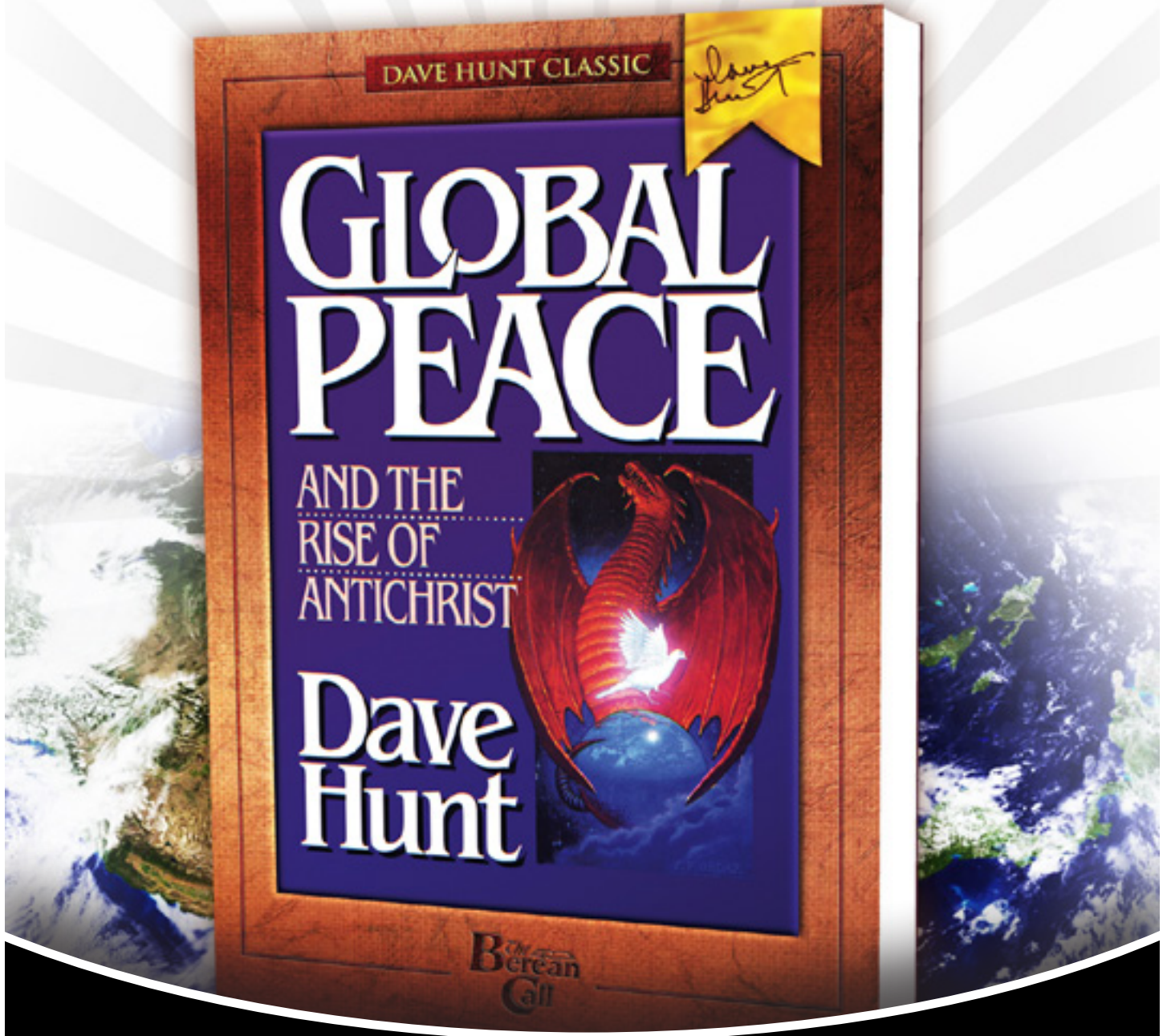


ECUMENISM & THE COMING NEW WORLD ORDER

by Dave Hunt ~ Exclusive Chapter Excerpt on Page 10!



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by T. A. McMahon

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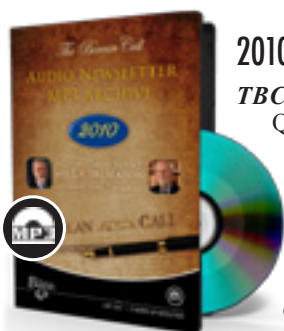
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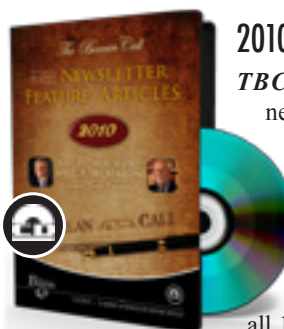
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"[The Bereans] . . . searched the scriptures daily, [to see] whether those things were so."—Acts 17:11

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The Temporal Delusion Part 3

T. A. McMahon

Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip [away].
—Hebrews 2:1

The importance of knowing what the Bible teaches and making sure that our thoughts and actions conform to God's Word is underscored by warnings given throughout the New Testament. Consider 2 Timothy 4:3-5:

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; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry.

The Apostle Paul's prophetic exhortation speaks of a time when those who profess to be Christians will not "endure sound doctrine." Incredibly, they will actually *refuse* to regard the teachings of Scripture as their authority. They will "turn away their ears from the truth" of the Bible and look to the perspective, opinions, and speculations of men. Not only has the Bible ceased to be their authority, but they are denying its *sufficiency* as well. Has that time come upon us?

Although some teach that we are in the Millennium, that Satan has been bound, Christ is ruling mankind from heaven, and things are getting better and better daily, neither the Scriptures nor experience confirm this Amillennial temporal delusion. There is, however, much evidence to support the belief that we are in the "time" of Paul's warning to the church. These are days of increasing apostasy, a stunning abandonment of "the faith" (Jude).

Over the last two decades, "the Church Growth Movement" has had an enormous influence in leading the evangelical church into apostasy. For centuries, "evangelical" described the conservative part of Christianity that believed the Bible to be inerrant and the sole authority in matters of faith and practice. "Evangelical" Christians regarded the Bible as sufficient in all things that pertain to life and godliness. Though many evangelicals still claim to hold to those beliefs, their numbers are decreasing drastically due to

recent trends in Christendom.

The Church Growth Movement (CGM) in particular has been a major catalyst in the demise of biblical faith among evangelicals today. In its attempt to attract non-Christians and nominal Christians to its churches, the CGM has implemented worldly concepts and methods to achieve its goal—primarily by employing *marketing* techniques. Central to this approach has been the development of "seeker-friendly," "seeker-sensitive," or "purpose-driven" churches. We have written about this movement extensively (See *TBC*, 2/05, 3/05, 8/08, 3/09, etc.), so we will only address here the devastating effect that it has had on "sound doctrine."

Marketing has its place in the business world. When applied to the church, however, it is terribly destructive to biblical teaching. The obvious problem is that the chief focus of marketing is on the customer, or consumer: he or she must always be pleased with what is being offered. This has caused thousands of "evangelical" churches that have subscribed to the seeker-sensitive approach to filter out those things from the Bible that are offensive to the unsaved people who have been attracted to their churches. From a marketing standpoint, certain teachings found in the Bible (even though they constitute sound doctrine and include conviction of sin—not to mention the gospel itself) may offend the consumer. Thus, they must be disregarded in order to ensure that "the customer" will keep coming back.

The CGM has infected thousands of churches around the world and has contributed greatly to the fulfillment of 2 Timothy 4:3-5. The result is an "evangelical" church that has been weaned away from the Word of God. Such a spiritually anemic condition has created hundreds of thousands of weak and biblically shallow Christians who, like dumb sheep, have been relegated to being spoon-fed by marketing-oriented shepherds. Not only will they not "endure sound doctrine," but they will no longer be capable of discerning biblical truth from error. Moreover, the call to be like the Bereans and search the Scriptures to see if what one is being taught by Christian leaders is biblically true (Acts 17:10-11) has been functionally silenced for multitudes of evangelicals.

The CGM is just one of the religious trends in our day that has caused the church to "slip away" from the Scriptures. The drifting away process itself is Satan's

primary strategy of turning humanity away from the Word of God, which he effectively accomplished right from the beginning in his seduction of Eve in the Garden of Eden: "Yea, hath God said...?" Planting seeds of doubt and using deceit are obviously his means, but what is his goal and where is all of this heading?

According to the Scriptures, the world is moving toward a one-world religion headed by Satan's man of lawlessness, the Antichrist (2 Thessalonians 2:3-4). His religion will be an apostate Christianity that will be a great distortion of what the Bible teaches yet will maintain a "positive" Christian veneer. Although the Antichrist will not be revealed nor will his apostate church be officially recognized until after true believers have been removed from the earth in the Rapture (1 Thessalonians 4:16-18), his religion and church have been developing for millennia. It doesn't take great insight to see it taking shape before our eyes.

Ecumenism, which originally meant a process of unifying Christian denominations, aberrant groups, and "Christian" cults, has been expanded today to include "people of faith" (i.e., any and all faiths). This is the chief means of developing a one-world religion and church. Since most biblical doctrines are a stumbling block to ecumenical accord, they are dismissed in the interest of harmony. As indicated above, the prophesied rejection of sound doctrine has paved the way for ecumenical unity. With the doctrine of Christ and of God distorted or negated, God himself has been effectively abandoned: "Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son" (2 John 9).

For those who profess to follow Christ, the void left by removing sound biblical doctrine as the discernor of God's instructions has been seductively filled by ways that seem "right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death" (Proverbs 14:12). Death involves separation. In physical death, this means the separation of the soul and spirit from the body. Yet it also refers to the separation of oneself from the truth by turning to man's ways. This condition is rampant in Christendom and has fostered agendas that indeed seem right but will have dire consequences in their advancement of apostasy.

In Parts 1 and 2 of this series, we presented examples from church history of various attempts to set up the Kingdom of

God or Christian utopias, or to impose a Christian dominionism upon the earth. The fact that all have failed in fulfilling their unbiblical agenda has not deterred further efforts, which seem to be all the more zealous in our day. What is even more striking about such efforts, as we've noted in Part 2 (See *TBC* 11/10), is how separate movements that claim to be Christian have come together in support of the "fix," "restore," "redeem," "take dominion of," or "solve the problems of" the world prior to the return of Jesus. Some declare that Christ *cannot* return until His servants (i.e., Christians) have fulfilled the "Great Commission" of restoring and establishing God's Kingdom on the earth.

As we've seen, much of what has been proposed above is taught by widely diverse Christian groups and movements that nevertheless claim to adhere to the Bible: the Latter Rain/Manifest Sons of God and the Kingdom Dominionism of Pentecostals and Charismatics, the Amillennialism of Roman Catholics and Lutherans, the Reconstructionists and Preterists of Calvinism and Reformed theology, the global P.E.A.C.E. agenda and the Green and Environmental movements of neo-evangelicals, and the earth-bound promotions of the Emerging Church movement. Not coincidentally, Mormonism and Jehovah's Witnesses have related eschatological views. What, then, of the liberal and left-leaning "social gospel"-oriented Christians who show little interest in biblical truth but are a very large and vocal part of Christendom? Amazingly, they too fit comfortably into this unbiblical "fix the earth" religious unity.

A recent book that demonstrates this clear connection is titled *The Hole in Our Gospel*, authored by Richard Stearns (Thomas Nelson, pub., 2010), president of World Vision U.S. (see p. 8 for a review). Bill Hybels's Willow Creek Church purchased 10,000 copies, and churches that are part of the Willow Creek Association have likewise ordered thousands of the books. Five pages of endorsements include Chuck Colson, Kay Warren, Bono, Jim Wallis, Tony Campolo, Max Lucado, Ron Sider, Eugene Peterson, Alec Hill, and Leighton Ford, among others. This volume (on which we are planning an extensive critique) is sprinkled with quotes from Catholic saints and mystics along with Nobel Laureate Mother Teresa (the "poster child" for Stearns's message). An alleged quote from St. Francis of Assisi sets the theme of the book: "Preach the gospel always; when necessary use words" (p. 23).

Stearns's thesis is that Christians have a hole in their gospel if their lives don't demonstrate good works. The "good works" that Stearns has in mind focus mainly on meeting the physical needs of the poor and

correcting social injustices throughout the world. Whether or not this is feasible, few could argue with his sincerity—or doubt the nobility of his objective. But is it biblical? From beginning to end, Stearns misuses and abuses Scripture in his attempt to prove his case. For example, he is at the very least confused about the *biblical* gospel. He erroneously speaks of Matthew 25:31-46 as the Final Judgment of the saved and the lost: "Those whose lives were characterized by acts of love done to 'the least of these' were blessed and welcomed by Christ into His Father's kingdom. Those who had failed to respond, whose faith found no expression in compassion to the needy, were banished into eternal fire" (p. 53). Although he attempts to qualify his works-gospel by saying, "This does not mean we are saved by piling up enough good works to satisfy God" (p. 59), he tells us elsewhere that in the example of Lazarus and the rich man, "The plain conclusion is that the rich man went to hell because of his appalling apathy and failure to act in the face of the gross disparity between his wealth and Lazarus's poverty" (p. 187).

The entire tenor of the book reinforces a social gospel that exhorts the reader to work at restoring our planet to righteousness: "Jesus seeks a new world order in which this whole gospel, hallmarked by compassion, justice, and proclamation of the good news, becomes a reality, first in our hearts and minds, and then in the wider world through our influence. This is not to be a far-off and distant kingdom to be experienced only in the afterlife. Christ's vision was of a redeemed world order populated by redeemed people—now" (pp. 243-44). He chides Christians for being "so heavenly minded, you're no earthly good," (p. 2) and adds, "if Jesus was willing to die for this troubled planet, maybe I need to care about it too" (p. 2). Scripture indeed teaches that believers are not to abuse this planet, but that's a far cry from the delusion of trying to renovate it morally and physically through one's "good works." The epistle to the Hebrews, honoring the saints of old as models of faith whom we should emulate, tells us that they saw themselves as "strangers and pilgrims on the earth" and that their desires were for "a better country," i.e., heaven (Hebrews 11:13-16).

Nevertheless, Stearns declares: "The gospel itself was born of God's vision of a changed people, challenging and transforming the prevailing values and practices of our world. Jesus called the resulting new world order the 'kingdom of God'... and said that it would become a reality through the lives and deeds of His followers" (pp. 2-3). In contrast to the title of his book, there is more than a "hole" in the gospel Stearns is fostering. It is clearly "another gospel" (Galatians 1:6-7),

a "social revolution" (Stearns's term) that will mislead many and save no one, though it shall bring many together. Stearns quotes Rick Warren: "The first Reformation... was about creeds; this one's going to be about our deeds. The first one divided the church; this time it will unify the church" (p. 51).

This book, even more than Warren's immensely popular *Purpose Driven Life* (which was a platform for solving the world's problems through his Global P.E.A.C.E. Plan), will rally professing Christians and the followers of the world's religions, as well as atheists bent on demonstrating their morality sans God—by doing good works. Works-salvation is the faith system for all beliefs but biblical Christianity. Furthermore, the various programs promoting such a faith and practice are gaining the respect and financial support of the world—as long as it accommodates the social welfare of the masses without proselytizing.

According to the Scriptures, there is something terribly wrong when the world is championing the church and its programs. We have seen examples of this throughout the centuries regarding ministries that had wonderful beginnings but now have drifted away from the faith. When was the last time you were exposed to anything remotely Christian at the Y.M.C.A. (Young Men's Christian Association)? When did you last receive a gospel tract from that Salvation Army "bell-ringer" at the shopping mall? Moreover, try to find the gospel or an exhortation to directly share the gospel in World Vision U.S.'s mission statement. It's simply not there—by design. These organizations have all succumbed to temporal delusions.

These delusions are manifested when the ways of man are implemented in order to satisfy physical needs at the expense of what God desires for us for eternity. Nothing is to take precedence over the proclamation of the biblical gospel, for it is not just mankind's only hope but his *eternal* hope. Any approach to presenting the gospel that does not clearly and directly reflect the Bible's true content will be a perversion of it, no matter how right or practical it may seem. Any person who participates in programs, practices, or beliefs that dismiss prophetic warnings of the Word of God regarding Last Days events may well become an unwitting contributor to the apostate religion of the Antichrist.

Jesus gives the antidote and the preventive measure that will protect a believer from being influenced and "taken captive" (2 Timothy 2:26) by an increasing number of temporally oriented trends and movements today: "If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:31-32).

Quotable

Forcible revolution is not the Bible way to correct social evils. The cause of man's inhumanity lies in his own fallen nature. The gospel attacks the root cause, and offers a new creation in Christ Jesus.

William MacDonald (From Believer's Bible Commentary, the Epistle to Philemon)

Q&A

QUESTION: I recently heard the term "progressive Christian" in conjunction with some controversial speakers, Jim Wallis and Shane Claiborne, at a Lifest Music Festival. I'm not familiar with the term or the controversy surrounding the speakers. What can you tell me?

RESPONSE: Jim Wallis and Shane Claiborne's beliefs place them among socialist, or "progressive," Christians who advocate deeds and actions that they believe will achieve justice and peace upon the earth. Wallis is the founder and editor of *Sojourners* magazine. He oversees a Washington, D.C., Christian community of the same name and is one of President Obama's spiritual advisors. Claiborne studied under Tony Campolo at Eastern University, did a 10-week internship with Mother Teresa in India, and later started a "new monastic" community in Philadelphia that ministers to the poor.

Claiborne's Christianity majors in "good works" yet is rooted in the experiential, often expressed through mysticism. His frequent ecumenical statements speak of a "mystical" bonding between "people of faith":

Rarely are people converted by force or words, but through intimate encounters. Perhaps one of the best things we can do is stop talking with our mouths and cross the chasm between us with our lives. Maybe we will even find a mystical union of the Spirit as [Saint] Francis [of Assisi] did.¹

Since mysticism is completely subjective and experiential, it lends itself to Claiborne's openness to those whose beliefs are contrary to Scripture (e.g., Mother Teresa and Francis of Assisi, who put their faith in the false gospel of Roman Catholicism): "One of the barriers [between religions] seems to be the assumption that we have the truth and folks who experience things differently will all go to Hell. How do we unashamedly maintain a healthy desire for others to experience the love of God as we have experienced it without condemning others who experience God differently?"²

Jim Wallis says his mission "...is to articulate the biblical call to social justice,

inspiring hope and building a movement to transform individuals, communities, the church and the world." Wallis, viewed as a Marxist by his critics, doesn't shy away from the label. He stated that "private charity to help the poor was insufficient, and...true social justice could be achieved only by an omnipotent central government empowered to redistribute wealth"³

At the Lifest Music Festival, Claiborne proclaimed to a crowd of thousands of young people, "As my friend Jim Wallis... says, 'We look at the world and we don't believe the evidence of poverty and war. We believe despite the evidence, and we watch the evidence change'....I am so excited today, because I see a whole generation like you guys, who are totally nonconformist to the patterns of this world." His influence among young evangelicals is growing rapidly, especially among those who want more from their Christianity than their consumer-oriented and spiritual-education-by-entertainment-dispensing churches fed them. The problem is that too few of our young people have been taught to be "conformist to the patterns" of *God's Word* rather than "this world."

Some of Claiborne's agenda toward the poor is commendable and may be well suited to social welfare programs such as the Peace Corps or UNESCO, but it does a terrible disservice to the biblical gospel. "Biblical" needs to be underscored here because the gospel has specific content that can only be derived *from the Bible*. The gospel is what the Bible is all about. It is God's way of salvation, of which an understanding and an acceptance—by faith alone in Christ alone—are necessary for a person to receive the gift of eternal life. Since the gospel has an *eternal* objective (e.g., it is a person's only means for spending eternity with God), there is nothing of temporal significance that should be given priority over it.

The history of the social works-oriented gospel, of which so-called progressive Christians Wallis and Claiborne are only two of the latest representatives, is a testimony to what may have begun with sincere intentions or even "in the Spirit" (Galatians 3:1-3) but has degenerated into various forms of works-salvation, which constitutes "another gospel" (Galatians 1:6-9)—a gospel, of course, that can save no one. When "good works" take priority over the clear proclamation of the gospel by preaching and teaching, they become a leaven that ultimately *subverts* the gospel. Good works can only result from salvation—they are the cart that follows the horse. When the cart leads, the horse is in serious trouble.

The Apostle Paul was adamant about the necessity, power, and *priority* of the gospel

versus man's methods of "good" works: "For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God" (1 Corinthians 2:2-5).

Claiborne and Wallis are regarded in some circles as champions of alleviating the plight of the poor and as stalwarts against social injustice. We take no issue with such works as long as what is attempted is in keeping with the Word of God. Jesus said, "For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good" (Mark 14:7). And in Galatians 6:9-10, Paul tells us: "Let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith."

QUESTION: I'm concerned that my friends who are committed Bible-believing Christians seem to be smitten with Glenn Beck. Other than the problematic fact that he is a convert to Mormonism (which should raise red flags about his wisdom), many are seeing him as someone who will lead this country back to its Christian roots. Don't Mormons have a kingdom eschatology, and do you see Beck's influence as part of the "temporal delusion" you've been writing about?

RESPONSE: There is no doubt that Glenn Beck's charisma, candor, cutting humor, and profession of "faith" have contributed to his becoming an icon among conservatives and a major galvanizing force for Christians and patriots of all persuasions who are concerned about the direction and future of our nation. He appears to be well-informed on many issues of critical concern to political conservatives and Christians alike, and his forthright "fireside chat" teaching style is entertaining, educational, and persuasive.

For example, Beck warns of conditions that could lead to economic collapse in the United States and exposes the globalist, socialist agenda of "progressives" like billionaire George Soros, the "philanthropist" founder of Open Society Foundations. Beck, along with a few evangelical whistleblowers, has also exposed Obama's long-time friend and spiritual advisor, *Sojourners* founder Jim Wallis, as a leftist "Christian," who receives funds from anti-American sources including George Soros. It is therefore quite understandable why patriots and conservatives, including many Christians,

are enamored with someone whom they feel could champion their cause.

Beck's enthusiastic conversion to Mormonism over a decade ago has made him a highly visible "evangelist" for the cult founded by Joseph Smith in the early 1800s.⁴ As one writer noted, "Beck, who was raised Catholic in Washington state, has produced, with the help of Mormon Church-owned Deseret Book Company, the DVD *An Unlikely Mormon: The Conversion Story of Glenn Beck* (2008); Mormon fansites invite visitors to learn more about Beck's beliefs by clicking through to the official Web site of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints....It is likely that Beck owes his brand of Founding Father-worship to Mormonism, where reverence for the founders and the United States Constitution as divinely inspired are often-declared elements of orthodox belief. Mormon Church President Wilford Woodruff (1807–1898) declared that George Washington and the signers of the Declaration of Independence appeared to him in the Mormon Temple in St. George, Utah, in 1877, and requested that he perform Mormon temple ordinances on their behalf."⁵

Mormons espouse a "last days" view that has the "Kingdom of God" established on this earth, with its headquarters in Independence, Missouri. Latter-Day Saints' prophets declared that the U.S. Constitution would come under attack and be severely weakened, yet it will be restored by true followers of the Mormon faith. Their tenth article of faith states: "We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon the American continent...."

Brigham Young stated: "When the Constitution of the United States hangs, as it were, upon a single thread, they will have to call for the 'Mormon' Elders to save it from utter destruction; and they will step forth and do it."⁶

Mormon "Apostle" Bruce R. McConkie wrote, "With the restoration of the gospel and the setting up of the ecclesiastical Kingdom of God, the restoration of the true government of God commenced. Through this church and Kingdom, a framework has been built through which the full government of God will eventually operate.... The present ecclesiastical kingdom will be expanded into a political kingdom also, and then both civil and ecclesiastical affairs will be administered through it."⁷

Although the Mormon "prophets" saw their church as ruling through the Kingdom of God, there has been a shift of late toward ecumenism. We've seen the repackaging of the LDS church as simply another "denomination" of Christianity—and many are

buying it. Prominent evangelical scholars and theologians from Biola University and Fuller Seminary have been "dialoguing" with top LDS apologists for nearly a decade. This fact is alarming enough, but some leaders, such as Richard Land (president of "The Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission" of the Southern Baptist Convention) have even gone so far as to call Mormonism "the fourth Abrahamic religion."

More than a quarter of a century ago, in their book *The God Makers*, Ed Decker and Dave Hunt saw this political/social/religious ecumenism coming: "There is increasing evidence of a new and growing secular/religious ecumenism persuasive enough to accomplish this unprecedented and incalculably powerful coalition [of diverse groups with similar objectives]" (p. 258). Though Glenn Beck is seen to be a voice against the thunder of socialism blaring from our capital (and making incredible inroads in our left-drifting evangelical churches), his Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, on the other hand, has a foundational doctrine of socialism. Its "United Order," which is defined as "the Lord's program for eliminating the inequalities among men," is a theocratic form of socialism in which the Church owns everything and distributes its goods for the welfare of all, something that would seem to please Soros and Wallis.⁸

News Alert.....

The Washington Post, 11/29/2010: CANCUN TALKS START WITH A CALL TO THE GODS [EXCERPTS]—With United Nations climate negotiators facing an uphill battle to advance their goal of reducing emissions linked to global warming, it's no surprise that the woman steering the talks appealed to a Mayan goddess Monday.

Christiana Figueres, executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, invoked the ancient jaguar goddess Ixchel in her opening statement to delegates gathered in Cancun, Mexico, noting that Ixchel was not only goddess of the moon, but also "the goddess of reason, creativity and weaving. May she inspire you—because today, you are gathered in Cancun to weave together the elements of a solid response to climate change, using both reason and creativity as your tools."

She called for "a balanced outcome" which would marry financial and emissions commitments from industrialized countries aimed at combating climate change with "the understanding of fairness that will guide long-term mitigation efforts...."

"Excellencies, the goddess Ixchel would probably tell you that a tapestry is the result of the skilful interlacing of many threads,"

said Figueres, who hails from Costa Rica and started her greetings in Spanish before switching to English. "I am convinced that 20 years from now, we will admire the policy tapestry that you have woven together and think back fondly to Cancun and the inspiration of Ixchel."

Delegates from 193 countries are gathered in Cancun for the two-week meeting. Mexican President Felipe Calderon, a major proponent of action on climate change, attended the opening. Two weeks from now, we'll have a sense of whether Ixchel—and the delegates—were listening to Figueres's appeal.

[TBC: We are also curious to know how the evangelical Green and Environmental movements will handle Figueres's appeal to her pagan goddess.]

The Quarterly Journal, January-March 2011 [EXCERPTS]: For several decades the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been on a mission. Its objective has been to shed the label of being a cult and to appear as just another Christian church down the street.

Last summer, a new television ad campaign was launched in nine test market cities which presents Mormons as regular folks. Billboards along Interstate highways and bus stop placards in the metropolitan test markets are also part of the massive blitz.

Scott Swofford, the director of mormon.org, says, "We hope the spots portray Mormons as diverse people who are united in their belief in Jesus Christ....We hope [Americans] see that Mormons are friendly, charitable, giving to others." Swofford said after the advertisements began airing, their Website experienced "huge traffic jumps."

[TBC: Truth is being trumped by "good works"—which have become the ecumenical building blocks for the works salvation, one-world religion of the Antichrist.]

Endnotes.....

1. "On Evangelicals and Interfaith Cooperation," an Interview with Tony Campolo by Shane Claiborne, *Cross Currents*, Spring 2005, No. 1.

2. Ibid.

3. Joan Harris, *The Sojourners File*, Accuracy in the Media, New Century Foundation, 1983.

4. See "Mormon Fiction," *TBC*, www.thebereanall.org/node/2594, and *The God Makers*, offered in the resource pages.

5. <http://www.religiondispatches.org/archive/politics/1885/>.

6. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 2, 317.

7. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 338.

8. *Documentary History of the Church*. Vol 7, 412-13.

Speaking Schedule

Feb 6 (TA)	Berean Bible Fellowship Greencastle, PA (717) 597-8127
Feb 7-8 (TA)	Fellowship of Bible Churches Men's Retreat Mercersburg, PA (717) 597-8127
Apr 8-9 (TA)	Discerning the Times Bible Conf. Saskatoon, SK (306) 384-9611

Letters

TBC,

I am a regular subscriber to TBC and have read a number of Dave's books. I am almost finished reading *Cosmos*, *Creator*, and *Human Destiny*. What a remarkable book! What research! As a published author, I was contemplating writing a book that would show the futility and ignorance of evolution and "big bang" arguments. However, after seeing Dave's magnificent treatment of these subjects, I shall direct my efforts elsewhere. I would like to know whether your book has come to the attention of today's atheists. If so, they surely would be unable to answer its charges. I am saddened that, because of health problems, Dave is unable to continue his radio broadcasts. I used to listen to them regularly. May the Lord comfort Dave and sustain him in his enterprises. AB (email)

Dear Dave Hunt and Staff,

I so appreciate the way you handle contributions—[it's] not the way many Christian ministries do today. You never offer a book or CD as a motivation for a gift. You do offer books and CDs if someone wants to order, but never in conjunction with a gift. I want to commend you for this. As a Berean, I see no example of Paul, Peter, or any of the apostles trying to motivate giving by offering a gift.

[W]orldly marketing skills [are] so accepted in the church today.... Thank you for being a ministry of integrity and earnestly contending for the faith. God will continue to keep TBC.... NR (VA)

Dear Dave,

I can hardly contain the continuous joy, even in prison. Not that I don't have some periods of loneliness and despair, but these are much shorter. I remember back to my teen years, and my 20s, I had partial weeks of despair and unhappiness. Drug abuse and alcoholic addiction robbed me of peace. My mom would preach Jesus [but] my brother and I would be disrespectful to her. She passed into glory in 1996. I miss her but her

prayers for me to be saved are answered.... MB (ID, prisoner)

Hello Dave.

Trust you are well. We've been praying for you since we heard of your recent health challenges. This email is to thank you for giving us a copy of your book *What Love Is This?* about 5 years ago. We should have read it sooner. Turns out we have been attending a church that is pastored by a Calvinist. We knew something wasn't quite right through the years, but when our pastor recently told me I should not teach...that man has a free will, or has a choice regarding salvation (which I've been teaching in our missionary work for over a quarter of a century), I knew I needed to find out what was going on. Your book hit the nail on the head. I did not understand what Calvinism was, and now I know to stay away from it. I resigned from being Chairman of the Board and have left the church. As we are missionaries supported by the church, it is a rather awkward situation that we appreciate your prayers on. We've endeavored to leave quietly, but I am upset that this teaching is continuing. We were at the church before the pastor. I wish I had asked him if he were a Calvinist when he applied to serve. But I didn't know what that was! Thank you for speaking the truth in love. We continue to appreciate your ministry of truth in these last days. [T]he Lord is good no matter what, and continues to bless the precious work.... JC (OR)

Dear Dave,

A friend of mine on Facebook posted a link to your *A Woman Rides the Beast* video. I had some time today to watch and listen and just wanted to send you a note of encouragement for your ministry. Thanks for exposing the Roman Catholic Church for what it is and helping spread the gospel from an end-times perspective. JC (email)

Dear Mr. Dave Hunt,

I'm from Romania [and] I have found on YouTube some of your conferences and I enjoyed them very much.... I have learned many interesting things from you and I would like to read your books but I haven't found them translated into Romanian. Anyway, I wrote you to thank you and also to congratulate you for your work and to tell you that I felt happiness in my heart each time I heard or read something from your researches.

I think that we all talk or write from the bottom of our hearts. As for you, I think your heart is very warm as God likes! I hope my bad English will not make my message hard to understand! God bless you! PD (Romania)

Dear Dave,

Thanks again for all the things you've shared over the years. You have been a blessing to us. My wife and I have reached the age when our strength is beginning to fade. Nevertheless, we praise the Lord for His faithfulness and look forward to being with Him. I've always wanted to be in the group that meets Him in the air. May He come soon, Rv 22:20-21! KL (MS)

TBC,

Thanks for your presentation of the "Unlikely Hero" by Paul Wilkinson. As I read and reread this article several times convictions arrived in my heart: A pastor who gave all (his life), a pastor who believed in the Bible, a pastor who had a good life to live—a daughter, [an opportunity to] return overseas to minister. But he had a higher calling from God, to spread the message about the Cross.

I searched my heart and only one answer came to me. My life has not been devoted 100 percent to God and His ways. Christ paid the ultimate price for my sins. Yes, I failed God. I have asked for forgiveness for my old life and by grace alone He has forgiven my ways. John Harper may not know how his story was used by God in my life.... RD (TX)

TBC Notes

Are You a Man of God?

I know quite a few Christian men who wouldn't think twice about picking up a baseball bat to protect their families from a dangerous intruder who had broken into their homes. Sadly, not too many of them are willing to pick up the Sword of the Spirit to protect their wives and children.

Gentlemen, how about becoming the spiritual leaders of your households, if you have been remiss in that responsibility? There is nothing you can do for your wives and children that will bless them more than your becoming true men of God. Family prayer and the study of God's Word with one another are essential. With God's help, make these your discipline this year and the years ahead until Jesus comes!

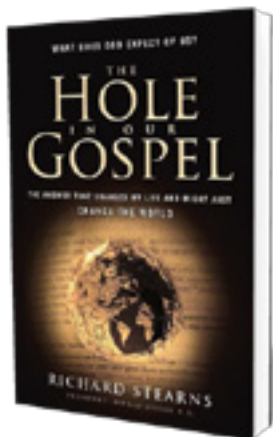
T.A. McMAHON

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A REVIEW OF *THE HOLE IN OUR GOSPEL*

BY RICHARD STEARNS, PRES. OF WORLD VISION U.S. — REVIEWED BY RON MERRYMAN



RICHARD STEARNS WRITES, “[God] is weary of seeing a shiny veneer of faith but no depth of commitment. *That is the hole in our gospel*, and until we fill it, ours is an empty religion, one that God despises” (pp. 184-85). To fill the hole, Stearns advises the church (i.e., Christians and local churches) to make the alleviation of social ills (poverty, hunger, squalor, disease, environmental issues, and injustice) a major priority. In fact, without such a major priority, there is a void, a hole, an inadequacy in the gospel that Christians propagate. Stearns’s “Good News” to the poor

focuses on handouts—not on the gospel of God’s saving grace in Christ.

In short, Stearns advocates that American Christians (“Christians” in the broad sense) should aggressively support an international social welfare system that would be somewhat of a rival or supplement to the United Nations UNESCO. Obviously, World Vision has such a system already in place, with 40,000 workers worldwide but lacking the funds to fill the hole.

To criticize any organization/movement that compassionately seeks to eliminate poverty, feed the poor, and correct the world’s injustices invites censure upon the critic—and double the censure when the organization claims Christian motivation.

This book is my only source of information on its author Richard Stearns, though I am quite familiar with the beginning, growth, and mission of World Vision. Richard Stearns, undoubtedly a brother in Christ, is no doubt a compassionate person who is highly motivated to alleviate all types of suffering in this world. But in seeking to encourage Christians to be more involved in his cause(s), the book that he has penned is based on false principles that he supports largely from misleading applications of Scripture. I have major concerns with Stearns’s premises and conclusions. Two of these follow:

1. First and foremost is the perverted, non-scriptural gospel advocated herein. To Stearns and World Vision (as with Mother Teresa), the gospel is so broad that it has no core message. In fact, the gospel message is swallowed up as if by a black hole in space and hence is lost and ignored. The title leads most evangelical Christians to look for a hole in their personal understanding of the gospel; instead Stearns submerges that message in the depths of social injustices, poverty, disease, etc., until its essential essence is totally lost.

In contrast, the Scriptures make the core message the first priority of the gospel! In 1 Corinthians 15:1-4, Paul

succinctly explains the gospel that he and the apostles preached. (Note: *it was a message of top priority to be preached, i.e., verbally communicated.*)

1 Corinthians 15:1-2a: *Moreover, brethren, I declare to you the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received and in which you stand...by which also you are saved....*

Note the order here. Paul says:

- A. “I declare to you the gospel;” (i.e., “I am reminding you verbally of what the gospel is”).
- B. “I preached (this) to you;” (“I am reminding you that on my initial visit to Corinth, I announced this message”).
- C. “Which also you received, and in which you stand, and by which you are saved.”

My point simply is this: the gospel according to God’s Word is an objective message to be delivered to human beings because only therein can they be saved from their sins. *Any organization that omits, subverts, or adds to the core message of the gospel, should not be promoting itself as “Christian.”* Stearns (World Vision) would have us replace the objective message with humanitarian efforts.

2. Another problem is the misuse and misapplication of Scripture throughout. Well-taught believers should immediately recognize these, but new and untaught Christians are most likely to buy into World Vision’s program (especially in view of the multiple endorsements that include such famous names as Madeline Albright, Luci Swindoll, Kay Warren, Bill Hybels, Charles Colson, Tony Campolo, Leighton Ford, et al.).

Note the distortions and misuses of God’s Word in the following quotes from the book:

(p. 15) “... the word *gospel* literally means glad tidings or good news. It is shorthand, meant to convey the coming of the kingdom of God through the Messiah.... This new kingdom, characteristics of which were captured in the Beatitudes, *would turn the existing world order upside down*” (emphasis mine).

(p. 20) “The gospel... means much more than the personal salvation of individuals. It means *social revolution*.”

(p. 22) “This *whole gospel* is truly good news for the poor, and it is the foundation for a social revolution that has the power to change the world. And if this was Jesus’ mission, it is also the mission of all who claim to follow Him.”

Thus Stearns sees the gospel as *whole*, or entire, only when it includes social benevolence. Christians who follow this logic could do more social good by becoming lawyers and politicians than by preaching the core message of the gospel.

I believe that Stearns is guilty of the following:

- He has a shallow and superficial understanding of the gospel of the Kingdom, which was the initial message to Israel by John the Baptist, then followed up by Jesus. Israel rejected its King and, in so doing, His kingdom. All Kingdom promises and blessings are now in abeyance *until the King returns at His second advent*.
- Stearns also identifies Kingdom responsibilities with the church. The church is not the Kingdom and the Kingdom is not the church (although Roman Catholics would disagree, as might Richard Stearns).
- He appeals to naïve idealism and utopian speculation: In the first 11 pages, at least 12 times the author refers to “believers changing or transforming the world.” According to Stearns, not only *can* they do it, “they are called to do so...as did the 12 Apostles.” On p. 311, he asks, “What have you done to change the world?”

In this case, Stearns is guilty of false advertising. Not only did the Twelve *not* change the world, but each of them died mercilessly at its hands. Moreover, the Scriptures teach that even the core message of the gospel will not change the *world*—only individuals in the world. It is the judgment of God and the return of Messiah, prophesied in both the Old and New Testaments, that alone will change this world.

Besides that, Christians are not called by God to change the world! They are called to give witness (verbal testimony) to an accurate gospel.

The root meaning of *ekklesia*, from which we derive our word *church*, is “called-out ones.” “Called-out” from what? Called out from the world of human beings. God sees believers of this age as persons separated and unique to His Son. They are indeed the Redeemed. They cannot and will not change the *world*.

- Stearns also lays a guilt trip on local churches because they do not have the same passion for social benevolence as does World Vision.

Conclusions

On page 336, the author names four objectives of World Vision. *Please note that not one word of the gospel preached by Paul and the Apostles is included.* Instead, World Vision describes itself as “...a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice.”

Stearns preaches that by living lovingly, kindly, and generously, we will convert people (p. 18). The Apostle Paul would challenge this, perhaps commending him for these niceties but certainly rebuking him for not proclaiming *openly* the objective message.

That World Vision is dedicated to social amelioration is commendable, but for it to claim to be Christian and yet shun the only true gospel message is strange and even deplorable.

World Vision follows in the steps of other well-meaning social-humanitarian organizations like the Red Cross, the YMCA, YWCA, and the Salvation Army. Each of these started with a Christian message that, over time, was diluted and eventually discarded under layer upon layer of social helps.

It seems that no one in their right mind should criticize an organization that seeks to feed starving children of the world and eliminate poverty, but to include this—in fact to insist upon it—as an integral part of *the gospel* is simply not biblical.

World Vision is in reality an international social-welfare program. Stearns sees anything short of this as short on the gospel. Therefore, he sees the role of the church as that of an international distribution center to evenly dole out security (financial and physical). Sound familiar? Atheistic socialism desires the same end.

Christians who understand God’s Word should find it difficult to support the goals of this book.

* * * * *

CAN YOU FIND THE GOSPEL IN THEIR VISION?

About World Vision (TAKEN FROM THE BOOK)

WHO WE ARE:

World Vision is a Christian humanitarian organization dedicated to working with children, families, and their communities worldwide to reach their full potential by tackling the causes of poverty and injustice.

WHOM WE SERVE:

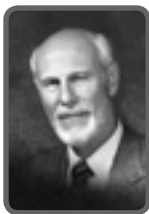
Motivated by our faith in Jesus Christ, World Vision serves alongside the poor and oppressed as a demonstration of God’s unconditional love for all people.

WHY WE SERVE:

Our passion is for the world’s poorest children whose suffering breaks the heart of God. To help secure a better future for each child, we focus on lasting, community-based transformation. We partner with individuals and communities, empowering them to develop sustainable access to clean water, food supplies, health care, education, and economic opportunities.

HOW WE SERVE:

Since 1950, World Vision has helped millions of children and families by providing emergency assistance to those affected by natural disasters and civil conflict, developing long-term solutions within communities to alleviate poverty and advocating for justice on behalf of the poor.



ECUMENISM *and* THE COMING ***NEW WORLD ORDER***

by **Dave Hunt** ~ Excerpt from *Global Peace and the Rise of Antichrist*



This article contains excerpts from Chapter 12 of Dave Hunt's 1990 best-seller, Global Peace and the Rise of Antichrist. Though written more than two decades ago, readers will find much material pertaining to the headlines of today—and tomorrow.

MOST OF THE WARS that have been fought down through history were religious wars. Then, with World Wars One and Two, religion was no longer a factor. The world seemed to have entered a new era where science, not religion, would mediate man's destiny. If peace were to be established, it would be purely on the basis of political, economic, and military arrangements. Or so it seemed.

In recent years, however, the importance of religion in relation to global peace has become increasingly clear. The strong resurgence of Islamic fundamentalism has confronted the world once again with the specter of "Holy War" fueled by fanatical convictions that cannot be swayed by reason and are impervious to military, economic, or political pressures. It is now apparent that the need for peace among the world's religions is as great as the need for peace among the world's nations, and that the latter cannot be achieved without the former. Yet the prospect for bringing peace between warring religious factions seems dim at best. (Indeed, it will happen—but in a way that may surprise everyone.)

Once again, we can glean at least a partial understanding of things to come by turning to history. It was the religious unity achieved under Constantine and his aides, the popes, an office which he created, that ushered in a new era for the Roman Empire. As we have already seen, a similar unity must be realized again if that Empire is to be revived as prophesied.

It was Constantine who called the Council of Nicaea, which is known as the first ecumenical council. Christians look back to it gratefully because it kept out of the church the serious heresy of Arianism, which denied the deity of Christ. Yet Constantine could not have cared less about the theological issues. His concern was getting the bishops to agree—never mind the substance. The following excerpt of a letter from Constantine shows that the whole purpose of his religious policy was to promote political unity:

I had proposed to lead back to a single form the ideas which all people conceive of the Deity; for I feel strongly that if I could induce men to unite on that subject, the conduct of public affairs would be considerably eased. But alas! I hear that there are more disputes among you

The cause seems to be quite trifling . . . a question in itself entirely devoid of importance; and you, Arius, if you had such thoughts, should have kept silence.

Though Constantine considered the question of Christ's deity meaningless, he realized that continued disagreement on that issue would have disastrous political consequences for the Empire. Such

a dispute could not be allowed to continue. Will Durant explains Constantine's dilemma and the solution he imposed upon the church:

If division were permitted on this question, chaos of belief might destroy the unity and authority of the Church, and therefore its value as an aide to the state.

The new Emperor who will rule the revived Roman Empire, the Antichrist, is not yet in position to accomplish the essential Constantinian strategy. In his absence, and in preparation for him, an ecumenical union of all religions is being aggressively pursued by [world leaders]. In Geneva, Switzerland, addressing the World Council of Churches (representing 400 million Protestants worldwide), Pope John Paul II declared:

From the beginning of my ministry as bishop of Rome, I have insisted that the engagement of the Catholic Church in the ecumenical movement is irreversible.

ious tolerance.

Indeed, the “engagement of the Catholic Church in the ecumenical movement” was significant even before the present Pope took office. This fact may seem to be in conflict with its claims of being the only true and infallible church. However, while damning ex-Catholics and Protestants, Catholicism allows for those outside its fold to be saved if ignorant of its claims and sacraments and if they are sincere in their own faith. Thus Mother Teresa and those who work with her never attempt to convert to Christ the dying people for whom they care. Instead, Mother Teresa declares:

If in coming face to face with God we accept Him in our lives, then we . . . become a better Hindu, a better Muslim, a better Catholic, a better whatever we are. What God is in your mind you must accept.

The fact that many people worship false gods, which the Bible condemns, never enters the equation. Mother Teresa proclaims the counterfeit “gospel” that Protestants endorse by joining Catholics in “evangelizing the world.” Examples of such [spiritual] harlotry among Catholic leaders are legion.

A month before his death, celebrated Catholic monk Thomas Merton told an ecumenical gathering of representatives from numerous religions in Calcutta: "My dear brothers, we are already one. But we imagine that we are not. And what we have to discover is our original unity." Merton was echoing not only Mother Teresa but what many other Catholics, including popes, have long been saying. For example, three Catholic priests state in their book, which bears the official Imprimatur:

We should not hesitate to take the fruit of the age-old Wisdom of the East and “capture” it for Christ. . . .

Many Christians who take their prayer life seriously have been greatly helped by Yoga, Zen, TM, and similar practices.

“World evangelization” with Suenens, who promoted a false gospel? For example, the Cardinal had hosted and given the

Freemasonry secretly fosters
ecumenism and quietly prepares
its members to accept and be part
of the coming new world order.

(Full text and notes are in the book. See resource pages to order.)

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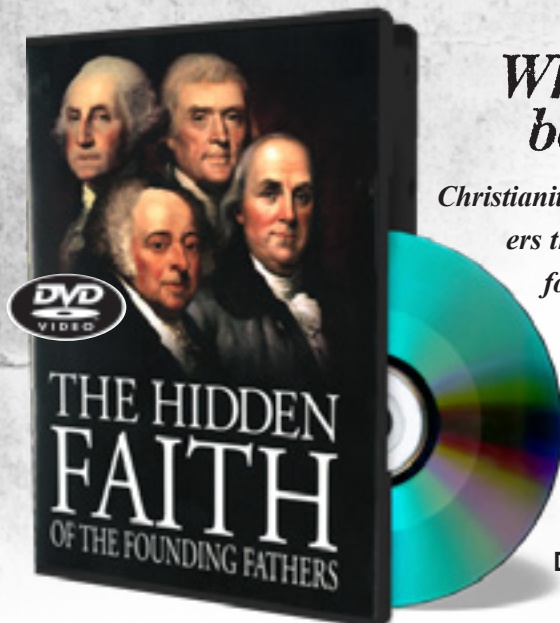
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