, and if I held on to my love for filthy secular rock I would be committing spiritual adultery against the thrice holy God who saved me.

I loved rock & roll, but I loved the Lord more. Furthermore, I had already drunk deeply of the cup of rock & roll and I yearned for a new path in life. I wanted a new song. I wanted to be set free from the old way, so I gave up rock & roll. I have been tempted to go back on that decision from time to time, but by God's grace I have never done so and I have never regretted it. The older I get in the Lord, the clearer it becomes to me that rock & roll is of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and it has no part whatsoever in the life of a born again child of God.

One reason why contemporary Christian music lovers do not separate from rock & roll is that they worship the same god as secular rockers.

It is the god that is experienced through sensual passions.

As we have seen, rock & rollers can be religiously passionate about their music and they often speak of it in terms of a spiritual experience.

The Doors wanted their audience "to undergo a religious experience."

Bob Marley's concerns were "like church ... a spiritual high."

Grateful Dead concerts are "a place to worship" and "bear uncanny resemblance to religious festivals."

Muddy Waters said that "blues was his religion."

Judas Priest said that rock music isn't just music; it's "a philosophy and a way of life."

Michael Jackson said, "When I am dancing, I have felt touched by something sacred."

George Harrison said, "Music is very involved with the spiritual."

Brian Eno described his discovery of rock & roll as "a spiritual experience."

Obviously, these rockers are not talking about having communion with the God of the Bible. They worship a different god. He is non-judgmental, sensual, even sexual, and puts no obligations on people, letting them "follow their hearts."

This is exactly the god worshiped by many CCM artists.

Consider the popularity of *The Shack*. It has been directly endorsed by Michael W. Smith and other CCM artists and has been well received in prominent CCM circles such as Calvary Chapels, Vineyard churches, and Hillsong. It was promoted at the 2009 National Pastor's Convention in San Diego, which was sponsored by Zondervan and InterVarsity Fellowship. The Shack's author, Paul Young, was one of the speakers and a survey found that 57% had read the

novel. Young was enthusiastically received, and in an interview with Andy Crouch, a senior editor of *Christianity Today*, there was not a hint of condemnation for his false god. Crouch is a CCM musician in his own right and led one of the praise and worship sessions in San Diego.

The Shack is all about redefining God. It is about a man who becomes bitter at God after his daughter is murdered and has a life-changing experience in the very shack where the murder occurred; but the God he encounters is most definitely *not* the God of the Bible.

Young says the book is for those with “a longing that God is as kind and loving as we wish he was” (interview with Sherman Hu, Dec. 4, 2007). What he is referring to is the desire on the part of the natural man for a God who loves “unconditionally” and does not require obedience, does not require repentance, does not judge sin, and does not make men feel guilty for what they do.

In that same interview, Young said that a woman wrote to him and said that her 22-year-old daughter came to her after reading the book and asked, “IS IT ALRIGHT IF I DIVORCE THE OLD GOD AND MARRY THE NEW ONE?”

This is precisely what a very large portion of the Contemporary Christian Music crowd is doing.

Young admits that the God of “The Shack” is different from the traditional God of Bible-believing Christianity and blasphemously says that the God who “watches from a distance and judges sin” is “a Christianized version of Zeus.”

This reminds me of the modernist G. Bromley Oxnam, who called the God of the Old Testament “a dirty bully” in his 1944 book *Preaching in a Revolutionary Age*.

Young depicts the triune God as a young Asian woman named “Sarayu” * (supposedly the Holy Spirit), an oriental carpenter who loves to have a good time (supposedly Jesus), and an older black woman named “Elousia” (supposedly God the Father). (* The name “Sarayu” is from the Hindu scriptures and represents a mythical river in India on the shores of which the Hindu god Rama was born.)

Young’s god is the god of the emerging church. He is cool, loves rock & roll, is non-judgmental, does not exercise wrath toward sin, does not send unbelievers to an eternal fiery hell, does not require repentance and the new birth, and puts no obligations on people. (See “The Shack’s Cool God” at the Way of Life web site, www.wayoflife.org.)

The false CCM non-judgmental, universalistic god is represented by emerging church leaders such as Brian McLaren and Rob Bell, both of whom are very popular with CCM artists. One Christian rocker told us that these writings “resonate” with him.

McLaren calls the God who punished Jesus on the cross for man’s sin “a God who is incapable of forgiving, unless he kicks somebody else” (McLaren, <http://www.understandthetimes.org/>)

mclarentrans.shtml and http://str.typepad.com/weblog/2006/01/brian_mclaren_p.html). He presents the traditional God of the Bible as a tyrant who “gets his way through coercion and violence and intimidation and domination. McLaren says that the “power of the blood” gospel “raises some questions about the goodness of God.”

Rob Bell, author of the influential book *Velvet Elvis*, claims that the God who would allow multitudes to go to eternal hell is not great or mighty (*Love Wins*, Kindle location 1189-1229). He says that such God is not loving and calls the preaching of eternal hell “misguided and toxic.” He says there is something wrong with this God and calls Him “terrifying and traumatizing and unbearable” (*Love Wins*, location 47-60, 1273-1287, 2098-2113). He even says that if an earthly father acted like the God who sends people to hell “we could contact child protection services immediately” (*Love Wins*, location 2085-2098).

One of Bell’s supporters, Chad Hotlz, a Methodist pastor, calls the God who sends unbelievers to hell “the monster God” (“Who’s in Hell?” *FoxNews*, March 24, 2011).

It is obvious that Bell and company worship a different God than the One we worship in “traditional” Baptist churches.

The “old-fashioned” Bible believer says with the writer of Hebrews, “Our God is a consuming fire” (Hebrews 12:29). The emerging church says, “Our God is *not* a consuming fire.”

Bell’s God is more akin to New Age panentheism than the God of the Bible. He describes God as “a force, an energy, a being calling out to us in many languages, using a variety of methods and events” (*Love Wins*, location 1710-1724).

“There is an energy in the world, a spark, an electricity that everything is plugged into. The Greeks called it *zoe*, the mystics call it ‘Spirit,’ and Obi-Wan called it ‘the Force’” (*Love Wins*, location 1749-1762).

Many of the CCM artists worship **A REBEL CHRIST**, which is certainly a false christ. Mark Stuart of Audio Adrenaline says, “Jesus Christ is the biggest rebel to ever walk the face of the earth” (*Pensacola News Journal*, Pensacola, Fla., March 1, 1998, pp. 1, 6E). Sonny of P.O.D. says, “We believe that Jesus was the first rebel; the first punk rocker” (<http://www.shoutweb.com/interviews/pod0700.phtml>). This is absolute blasphemy. The Bible says rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft (1 Sam. 15:23). A rebel is a lawbreaker, but Christ was the lawgiver who He came to earth to fulfill the requirements of His own law (Mat. 5:17-19). Christ was not crucified for rebellion; He was crucified for testifying that He is God (John 10:33).

Many of the CCM artists worship **A ROCK & ROLL PARTY CHRIST**. In his *Live ... Radically Saved* video Carman says, “Jesus is always cool; He’s got his thing together.” In *Resurrection Rap* Carman portrays Jesus as a street hippie; in *The Standard* he calls Jesus “J.C.”; and in *Addicted to Jesus* he speaks of “Jammin’ with the Lamb.” Petra claims that “God gave rock and roll to you/ Put it in the soul of every one.” In “Party in Heaven” the Daniel Band sang,

“The Lamb and I are drinkin’ new wine.” Phil Driscoll says, “God is the King of Soul; He’s the King of all rhythm” (quoted by Tim Fisher, *Battle for Christian Music*, p. 82). Messiah Prophet Band says, “Jesus is the Master of Metal,” and Barren Cross says, “Better than pot, Jesus rocks.” John Fischer described God as puffing on a cigar and swaying to rock music (*CCM Magazine*, July 1984, p. 20), while J. Lee Grady says Jesus enjoys dancing with the angels and “grooving to the sound of Christian R&B pumped out of a boom box” (*Charisma*, July 2000).

The fact that the CCM crowd typically worships a different kind of God than the “old-fashioned” Biblicist, is why they are perfectly comfortable using music that has been identified as sexy by the secular world.

“... that is what rock is all about—sex with a 100-megaton bomb, the beat” (Gene Simmons of KISS, *Entertainment Tonight*, ABC, Dec. 10, 1987).

Note that Simmons was not referring to the words of rock music; he was referring to the music itself and particularly to its backbeat rhythm.

Music researchers Daniel and Bernadette Skubik, in their study on the neurophysiology of rock music, warned:

“Whether the words are evil, innocuous, or based in Holy Scripture, the overall neurophysiological effects generated by rock music remain the same. There is simply no such thing as Christian rock that is substantively different in its impact” (“The Neurophysiology of Rock,” an Appendix to Ken Blanchard’s *Pop Goes the Gospel*, pp. 187ff).

The reason this statement doesn’t bother a CCM defender is because he sees Jesus as a non-judgmental rock & roll party Dude who loves a good time.

“Those who envision God as a special friend, a kind of lover, with whom they can have fun, see no problem in worshipping him by means of physically stimulating music. On the other hand, those who perceive God as a majestic, holy, and almighty Being to be approached with awe and reverence will only use the music that elevates them spiritually” (Samuele Bacchiocchi, *The Christian and Rock Music*).

They are worshiping a different god.

THE CASE OF SUE MONK KIDD

The story of Sue Monk Kidd is loud warning of the dangers of flirting with mysticism and it highlights the evil of those who are promoting this type of thing to the unwary, regardless of their sincerity and passion.

Kidd is a very popular writer. Her first two novels, *The Secret Life of Bees* (2002) and *The Mermaid Chair* (2005), have sold more than 6 million copies and the first one is being produced

as a movie. She has also written two popular books on contemplative spirituality: *God's Joyful Surprise* (1988) and *When the Heart Waits* (1990).

She was raised in a Southern Baptist congregation in southwest Georgia. Her grandfather and father were Baptist deacons. Her grandmother gave devotionals at the Women's Missionary Union, and her mother was a Sunday School teacher. Her husband was a minister who taught religion, and a chaplain at a Baptist college. She was very involved in church, teaching Sunday School and attending services Sunday morning and evening and Wednesday. She was even inducted into a group of women called the Gracious Ladies, the criterion for which was that "one needed to portray certain ideals of womanhood, which included being gracious and giving of oneself unselfishly."

When Kidd was 30, a Sunday School co-worker gave her a book by Thomas Merton.

She should have known better than to read such a book and should have been warned by her brethren, but the New Evangelical philosophy has created an atmosphere in which the reading of a Catholic monk's book by a Southern Baptist Sunday School teacher was acceptable. The unscriptural thinking goes like this: Who are we to judge what other people read, and who is to say that a Roman Catholic priest might not love the Lord?

Kidd began to practice Catholic forms of contemplative spirituality and visit Catholic retreat centers and monasteries.

"... beginning in my early thirties I'd become immersed in a journey that was rooted in contemplative spirituality. It was the spirituality of the 'church fathers,' of the monks I'd come to know as I made regular retreats in their monasteries. ... I thrived on solitude, routinely practicing silent meditation as taught by the monks Basil Pennington and Thomas Keating. ... For years, I'd studied Thomas Merton, John of the Cross, Augustine, Bernard, Bonaventure, Ignatius, Eckhart, Luther, Teilhard de Chardin, The Cloud of Unknowing, and others" (Kidd, *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*, pp. 14, 15).

Of Merton's autobiography, *The Seven Storey Mountain*, which she read in 1978 for the first of many times, she says,

"My experience of reading it initiated me into my first real awareness of the interior life, igniting an impulse toward being ... it caused something hidden at the core of me to flare up and become known" (Kidd's introduction to *New Seeds of Contemplation*, 2007, pp. xiii, xi).

Of Merton's book *New Seeds of Contemplation* she says, "[It] initiated me into the secrets of my true identity and woke in me an urge toward realness" and "impacted my spirituality and my writing to this day."

Merton communicated intimately with and was deeply affected by Mary veneration, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Sufism, so it is not surprising that his writings would create an appetite that could lead to goddess worship.

In *The New Seeds of Contemplation*, Merton made the following frightening statement that shows the great danger of Catholic mysticism:

“In the end the contemplative suffers the anguish of realizing that HE NO LONGER KNOWS WHAT GOD IS. He may or may not mercifully realize that, after all, this is a great gain, because ‘God is not a what,’ not a ‘thing.’ This is precisely one of the essential characteristics of contemplative experience. It sees that there is no ‘what’ that can be called God” (p. 13).

What Catholic mysticism does is reject the Bible as the sole and sufficient and perfect revelation of God and tries to delve beyond the Bible, even beyond thought of any kind, and find God through mystical “intuition.” In other words, it is a rejection of the God of the Bible. It says that God cannot be known by doctrine and cannot be described in words. He can only be experienced through mysticism. This is a blatant denial of the Bible’s claim to be the very Word of God.

This opens the practitioner to demonic delusion. He is left with no perfect objective revelation of God, no divinely-revealed authority by which he can test his mystical experiences and intuitions. He is left with an idol of his own vain imagination (Jeremiah 17:9) and a doctrine of devils.

Kidd’s own first two books were on contemplative spirituality.

The involvement in Catholic contemplative practices led her to the Mass and to other sacramental associations.

“I often went to Catholic mass or Eucharist at the Episcopal church, nourished by the symbol and power of this profound feeding ritual” (Kidd, *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*, p. 15).

There is an occultic power in the mass that has influenced many who have approached it in a receptive, non-critical manner.

She learned dream analysis from a Jungian perspective and believed that her dreams were revelations. One recurring dream featured an old woman. Kidd concluded that this is “the Feminine Self or the voice of the feminine soul” and she was encouraged in her feminist studies by these visitations.

She determined to stop testing things and follow her heart, rejecting the Bible’s admonition to “prove all things” (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

“I would go through the gate with what Zen Buddhists call ‘beginner’s mind,’ the attitude of approaching something with a mind empty and free, ready for anything, open to everything. ... I would give myself permission to go wherever my quest took me” (*The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*, p. 140).

This is blind mysticism and it led her into the deepest spiritual darkness imaginable.

She rejected the doctrine that the Bible is the sole authority for faith and practice. In church one day the pastor proclaimed this truth, and she describes the frightful thing that happened in her heart at that moment:

“I remember a feeling rising up from a place about two inches below my navel. ... It was the purest inner knowing I had experienced, and it was shouting in me no, no, no! The ultimate authority of my life is not the Bible; it is not confined between the covers of a book. It is not something written by men and frozen in time. It is not from a source outside myself. My ultimate authority is the divine voice in my own soul. Period. ... That day sitting in church, I believed the voice in my belly. ... The voice in my belly was the voice of the wise old woman. It was my female soul talking. And it had challenged the assumption that the Baptist Church would get me where I needed to go” (*The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*, pp. 76, 77, 78).

Having rejected the God of the Bible, she was led to the god of end-times apostasy. She came to believe in the divinity of man.

“There’s a bulb of truth buried in the human soul that’s ‘only God’ ... the soul is more than something to win or save. It’s the seat and repository of the inner Divine, the God-image, the truest part of us” (*When the Heart Waits*, 1990, pp. 47, 48).

“When we encounter another person ... we should walk as if we were upon holy ground. We should respond as if God dwells there” (*God’s Joyful Surprise*, p. 233).

She began to delve into ancient goddess worship. She traveled with a group of women to Crete where they met in a cave and sang prayers to “the Goddess Skoteini, Goddess of the Dark.” She says, “... something inside me was calling on the Goddess of the Dark, even though I didn’t know her name” (*The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*, p. 93).

Soon she was praying to god as mother.

“I ran my finger around the rim of the circle on the page and prayed my first prayer to a Divine Feminine presence. I said, ‘Mothergod, I have nothing to hold me. No place to be, inside or out. I need to find a container of support, a space where my journey can unfold’” (p. 94).

She finally came to the place where she believed that she herself is a goddess.

“Divine Feminine love came, wiping out all my puny ideas about love in one driving sweep. Today I remember that event for the radiant mystery it was, how I felt myself embraced by Goddess, how I felt myself in touch with the deepest thing I am. It was the moment when, as playwright and poet Ntozake Shange put it, ‘I found god in myself/ and I loved her/ I loved her fiercely’” (*The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*, p. 136).

“To embrace Goddess is simply to discover the Divine in yourself as powerfully and vividly feminine” (p. 141).

“I came to know myself as an embodiment of Goddess” (p. 163).

“When I woke, my thought was that I was finally being reunited with the snake in myself--that lost and defiled symbol of feminine instinct” (p. 107).

She built an altar in her study and populated it with statues of goddesses, Jesus, a Black Madonna -- and a mirror to reflect her own image.

“Over the altar in my study I hung a lovely mirror sculpted in the shape of a crescent moon. It reminded me to honor the Divine Feminine presence in myself, the wisdom in my own soul” (p. 181).

Kidd’s book *The Dance of the Dissident Daughter* ends with the words, “She is in us.”

According to this book, Kidd’s daughter, too, has accepted goddess worship.

Contemplative mysticism was the path that led Sue Monk Kidd from a Southern Baptist church to ancient goddess worship, and since mysticism has permeated evangelical Christianity, it is no surprise that Kidd’s writings continue to “resonate” with this movement.

Sue Monk Kidd is quoted non-critically by evangelicals such as David Jeremiah (*Life Wide Open*), Beth Moore (*When Godly People Do Ungodly Things*), and Richard Foster (*Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home*). Kidd’s endorsement is printed on the back of Dallas Willard’s book *The Spirit of the Disciplines*. She wrote the foreword to the 2006 edition of Henri Nouwen’s *With Open Hands* and the introduction to Thomas Merton’s *New Seeds of Contemplation*. Eugene Peterson, author of *The Message*, praises Kidd’s book *When the Heart Waits*. He says, “As I read her book, Kidd became a companion. I love having her walk with me on my journey.”

CONCLUSION

Every path of mysticism leads to the same type of “non-judgmental, unconditional love, no obligations, you can love yourself” god.

It doesn’t matter if it is rock & roll, the pop culture with its me-centered entertainment orientation, New Age, Human Potential, self-esteem building, contemplative prayer, charismatic worship, or Contemporary Christian Worship.

This does not mean that every individual who listens to rock & roll or watches television or surfs the Internet or worships in charismatic churches or uses Contemporary Christian Music ends up worshipping a false god. It simply means that these are mystical practices that have the design of moving you beyond analytical thought and opening you up non-judgmentally to “spirits” so that there is great danger involved.

The Issue of Salvation

A fundamental reason why so many professing Christians are embracing the false god of end-times apostasy is the absence of biblical salvation.

A genuine experience of salvation is foundational to spiritual protection, because it is impossible to understand the truth properly apart from the new birth.

“But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:14).

Further, those who are not saved are still under the power of the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:1-2). It is only the truly regenerate individual who can claim the precious promise of 1 John 4:4, “greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.”

Yet confusion about salvation is rampant.

I began to understand this many decades ago when I sat in the office of the head of the Bible Society in Calcutta, India, and talked with him about salvation. I told him how I was converted at age 23, and then I asked, “How were you saved?” He sort of chuckled and said, “I’m a third generation Christian.”

According to Scripture, there is no such thing. Jesus said that each individual must be born again. I can’t go to heaven on the coattails of the faith of my parents or grandparents.

On that same trip to India I sat in the office of the head of the theological seminary at Serampore University. When I asked him how a person becomes a Christian he replied: “There are a number of ways. You can be born into a Christian home; you can be baptized; you can be catechized; you can have a conversion experience.”

A few years ago I attended Rick Warren’s church in California and as I was waiting for the service to begin I talked to the man sitting next to me. I asked if he was a member of the church, and he said yes. I then asked when he was born again, and he replied that he had always been a Christian.

Again, that is not possible.

Consider the Charismatic Movement

Consider **the** charismatic movement with its radical ecumenism. While there are saved people in the movement, there are countless people who are not saved. They have had an emotional mystical experience of some sort; they have prayed a prayer and been “baptized by the Spirit”; they have fallen down, spoken in tongues, danced, been captivated by powerful music. But they haven’t repented of their sin and put their complete trust in the once for all atonement of Jesus Christ. At the massive New Orleans ’87 conference, which had roughly 35,000 attendees, half of the people raised their hands one evening to indicate that they didn’t know for sure if they were saved, and this was after these same people had spent two or three days in enthusiastic charismatic worship.

At a press conference the next day, Dennis Costella of *Foundation* magazine asked why the conference didn't address the matter of salvation plainly and publicly in order to clear up the obvious confusion. A Pentecostal leader replied, "We don't have time for that." The more honest answer would have been as follows:

"We are a mixed multitude and there is widespread confusion about salvation in our midst. This conference represents 40 different denominations, and we have different ideas about the gospel itself. Our Catholic brethren have one idea and our Lutheran brethren another and there are differences of opinion even among us Pentecostals. In the context of the ecumenical aspect of the charismatic movement, some believe baptism is necessary for salvation; some believe you can't be saved without tongues; some believe baptism regenerates; some believe cooing infants can be saved; some believe salvation must be nurtured through sacraments; some believe you can lose your salvation; some believe salvation is a mere sinner's prayer; some believe in 'Four Spiritual Laws,' etc. So it is impossible to be doctrinally precise on that or practically any other issue and still keep our unity. As you know, doctrine divides; love unites, and love is what really matters. We can't judge someone else, you know."

That is the situation that exists within the broad worldwide charismatic movement.

Consider the Emerging Church

There is the same problem in the emerging church. In my research into the emerging church I have been amazed at the widespread confusion about the issue of salvation itself.

In fact, Brian McLaren, one of the most prominent names in the movement, says:

"I don't think we've got the gospel right yet. What does it mean to be 'saved'? When I read the Bible, I don't see it meaning, 'I'm going to heaven after I die.' Before modern evangelicalism nobody accepted Jesus Christ as their personal Savior, or walked down an aisle, or said the sinner's prayer. I don't think the liberals have it right. But I don't think we have it right either. None of us has arrived at orthodoxy" ("The Emergent Mystique," *Christianity Today*, Nov. 2004, p. 40).

In fact, it is rare to find a clear biblical testimony of salvation in the writings of emerging church leaders.

Scot McKnight says that "conversion" can be through liturgy (referring to sacraments such as baptism), or through socialization (growing up in a Christian home), or through personal decisional faith in Christ (*Turning to Jesus: The Sociology of Conversion in the Gospels*).

This statement reflects a deep confusion about salvation.

Robert Webber, who grew up in a Baptist pastor's home, argued that salvation does not have to be a dramatic conversion experience and admitted that he didn't have such an experience. He said that repentance "can have a dramatic beginning or can come as a result of a process over time" (*The Divine Embrace*, p. 149). He saw salvation as a sacramental process that begins at baptism, and this is one reason why he left the Baptists and joined the Episcopalians and was also perfectly comfortable with Roman Catholicism.

Tony Campolo has a similar testimony. In *Letters to a Young Evangelical* Campolo described his own experience in the following words:

When I was a boy growing up in a lower-middle-class neighborhood in West Philadelphia, MY MOTHER, a convert to Evangelical Christianity from a Catholic Italian immigrant family, HOPED I WOULD HAVE ONE OF THOSE DRAMATIC 'BORN-AGAIN' EXPERIENCES. That was the way she had come into a personal relationship with Christ. She took me to hear one evangelist after another, praying that I would go to the altar and come away 'converted.' BUT IT NEVER WORKED FOR ME. I would go down the aisle as the people around me sang 'the invitation hymn,' but I just didn't feel as if anything happened to me. For a while I despaired, wondering if I would ever get 'saved.' It took me quite some time to realize that entering into a personal relationship with Christ DOES NOT ALWAYS HAPPEN THAT WAY. ...

In my case INTIMACY WITH CHRIST WAS DEVELOPED GRADUALLY OVER THE YEARS, primarily through what Catholic mystics call 'centering prayer.' Each morning, as soon as I wake up, I take time--sometimes as much as a half hour--to center myself on Jesus. I say his name over and over again to drive back the 101 things that begin to clutter up my mind the minute I open my eyes. Jesus is my mantra, as some would say. ...

I LEARNED ABOUT THIS WAY OF HAVING A BORN-AGAIN EXPERIENCE FROM READING THE CATHOLIC MYSTICS, especially *The Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola (*Letters to a Young Evangelical*, 2006, pp. 25, 26, 30).

This is very frightful testimony. Campolo does not have a biblical testimony of salvation. He plainly admits that he is not "born again" in the way that his mother was, through a biblical-style conversion. Instead, he describes his "intimacy with Christ" as something that has developed gradually through the practice of Catholic mysticism.

For one thing, this is to confuse the issue of salvation with that of spiritual growth. All of the conversions that are recorded in the New Testament are of the instantaneous, dramatic variety. We think of the woman at the well (John 4), Zacchaeus (Luke 19), the Ethiopian eunuch (Acts 8), Paul (Acts 9), Cornelius (Acts 10), Lydia (Acts 16), and the Philippian jailer (Acts 16), to name a few. The Lord Jesus Christ said that salvation is a birth (John 3:3). That is not a gradual thing that happens throughout one's life; it is an event!

Further, Catholic mysticism itself is deeply unscriptural. Jesus forbade repetitious prayers (Mat. 6:7). He taught us to pray in a verbal, conscious manner, talking with God as with a Father, addressing God the Father external to us, not searching for a mystical oneness with God in the center of our being through meditation (Mat. 6:9-13). The Catholic mystics did not have a biblical testimony of salvation. They trusted in Christ PLUS baptism and the other Catholic sacraments, which is a false gospel.

Jim Wallis, one of the most influential of emergents, defines "born again" as follows:

"Being born again was not meant to be a private religious experience that is hard to communicate ... but rather the prerequisite for joining a new and very public movement – the Jesus and kingdom of God movement" (*The Great Awakening*, p. 60).

Wallis claims that salvation isn't a personal religious experience, but that is exactly what it was in the case of the salvations recorded in the New Testament.

The book *Emerging Churches* by Eddie Gibbs and Ryan Bolger contains the testimonies of about 50 emerging church leaders in Appendix A, and only a couple of them even come close to a biblical testimony. Some of them don't mention a personal salvation testimony, merely saying that they grew up in some type of church.

And remember that these are emerging church *LEADERS*.

Ben Edson of Sanctus1 in Manchester, England, says:

"After a painful breakup with my girlfriend, I gave God another chance. I cried out to God at my point of need, and God met me in a profound and life-changing way" (p. 266).

Is salvation a matter of giving God a chance, of God meeting my needs and having a "profound" experience of some sort? Many people have life-changing experiences through psychology, 12-Step programs, New Age mysticism, and goddess worship.

Kester Brewin of Vaux in London, England, said:

"I can point to a Billy Graham rally in 1984 as a conversion, but that was really more of a moment of STRENGTHENING A FAITH THAT HAD ALWAYS been there" (*Emerging Churches*, 2005, p. 248).

Ephesians 2:1-2 says there is a time before salvation and a time after salvation. Before salvation we are dead in trespasses and sins and controlled by the devil. After salvation we have new life in Christ and belong to God. It is sometimes the case with a child who grows up in church that he does not remember the exact time that he put his faith in Christ, but true salvation is always a life-changing event and one should never say that he has *always* had faith.

In the book *What Is the Emerging Church?* we give many more examples of this.

Consider Christian Rock

From its inception, Christian rock has been promoted as a great tool for evangelism and large numbers of professions of faith have been reported, but there is reason to be very skeptical.

John Blanchard researched 13 mission agencies in Britain to see how many of their candidates were converted at Christian rock concerts. Not one was found. The following reply was typical: "I cannot call to mind anybody who has been converted through this type of youth evangelism and has subsequently gone to missionary service" (*Pop Goes the Gospel*, pp. 110-112).

When decisions made at Christian rock concerts in Britain were followed up, it was found that very few were genuine. For example, of 200 decisions recorded at one youth meeting, only four

attended a follow-up session. Of the 100 students who made “decisions” in a school visited by a CCM performance, only one later showed even “a mild interest” in Christian things (Blanchard, *Pop Goes the Gospel*, p. 110).

The devil has provided many alternatives to the new birth and there are many sorts of false professions of salvation. Note the Bible’s warnings:

- * A person can believe in God and not be saved (James 2:19).
- * A person can pray to Jesus and not be saved (Matt. 7:22-23).
- * A person can prophesy in Jesus’ name and not be saved (Matt. 7:22-23).
- * A person can do wonderful works in Jesus’ name and not be saved (Matt. 7:22-23).
- * A person can have a zeal for God and not be saved (Rom. 10:2-3).
- * A person can have a zeal to make proselytes for God and not be saved (Matt. 23:15).
- * A person can be very interested in Jesus Christ and not be saved (Matt. 19:16-22).
- * A person can profess to know God and not be saved (Titus 1:16).
- * A person can follow Jesus for a while and not be saved (Jn. 6:66).
- * A person can serve Christ as an apostle and not be saved (John 6:70).
- * A person can even believe on Jesus’ name and not be saved (John 2:23-24).

The reason the people in John 2:23-25 were not saved is because they did not believe on Jesus as their Lord and Saviour from sin but as their worldly messiah who would feed them and rescue them from their political enemies (Jn. 6:26).

Consider the Southern Baptist Convention

The Southern Baptist Convention has a reputation of being very conservative, yet only about 30 percent of the members of Southern Baptist churches even attend Sunday morning service and only about 10 percent participate in anything beyond that. As Jim Elliff at Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary observed, “These figures suggest that nearly 90% of Southern Baptist church members appear to be little different from the ‘cultural Christians’ who populate mainline denominations” (*Founder’s Journal*, Feb. 7, 1999).

I suggest that this means that the vast majority of Southern Baptists are not born again. Those who joined the first church at Jerusalem demonstrated the reality of their Christianity by “continuing steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).

I grew up in the Southern Baptist Convention and I know that it was typical to make a profession of faith of some sort when you were a kid and to be baptized even though there was no real indication that you had been born again. And it was commonplace that an individual’s salvation was never questioned thereafter no matter how wicked he lived and no matter how obvious it was that he had never been converted (e.g., Matthew 18:3; John 3:3; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Titus 1:16; 1 John 2:4). It was typical to leave church sometime during adolescence (because you had

zero interest in spiritual things), and to go out and “sow your wild oats,” and then to come back to church at some point years later and take up right where you left off without ever having a real life-changing conversion experience. Reformation is not the same as salvation. In this way, churches become filled up with unregenerate members as the generations pass.

Consider Independent Baptists

I am not sure how much better the situation is among Independent Baptists. The practice of Quick Prayerism and the haste to baptize people upon a mere “profession of faith” with no evidence of the new birth has doubtless filled many churches with unregenerate people who are trying to act like Christians without ever having experienced the life-changing miracle of conversion.

An experience that a pastor friend had during a soul-winning visitation is all too typical. A couple of years ago he went door knocking with one of the prominent soul-winners in a large independent Baptist church. This man is a veteran missionary as well as a teacher of evangelism and missions. A young preacher was also with them who was preparing to start a new church. They knocked on a door and a Roman Catholic man answered. He wasn’t interested enough to invite them in, but the soul-winner quickly presented the “Romans Road,” led him in a sinner’s prayer, and gave him “assurance.” As the soul-winner and the young preacher were busy writing down the man’s address and other details, my pastor friend asked the man if he believed he was a good man and that he would die and go to heaven based on his merits as a good person, and he replied, “Yes, of course!” Which is a proper Catholic answer, of course, but it is not the answer of a truly saved man. My pastor friend said: “Nobody blinked; they kept on writing as if nothing happened. I actually had to pause and look around to see if all this was for real before I realized that this wasn’t important from their perspective because he had already prayed a prayer and as long as he can be brought in to attend Sunday School, he can be baptized and trained to act like an IFB church member afterwards.”

Quick Prayerism is a frightful, unscriptural practice that is rampant within Independent Baptist circles. I was taught it in the 1970s as a student at Tennessee Temple, one of the largest Independent Baptist schools. It was promoted by Jack Hyles, one of the most influential Independent Baptist pastors. It has long been promoted by the *Sword of the Lord*. It is even practiced by many preachers who say they are against it and who claim to believe in “repentance”!

I have dealt with this problem extensively in the book *Repentance and Soul Winning*.

I would challenge every reader to examine yourself in the light of God’s Word to make sure of your salvation.

“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17).

“Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Peter 5:8).

“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).

This book is copyrighted but it is published for free distribution in electronic formats and posting on web sites and blogs as long as it is kept intact.

Way of Life Literature
P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061
866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org
<http://www.wayoflife.org>

Canada: Bethel Baptist Church, 4212 Campbell St. N., London, Ont. N6P 1A6
866-295-4143, info@bethelbaptist.ca