

THE COMING NEW WORLD RELIGION

by Dave Hunt ~ Exclusive Chapter Excerpt on Page 10!



**The Berean
Call**

FEBRUARY 2011

THE APOSTASY AND ITS ANTIDOTE

by T. A. McMahon

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or because of the weaknesses of their flesh, have contributed to apostasy. A major factor related to the apostasy’s subversion of the evangelical church is that fewer and fewer professing Christians really believe in the sufficiency of the Word of God for ‘all things that pertain to life and godliness’ (2 Peter 1:3). Instead, evangelicals are turning more and more to the ungodly wisdom of the world.”

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Seven years after publication of the controversial ground-breaking bestseller *The Seduction of Christianity* in 1985, its authors, Dave Hunt and T. A. McMahon, joined forces on another front. They began a ministry for the purpose of encouraging spiritual discernment among those who regarded themselves not just as “evangelicals” but as *biblical* Christians. The primary vehicle for this endeavor was through the publication of the newsletter *The Berean Call*. The ministry and newsletter name is taken from Acts 17:11, in which the writer of Acts commended those in the synagogue of the Greek city of Berea for being more fair minded than those in Thessalonica—because not only were they eager to receive the Word, the *Bereans* also checked it against what the Apostle Paul taught them in order to see if his teaching was according to the Scriptures. Through the publishing and multimedia efforts of The Berean Call (TBC) believers are exhorted to get back into the Word of God instead of being “carried about by every wind of doctrine,” and are equipped with materials to help them walk in the truth. TBC’s stated mission is to:

ALERT believers in Christ to unbiblical teachings and practices impacting the church

EXHORT believers to give greater heed to biblical discernment and truth regarding teachings and practices being currently promoted in the church

SUPPLY believers with teaching, information, and materials that will encourage the love of God’s truth, and assist in the development of biblical discernment

MOBILIZE believers in Christ to action in obedience to the scriptural command to “earnestly contend for the faith” (Jude 3)

IMPACT the church of Jesus Christ with the necessity for trusting the Scriptures as the only rule for faith, practice, and a life pleasing to God

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THE BEREAN CALL

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

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Apostasy and Its Antidote

T. A. McMahon

Apostasy is the desertion of one's faith or religion. It is the *forsaking* of the belief to which one had previously adhered. In Acts 21:21 the Apostle Paul is falsely accused of encouraging the Jews to "forsake" the teachings of Moses. The Greek term that is translated "forsake" is *apostasia*. Apostasy, however, rarely comes about abruptly. It is more often a process, and some may contribute to it without becoming complete apostates.

It began in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve were in a perfect environment and in perfect fellowship with God. They submitted to God in all things—until, that is, Eve got into a dialog with God's adversary, Satan, the first apostate (see also Isaiah 14:12-14). He had her reconsidering God's Word by questioning what He commanded: "Yea, hath God said. . . ?" The Serpent's objective was to get her to "forsake" the commandment God had given to Adam: they were not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17; 3:1). Eve succumbed to the seduction, Adam joined his spouse in rebellion against God, and the seeds of apostasy took root.

The seed of apostasy sprouted in Cain, who forsook God's instructions for bringing an acceptable sacrifice and instituted his own type of offering. Apostasy increased with the building of the city and the tower of Babel. It unified people to the degree that God had to "confound the language of all the earth: and from thence did the LORD scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth" (Genesis 11:9). Later, among the Israelites, Aaron participated in apostasy when he assisted them in their idolatrous worship of the golden calf (Exodus 32).

Throughout the history of the northern and southern kingdoms of Israel many of the kings became apostate. King Ahaz of Judah was a prime example. William MacDonald suggests in his commentary that the prefix of Ahaz's name, "Jeho," which stands for the name of Jehovah God in "Jehovah," may have been omitted by the Holy Spirit "because Ahaz was an apostate" (*Believer's Bible Commentary*, pp. 409-10). He endorsed idolatry in Judah

and had his son pass through the fire in a ritual to the god Molech. Submitting to Ahaz's instructions, Urijah the priest (who is nevertheless commended in Isaiah) participated in the apostasy by carrying out the king's command to make a copy of a pagan altar and set it up for divination purposes. Ahaz then had the altar incorporated in the Temple worship in Jerusalem.

BLESSED IS THE MAN THAT WALKETH NOT IN THE COUNSEL OF THE UNGODLY, NOR STANDETH IN THE WAY OF SINNERS, NOR SITTETH IN THE SEAT OF THE SCORNFUL. BUT HIS DELIGHT IS IN THE LAW OF THE LORD; AND IN HIS LAW DOTHE HE MEDITATE DAY AND NIGHT. AND HE SHALL BE LIKE A TREE PLANTED BY THE RIVERS OF WATER, THAT BRINGETH FORTH HIS FRUIT IN HIS SEASON; HIS LEAF ALSO SHALL NOT WITHER; AND WHATSOEVER HE DOETH SHALL PROSPER.

— Psalm 1:1-3

Apostasy has been a part of every generation since the fall of mankind. Scripture tells us that it will culminate in the last days when the Antichrist is revealed. His religion will be an apostate Christianity—the total antithesis of biblical Christianity. It will accommodate all religions. Although the apostasy will not be fully realized until after the Rapture of the church, its development has been ongoing from the time when sin entered the human race. Furthermore, down through biblical and church history, many true believers, either in ignorance or because of the weaknesses of their flesh, have contributed to apostasy. Solomon seems to exemplify this. As a believer, he was used of the Holy Spirit to build the Temple and to write much of the Book of Proverbs, Song of Songs, and Ecclesiastes, yet he also married many pagan women, which was contrary to Scripture. These women turned him to idolatry and he built temples for them to worship their false gods.

In church history, men such as Augustine and Martin Luther are regarded as true believers, especially by those who hold to Reformation theology. Yet Augustine conceptualized many of the dogmas that

are foundational to the false theology and false gospel of the largest apostate institution in Christendom—the Roman Catholic Church. Luther is to be commended for his heroic stance against the Church of Rome but certainly not for his replacement theology and his anti-biblical hatred of the Jews. Later church history is replete with professing and confessing Christians who (knowingly or unknowingly) participated in the development of apostasy.

In summary of the above, apostasy began with the sin of mankind, will greatly increase in the Last Days, and will be complete when the Antichrist rules this earth during the seven-year Great Tribulation period. Therefore, as the world moves toward the apostasy's total fulfillment, *all Christians* will be vulnerable to its destructive seduction.

What is the antidote? How can we keep ourselves from succumbing to those things that would draw us into the apostasy? Let's start with the prevention program presented in Psalm 1: *Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*

The psalmist gives instructions for a spiritually fruitful life in the Lord. These instructions are centered upon our being strengthened by God's Word and begin with the admonition that we are not to follow the counsel of the ungodly. This doesn't mean avoiding counsel only from those who are obviously evil but rather rejecting *any counsel* that does not conform to what is taught in the Word of God. Twice we find in Proverbs (14:12; 16:25) that there is a way that seems right to people but it is not *God's* way. If it is not God's way, it leads to the ways of death, which means a separation from God's truth that will ultimately lead to destruction in one's life.

A major factor related to the apostasy's subversion of the evangelical church is that fewer and fewer professing Christians really believe in the *sufficiency* of the Word of God for "all things that pertain to life and godliness" (2 Peter 1:3). Instead, evangelicals are turning more and more to the ungodly wisdom of the world. The evangelical church is one of the leading referral entities for psychological counseling services. The

shepherds are turning their flocks over to professional psychotherapists, who are, in a sense, the biblical equivalent of hirelings. In addition, they are attempting to increase the numbers of their flocks by turning to marketing techniques, which the Church Growth Movement gleaned from the world. These have proven deadly to biblical faith.

Scripture's warning against walking in the counsel of the ungodly, standing in the path of sinners, or sitting in the seat of the scornful reveals a progression, which is actually a *regression*—from waywardness to wickedness. By listening to and heeding what the lost—and even the enemies of the faith—have to say, one settles in comfortably with *their* perspective and eventually practices what they preach. The tragic result is that the heart becomes hardened to God's truth, and one's attitude turns to scorn when confronted with it.

The psalmist then shifts from what believers need to avoid to the primary preventative measure they need to incorporate into their lives: "...his delight is in the law of the LORD [meaning the Law, the Prophets, and the Testimony], and in his law [the Scriptures] doth he meditate day and night" (Psalm 1:2).

The main reason that apostasy is spreading so quickly among evangelicals today is that many are functionally biblically illiterate. This means that although nearly all "Christians" have Bibles and are able to read, too few *do* read them, and those who do don't make it a practice that guides their lives. This is one of the reasons for a shocking response revealed by the Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life. It published a survey of more than 35,000 American adults and found that 57 percent of those who claim to be evangelicals believe that "many religions can lead to eternal life."

Obviously, they were not aware of nor did they take seriously the verses in which Jesus declared, "*I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me*" (John 14:6) and Peter exclaimed, "*Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved*" (Acts 4:12). Scripture tells us that such a condition will be pervasive in the last days: "*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*" (2 Timothy 4:3-4).

In our day, biblical absolutes and an exclusive way of salvation are viewed by the world as the epitome of intolerance, an accusation that many evangelicals can't handle—especially those who don't know the Bible well enough to give a biblical response. Meditating upon the Word continually is the obvious solution to rectifying such a condition. Furthermore, there is both encouragement and help from our Lord. Consider His prayer to the Father for believers: "*Sanctify them through thy truth: thy Word is truth*" (John 17:17). Jesus wants us sanctified, or set apart, as those who, regardless of what the world thinks and says, are confident that His Word is the truth. He said, "*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). Part of that freedom is a confidence to "*earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints*" (Jude 1:3). One cannot "contend" for something of which he is mostly ignorant. Being able to defend one's faith can only come about through a disciplined study of the Scriptures.

In the Book of Proverbs we're told, "*Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding*" (Proverbs 4:7). God has made His wisdom available to us in His Word. Furthermore, to all who have put their faith in Jesus, He has given the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, to help us to "get understanding." Knowing the Holy Scriptures is God's prevention program against apostasy, and it is available to all who seek after Him. That is the biblical criteria for getting wisdom and understanding. The Apostle Paul wrote to Timothy, "*From a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus*" (2 Timothy 3:15). Clearly, it is not a matter of one's intellectual ability or education but rather one's desire to know God's truth and to diligently pursue it. The Lord's choice of uneducated fishermen as apostles to be the primary messengers of His Word—rather than those highly educated within the religious establishment—should speak volumes to anyone who thinks he doesn't qualify.

The believer who meditates continually on God's Word will find that his efforts will be both preventive against apostasy and for the strengthening of his faith. Furthermore, it is the basis for being spiritually fruitful: "*He shall be like a tree planted by the*

rivers of water; that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psalm 1:3). It is also the means for equipping the believer for the spiritual war that is now raging.

The crux of the spiritual battle is over the Word of God. The adversary's strategy is to discredit the Scriptures in every way and by every means possible. As we noted, it began in the Garden initially by the questioning of God's Word, followed immediately by the denial of its truth (Genesis 3:4-5). Those who do not recognize that they are in such a battle may have already been captured by the lies of the Adversary. The Apostle Paul wrote that we are not to be ignorant of his devices (2 Corinthians 2:11) and used military metaphors for more than a literary device; he underscored the reality of the spiritual warfare taking place and sets up the believer's defense:

Wherefore take unto you the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. (Ephesians 6:13-17)

Our fight is the good fight of faith, remembering that our weapons are not carnal but spiritual (2 Corinthians 10:4). It is "warfare" over the truth, with the goal of being "able to withstand in the evil day." Our victory is simply to *stand* for God's Word.

As the battle intensifies, which Scripture indicates it will prior to the Lord's coming for His saints, we need to be "*praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints*" (Ephesians 6:18). We need to circle the wagons with other believers for fellowship and spiritual protection, for counsel, for encouragement, for correction, for comfort, and for ministry to one another. If such things become our practice while we wait upon the Lord, even though the Apostasy dries up the spiritual environment around us, we shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that brings forth its fruit in its season, whose leaf also shall not wither; and whatever we do shall prosper in the Lord. TBC

Quotable

If we could only find some means of curing everybody of disease, of feeding them and putting them on a good social basis, what a marvelous thing it would be. That is the way we are being told that the kingdom of God is to be established on this earth. "We do not need any more of this talk about the Atonement, and the shedding of blood; what is needed today is to spend ourselves for others." That is the lure of the wrong road to the kingdom, and we cannot keep out of it if we forget to watch and pray. "Watch with Me," said Jesus; "Mine is the only road to the kingdom."

Oswald Chambers

Q&A

QUESTION: I've been a Christian (or so I thought) for over 33 years. By "Christian," I mean someone who rests in the blood of Christ, who trusts in the sacrifice of Christ—and that alone—for salvation. The problem is that over the last few weeks, while researching the ECM [Emerging Church Movement] and Purpose Driven movement on various apologetics websites—whether they be of an Arminian or Calvinist bent (including TBC)—sometimes I can't help coming away wondering if Christians are allowed to do anything recreational without it being a sin—a lapse of devotion. I don't mean things that are [obviously] sinful like getting drunk or fornicating. I mean things like having a hobby, participating in sports, appreciating art, etc. From what I infer from articles on the sites I've checked and from many commentaries and sermons, a Christian can't do much else but pray, study the Bible, and "witness." Indeed, a truly devoted Christian supposedly wouldn't want to do anything else, or so these people seem to be saying. (Sleeping and eating seem to be ok, but just barely.) Such a requirement sounds like legalistic bondage to me. Isn't that what asceticism is all about?

RESPONSE: According to the Scriptures, if you have indeed trusted "in the sacrifice of Christ—and that alone—for salvation," you are a true Christian. Furthermore, we don't know what websites you are researching so we can't know what they are saying. We can only guess at what you may be applying to us as well. TBC is neither Arminian nor Calvinist. Our "bent" is simply to be biblical, and we hope that we

are pointing our readers to the Scriptures.

The Bible declares that believers have been "called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh" (Galatians 5:13). It also says that whatsoever is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:23). Our understanding of these verses and others is that we are free to have a hobby, participate in sports, appreciate art, etc., as long as our involvement is consistent with God's Word and therefore with His pleasure and glory. "The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38).

For the true believer, there is no dichotomy between the secular and the sacred. Whether alone or with others, he or she may both glorify God in meditations of the heart and still be ready for "reasonable service" as the Spirit leads and provides opportunity "to give an answer to every man [woman, girl, and boy] that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you" (1 Peter 3:15). The key is that we must first "sanctify the Lord God in [our] heart" and "be ready always."

It seems that your question wrestles with the judgments often leveled against the Emerging Church and Seeker-Sensitive movements, which often focus on lifestyle choices, personalities, and preferences rather than "non-negotiable" doctrines of the gospel. Unfortunately, some who rightly take issue and sound the alarm at the rise of the apostate church do not always exhibit grace nor follow the biblical admonition, "The servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all...apt to teach, patient, in meekness instructing those that oppose themselves; if God peradventure will give them repentance to the acknowledging of the truth" (2 Timothy 2:24-25). Paul gave a similar exhortation to Titus, "Avoid foolish questions...and contentions, and strivings about the law; for they are unprofitable and vain" (Titus 3:9).

There are clear, God-given guidelines that govern the behavior of Christians—especially those in leadership, who will incur a stricter judgment (James 3:1). However, what many "discerning" individuals fail to realize is that believers are also given great grace and liberty with regard to personal preferences in the practice of their faith. The Apostle Paul made this clear: "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient [profitable]: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not" (1 Corinthians 10:23).

Regarding food and drink, Paul praises God, who "giveth us richly all things to enjoy" (1 Timothy 6:17b) and elsewhere affirms, "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof" (1 Corinthians 10:26). At the same

time, "stronger" believers (those able to exercise liberty with restraint) are exhorted to not cause the "weaker" to stumble: "If thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou charitably. It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor any thing whereby thy brother stumbleth, or is offended, or is made weak" (Romans 14:15, 21). In other words, a believer should govern himself according to his conscience and convictions, which may permit certain liberty that should not be cause for shame or guilt: "Hast thou faith? have it to thyself before God. Happy is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth" (Romans 14:22); "For if I by grace be a partaker, why am I evil spoken of for that for which I give thanks?" (1 Corinthians 10:30).

Clearly there are limits: "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come on you unawares" (Luke 21:34). In addition, there are stricter requirements for those in positions of authority within the church (1 Timothy 3, Titus 1). Paul sums up the bottom line well, and adds an important exhortation against selfishness: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God...not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved" (1 Corinthians 10:31-33).

Unfortunately, as many well-intentioned critics point out, leaders of the Emerging Church Movement often model or encourage the abuse of God's grace when it comes to Christian liberty. Many followers—and leaders—of the ECM appear to take pride in being "Christian rebels," thus violating God-given principles in word and deed.

May we point out that your take on Christian activities being limited to prayer, Bible study, and witnessing makes it sound as though you think these are joyless endeavors. In reality, no hobby or other activity can come close to producing the joy that results from prayer, Bible study, and sharing the love of Christ with others. Of course, these are no joy to the flesh, which continually opts for things that appeal to one's fleshly nature. You may want to check your own heart in this matter.

In conclusion, there is indeed a biblical balance that must be prayerfully and scripturally sought by the believer. Neither legalism nor the abuse of liberty is pleasing to God. Furthermore, contrary to the conflicting extremes that you encountered in your research, sleeping and eating are more than "barely okay" to our Creator, who knows exactly what we need: "It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late,

to eat the bread of sorrows: for so he gives his beloved sleep" (Ps 127:2).

QUESTION: I need an answer for the following question: On September 26 my pastor gave a message titled "The Power to Forgive." I detected a strong reference that as a Christian I had the power to forgive those who had sinned directly against God (i.e., blasphemy). I got the CD of the message and listened to it twice, which verified my concern.

His message was based on several scriptures: Matthew 9:2-8, Mark 2:1-22 and Luke 5:17-26....My main problem, however, was John 20:21-23: "And Jesus said unto them again, "Peace to you! As the father has sent me, I also send you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive ye the Holy Ghost: Whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained."

Here are some statements that my pastor made: "The purpose of us having the Holy Spirit is to forgive sin. We have been given the authority to say: 'I wipe that from the record.' [And] Jesus said: You are my representation. You have my spirit to forgive sins." The problem is that while being completely convinced that we have the power and the Christian obligation to forgive *one another's* sin towards each other, (Colossians 3:12-15), does that power include the ability to forgiving sins against the Holy Spirit? This is one of the problems that I have had concerning the priest in the Catholic Church.

RESPONSE: We share your concerns. In Mark 2:1-22 and the parallel accounts in Luke and Matthew, the Scriptures tells us: "Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?" (Mark 2:7).

This is a rhetorical question with an obvious answer: Only God has the power to forgive sins. Sins are committed against the Lord. Though we may sin against others, our primary sin is against God first, who has revealed how we are to treat one another.

In Psalm 51:4, David wrote that although his sin was against another person, it was ultimately against God: "Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight." Since sin *is* against God—because we have broken His laws—then it can only be forgiven by Him. Our forgiving someone for sinning against us, which God commands, does nothing to *remove* that sin. The only full payment for sin is that which Christ accomplished on the Cross, with the result that: "As far as the east is from the

west, so far hath he removed our transgression from us" (Psalm 103:12).

In Mark 2:8-10, we read, "And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy)."

The deity of Jesus was often in question by Israel's religious leaders. Jesus bluntly told them that His act of healing was so "ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins" (v. 10). Jesus didn't deny that only God had the power to forgive sins. The point was that He, as the "Son of man," also had that power. Simply put, Jesus is God. These exchanges happen throughout the Gospels (John 10:30-39, for example).

John 20:21-23 is given as support for the idea that we can forgive sins. It is also used as a "proof text" for Catholics to support their teaching that Christ instituted the power for "priests" to "sacramentally forgive" sins in His stead.

One must read one's own presuppositions into these verses to support this idea or the idea that believers forgive sins. Furthermore, the Lord Jesus says nothing about passing such a supposed authority on to a select group of individuals like Catholic priests. In fact, the Scriptures are consistent in testimony that only God can forgive sins (Luke 5:21). Finally, our mission is to preach the gospel. The message of the gospel is what makes it possible for someone to have his sins forgiven. Our proclaiming it is the only way that we play a role in the forgiveness of sins.

The Lord Jesus assured them that "he [everyone] that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father" (John 14:12).

In conclusion, it is a great presumption to say that we have been given the power of God to forgive sins. Our proclamation of the gospel to the unsaved and their receiving the same is what leads them to repentance, which brings forgiveness from the God of the Universe against whom they have willfully sinned.

QUESTION: When I read 1 Peter 4:17 ("For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?") it seems to me that this applies

to persecution of the church. I'm aware of wholesale persecution of believers in places like China, Pakistan, Sudan, and other foreign countries, but I don't think that has ever happened in the U.S. Are we exempt for any particular reason, or do you think it is going to take place here?

RESPONSE: We believe that the judgment referred to in 1 Peter 4:17 is a judgment of persecution that God allows His church to go through for the purpose of purifying and strengthening it. As the process takes place, believers are supported by His grace and mercy. It has value for them, and it glorifies Him—even when it ends in the death of the saints. The contrast is judgment *without* grace and mercy, which takes place against those who reject God's salvation and will suffer eternal punishment.

Consider the record of the persecuted believers in Hebrews 11. Their testimony has been an encouraging witness to those who followed after them. Persecution has caused the church to grow just as a pruned fruit tree increases in its fruitfulness. History confirms that the blood of the martyrs was the seed of the church, and as Tertullian noted, "The more we are cut down, the more we persist."

Certainly, believers in the U.S. have never suffered persecution—as a body—such as we've seen in other parts of the world down through the ages. Yet America has been subjected to something of a more spiritually destructive nature that few countries have experienced: seduction. In Satan's game plan of attempting to destroy the church, seduction has been by far his most successful tactic.

It may be that the consequences of seduction, which have resulted in a church that has drifted away from the Word of God "in the latter times" and is "giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils" and will "not endure sound doctrine," will foster a condition of persecution in this country (1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 4:3-4). Some have already been subjected to it as they have been thrown out of their "seeker-friendly, purpose-driven, marketing, and/or psychology-oriented" churches for simply questioning the biblical basis for such programs.

As believers, we simply and with meekness hold fast to God's Word and reflect its truth in our lives. Be aware, however, that we will invite persecution from both the world and from a professing church that regards us as intolerant, racist, bigoted, self-righteous, lacking compassion, arrogant, and on and on. As the apostasy increases in the U.S., there is every indication that persecution will also increase.

TBC NewsWatch

PURPOSE-DRIVEN APOSTASY

WorldNetDaily, 1/15/2011: RICK WARREN HOSTS 'CULT' CELEBRITY DOCS [EXCERPTS]—When megachurch pastor Rick Warren decided he needed to take his health seriously, he responded in typically ambitious fashion, launching a year-long health program for his church, "The Daniel Plan," written with the help of three celebrity doctors who will appear at a kickoff seminar today.

But critics point out the physicians who crafted the program apparently don't share the church's professed evangelical beliefs, espousing instead various forms of Eastern mysticism and the tenets of a Christian cult, Swedenborgism.

Vowing to lose 90 pounds, Warren said he placed himself under the care of Drs. Mehmet Oz, Daniel Amen and Mark Hyman last fall and worked with each to develop "The Daniel Plan."

Oz, host of the Emmy-winning "Dr. Oz Show" and professor of surgery at Columbia University, says he is inspired by Emanuel Swedenborg, an 18th century cult founder who taught that all religions lead to God and denied orthodox Christian beliefs such as the atonement of Christ for sin, the trinity and the deity of the Holy Spirit.

Best-selling author Amen, a professor of psychiatry at the University of California at Irvine, teaches Eastern religious meditation and the New Age energy-based practice of Reiki.

Hyman, a four-time New York Times best-selling author, promotes mystical meditation based on Buddhist principles.

Steve McConkey, who directs a website called Christian Investigator, called it "troubling for a top pastor in the United States to promote false teachers.... We are living at an all-time low spiritually in the United States with weak leaders," he said.

Saddleback's staff did not respond to a WND request for comment.

McConkey pointed out the followers of what is called Swedenborgianism believe all religions lead to God and that Christianity must go through a rebirth. The group also denies the existence of a personal devil and believes the Bible is not inspired. When people die, the followers believe, they become an angel or an evil spirit. Emanuel Swedenborg said he had a vision in 1745 in which he saw creatures crawling on walls. He asserted God then appeared to him as a man and told him to promote the new teachings to the world.

The church says all of its more than 5,000 small groups will go through "The Daniel Plan," which is part of Saddleback's "Decade of Destiny," a 10-year plan launching this month "to help individuals succeed and be who God designed them to be in every aspect in life." Warren, author of the best-selling "The Purpose Driven Life," said he is "honored to be partnering with these internationally distinguished health experts."

"God says that health is important, and that is what we want to explore," Warren said. He said that the many Americans who resolve each year to lose weight and get fit need to have the right motivation if they want to succeed. "We hope to provide encouragement, based on biblical principles, to help people make a real lifestyle change toward better health," Warren said. The 52-week "Daniel Plan," according to Saddleback, is based upon the biblical account of Daniel and his three friends, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego, who refused to take part in the Babylonian king's rich foods and wine and challenged the king's chief-of-staff to a test of meal plans.

[TBC: Although Warren is claiming that the "Daniel Plan" is based upon "biblical principles," why then is he having three doctors who espouse heathen beliefs administer the plan. That's akin to Nehemiah soliciting help from the Israelites' enemies, Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arab, to help rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Warren has similarly turned to the false religions of the world to implement his Global P.E.A.C.E. Plan.]

NEW WORLD RELIGION

CNSNews.com, 1/14/2011: CATHOLIC MD EXPLAINS NATIVE AMERICAN PRAYER [EXCERPTS]—[The official] memorial service for the shooting victims in Tucson did not open with a prayer from a Jewish rabbi, a Protestant minister or a Catholic priest—it began with a Native American "blessing" that left many puzzled about what it meant and why it was performed. The prayer, which did not use the word "God" and did not make the traditional request for God's comfort for the bereaved that many might have expected, did mention the Creator and called for "honoring" the Seven Directions, including "Father Sky" and "Mother Earth"—and remembering our "fellow creatures" who "crawl and slither on the earth."

The blessing was presented by Dr. Carlos Gonzales, an associate professor at the University of Arizona College of Medicine.

"I was asked by the university [president] to give a traditional Native American blessing," Gonzales told CNSNews.com late Thursday....It's basically a recognition of the powers of the seven directions and how they influence human beings—and how each direction has a certain characteristic; that when you pray to that direction, you ask for the inspiration that comes from that direction."

Holding an eagle feather, the physician and professor began by introducing himself—at length.

"On my mother's side I am Mexican.... On my father's side, I'm Yaqui, refugees from Mexico that escaped the genocide of the Pascua Yaqui in the 1800s. For myself, I am fifth generation in the valley of Tucson."

[Gonzales] asked for strength from "Father Sky," which he called the "masculine energy," and "Mother Earth," the "feminine energy."

"O Creator, may the two energies, the masculine energy and the feminine energy, come together in our center where the Creator exists..." he prayed.

...Gonzales explained the meaning behind what he was doing in the blessing: "The seven directions are basically the cardinal directions, Father Sky, which is up above us, and Mother Earth, which is down below us, and the seventh direction, which is the center, where the Creator exists," he told CNSNews.com. "The east is where the sun comes up [and] lights the path of the world, therefore the East is seen as having the power to guide us and to give us vision and to help us through as we walk on this earth."

"It's not truly a religion, it's more of a way of appreciating spirituality," Gonzales told CNSNews.com. "I'm Yaqui and Yaquis have been Roman Catholics since 1650. We were one of the first tribes in Mexico to actually peacefully absorb Catholicism; however we have always practiced Catholicism in our own unique manner, incorporating traditional beliefs, and so I grew up as a Roman Catholic with a Yaqui variation."

Gonzales, meanwhile, said the "Creator" he mentioned in the prayer is "whoever your particular denomination deems to be the important entity."

[TBC: Gonzales' "entity" is no different from that of the secular "Daniel Plan" MDs endorsed by Rick Warren, whose occult "enlightenment" also comes from the East. The political agenda for establishing a global nature-worshipping religion is abundantly clear. Romans chapter one foretells the consequences.]

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

Hi Dave,

I just finished your book *How Close Are We?* I am sorry you received no profit on this because I found it in a Goodwill store. [I] underlined almost all of it. I'm 76 years old and [am] on a small Social Security [income]. Even though I appear on the surface to have little, I'm debt free; and because I have the Lord, I also know I'm very rich. What a way to live—total freedom! In the future, I will be thinking of buying another of your books or two. LJ (OR)

Dear Dave & Tom,

Dave, your book, *Cosmos, Creator, and Human Destiny*, is the torpedo that will hit evolution and atheism broadside and do serious damage to all their arguments. It may not sink their ship, but it sure will slow them down. It should be read by every pastor and leader in the churches, as well as the people in the pews. My wife and I continue to pray for you both, for your health, and for your families. God bless you. DP (IL)

Dear Dave and TBC,

I have finished the book *Debating Calvinism* and just had to commend you on it. I felt you kept the debate impersonal and to the point with numerous scriptures and quotes. So often man's theologies don't comply with the whole Bible because of misinterpretation somewhere. It disturbs me that man can hold to his theologies to a point that compromises [God's] love. By the way, I wouldn't mind being called traditional if my tradition was to search the Scriptures daily. BG (IA)

Dear Dave Hunt,

I was shocked to read the harsh and cruel words addressed to you in the...October issue of *The Berean Call*. Someone has to expose error, and it looks as though it is a very unpopular task. If the tone or choice of words is not serious enough when doing so,

the impression left is that the matter is not all that bad. Error is dangerous and damaging.... May God continue to strengthen you against the caustic comments of Christians. RB (Canada)

To all at The Berean Call,

We enjoyed the tour [last year] of your facility. I am reading *Peace, Prosperity, and the Coming Holocaust*, which I purchased while there. It is a treasure trove of truth—and written in 1983! As an ex-Mormon I can see where the Mormon Church fits into this whole scenario. Thank you for the truths of God you bring to the world. Wishing you all well and especially prayers for Dave's health. MK (MD)

Dave,

I should have done this a long time ago, but I wanted to thank you so much for your books and tapes that I have benefited from so greatly over the last 20+ years of my ministry. Your uncompromising stand for truth has encouraged me and challenged me to do the same! I have gained great insight from your books, considering them as standards on the subject (e.g., *A Woman Rides the Beast* on Catholicism, *What Love Is This?* on Calvinism, and *Cosmos, Creator, and Human Destiny* on atheism and evolution). I know you have poured out your life into the books you've written and the lectures and debates you have presented. As a preacher of the Gospel who knows what it takes to prepare to feed the people from the pulpit, I commend your hard work and diligence in a day when shallowness and entertainment are the norm among church leaders! I have bought and recommended your materials to many preachers and laymen alike, being confident of the positions that you take, which mirror my own. I felt it was necessary to give "honor to whom honor is due" and only wish I had done so many years before. If I never have the chance to meet you in person in this life, I look forward to meeting you around the throne of our Precious Lord! May God be with you and your family, and continue to use the wisdom He alone has given you to bless many others in the faith, as I have been truly blessed! JH (TX)

Dear Mr. Hunt,

Thank you so much for your faithful efforts to proclaim the truth and to reveal false teachings/teachers. I have personally benefited greatly from your *Berean Call* newsletter, which I have been receiving for the past eight years while incarcerated. I have shared your newsletter with many other inmates, not all of whom have taken what you write with agreement, but most

have. There has been a plethora of false things taught in the institution where I am, including most recently, that Jesus had the "capacity" to sin. There have been many animated discussions and disagreements on this issue. I personally believe the Bible clearly teaches that Jesus was and is very God, and therefore could not have even thought of sinning. Could you address this issue in an upcoming issue of your newsletter, please? I pray for your ministry often.... God bless you richly as we enter this New Year. JR (WI, prisoner)

Dear TBC,

A year ago I was challenged to read *The Hole in Our Gospel* by some Christians who thought it was...important....I was challenged by it but troubled at the same time. I subsequently wrote the author about what I had concluded was "a hole" in *The Hole in Our Gospel*. [What follows are excerpts from that letter addressed to the leadership of World Vision]:

Many years ago...we supported World Vision. Then I became sensitized to the impression that it was mostly a liberal do-gooder organization with the merest of Christian underpinnings....World Vision's mission statement today [See TBC Extra page, January 2011] fails to disabuse me of that conclusion....While I believe [that] World Vision does an extraordinary work, I believe there is a hole in its vision....

Many luminaries whom you mentioned are clearly not Christian. While I understand that Gandhi can provide us valuable insight on how Christians are perceived, and Bono can perhaps recognize suffering better than I...nonetheless, I question the worldly implications, as well as the partnerships, which World Vision fosters.... We are exhorted not be to unequally yoked together. Sure, bread isn't Baptist or Episcopalian, water isn't Seventh Day Adventist or LDS, and recipients see caring, not Catholic or Jewish, eyes. Yes, we must bring compassion and resources to the world and give a cup of cold water...doing it in God's name. But how we mount the effort is equally important. God is honored when we love our neighbors, but [He is] not glorified unless that labor is also done with co-believers. We can't avoid one of His stipulations in order to accomplish another one....

I stumble[d] over [your] citations of guiding lights like Jimmy Carter, whose tremendous bona fides as an advocate for the disadvantaged are eclipsed by his abject failure as a former world leader and questionable pronouncements against Israel and certain fundamental Christian tenets;

like Pope John Paul II, who could have single-handedly brought millions to saving faith in Christ yet perpetuated the misuse of wealth, persecution, and falsehood [that] his church inflicts on the poor; like Mother Teresa, the saintliest of souls, who despite her own lifelong devotion to the least of God's creatures, was in fear for her own soul; like the gospel-impaired Katherine Kuhlman, etc. I stumbled over quotations from *The Message*: no matter how compelling, paraphrasing God's inspired Word is simply another gospel...it is not God's Word. And how can yours be a "Christian humanitarian organization"? Organizations can't be Christian. Quasi-Christian elements, invoking the imprimatur "Christian," having Christians in the organization, sharing Christian principles, does not make it Christian.... Words do mean things.... and much of World Vision and your opus need to be seen in light of whom you choose to invoke and how you [do] it.

So the hole in *The Hole in Our Gospel* may be evidenced, implied, or omitted by your mission statement. God must come first and last—and everywhere in between—or it is a false gospel. World Vision should help others to reach their full potential in Christ *along with* material assistance.... The goal should be transforming lives, not communities, for Christ. You should partner with God first and foremost; and while it may be impossible to be in the world and not utilize worldly elements, 1 Corinthians 9:22b aside, [you should] clearly not align with non-Christian entities no matter how noble or worthy their effort. To do any less is the hole in *The Hole*....

There are those of us who applaud your goals yet question some of your means.... Your personal testimony is an awesome challenge to me. I do not doubt your personal faithfulness to God's calling and therefore have to question my own possible misperceptions of World Vision accordingly. But "building a better world for children" seems strangely hollow despite all its implied goodness and scriptural mandate. DB (email)

Dear Dave,

Dear Dave, I have received your newsletter for a number of years but visited your website for the first time just today. I see that you are retired from public speaking. I was sad to read that but at the same time understand that there are seasons in life. I had the opportunity to hear you on several occasions in the past and was always greatly blessed. I feel privileged to have had those experiences. Thank you for your service. May God continue to strengthen you for His work. MB (email)

World of the Bible Israel Tour!

DR. RANDALL PRICE'S ISRAEL/JORDAN STUDY TOUR

BASIC TOUR JUNE 4-15: Join Dr. Price's ministry for a great adventure in the land of Israel on this 11-day journey to see the most important tourist sites of biblical Israel.

JORDAN/EILAT EXTENSION JUNE 15-19: On this extension, you will journey down the length of Jordan, seeing Jerash, Amman, Mt. Nebo, and more—ending at Petra, one of the seven wonders of the world, and crossing back into Israel to Eilat on the beautiful Red Sea.

Space is limited. Register early!
To see the complete itinerary including cost, go to:
www.worldofthebible.com/IsraelTours.htm
Call: 512-396-3799



"This tour, led by archaeologist and Bible teacher Dr. Randall Price, whose wonderfully informative books and videos on Israel have been promoted by TBC for years, is a terrific opportunity to visit the land of the Bible with someone whose knowledge and love for it and its people will make it the trip of a lifetime. Randy and his wife, Beverlee, are close friends of The Berean Call, so you will be going with 'family'!"

— T. A. McMAHON

TBC Notes

Our Slightly New Format

One of the concerns we've had lately as we publish our newsletter is its size. On the one hand, it's been a very manageable read for most people who don't have much time to devote to it. On the other hand, issues that we believe are detrimental to biblical faith and are contributing to apostasy are growing exponentially. Therefore, we decided to expand the newsletter a bit to cover more of the trends, movements, false teachings, etc., that are influencing and adversely affecting the Body of Christ.

Our Stewardship

From time to time, and in the interest of good stewardship, we "fine-tune" our mailing list by performing a mail purge. Some who receive our newsletter by mail have been added through the best intentions of friends or family members and may not be interested. Of these, a rare few ask us to stop sending the newsletter, a request to which we quickly comply. Others who are not interested may line their birdcages with it or toss it away upon arrival—a costly solution. Unfortunately, the purge process may also affect the subscriptions of our more avid readers.

How can you avoid being removed?

- We encourage you to check your mailing label every month. Before

purging an address from our system we will always include a notice indicating, "This could be your last issue."

- If you receive a notice, simply write, email to customerservice@theberean-call.org, or give us a call at 1-800-937-6638 to let us know that, yes, you still want to receive the newsletter by mail.

What if you no longer wish to receive *The Berean Call*?

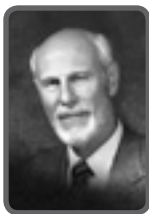
- If we don't hear from you after a purge notice has gone out, we'll understand this to mean that you no longer wish to continue your subscription.
- Or, if you already know that you don't wish to receive our newsletter, please let us know as soon as possible.

What if you want to get the newsletter by email instead?

- Subscribe to the online edition at www.theberean-call.org/subscribe. Then send an email to customerservice@theberean-call.org asking us to discontinue your paper newsletter.

As a reminder, *The Berean Call* is free within the United States. We have asked readers outside the U.S. to help with our mailing costs.

T. A. McMAHON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



THE COMING **NEW WORLD RELIGION**

by Dave Hunt ~ Excerpted from *Occult Invasion*

This article contains excerpts from Chapter 12 of Dave Hunt's 1998 best-seller, Occult Invasion: The Subtle Seduction of the World and Church. Written over 13 years ago, the book is a fascinating revelation of the road-builders paving the way to the New World Religion now converging.

WE HAVE SEEN that there is a massive but subtle occult invasion of today's world and church. Materialism is dead. No longer clinging to the view that nothing exists except matter, science now admits the reality of a nonmaterial dimension governed by mysterious forces and inhabited by nonmaterial intelligences that it can neither identify nor explain. Every facet of occultism is now being explored as the new hope in medicine, education, psychology, business, military intelligence, and space science. Contact is sought and advice is followed from spirit entities whose trustworthiness cannot be established by scientific means. Psychic powers mistakenly assumed to arise from an alleged inner human potential are being avidly cultivated in many fields, and their pursuit can only lead deeper into the occult.

The occult has always been the foundation of non-Christian religions, and it invaded Christianity when Constantine allegedly became a Christian and wedded the church with paganism. Catholicism, which had its birth under Constantine, has been involved in the occult ever since, not only in its adaptation of pagan practices wherever it has spread but now in the more overt ecumenism under Pope John Paul II. In their new partnership with Rome, evangelicals have opened themselves further to the occult invasion.

The Mind Science cults such as Christian Science, Science of Mind, Religious Science, and Unity School of Christianity openly embrace the occult. Their brand of occultism has invaded charismatic and Pentecostal churches through the Positive Confession movement of Hagin, Copeland, Cho, Wimber, Hinn, and other false prophets and healers. The same "positive" occultism has invaded the evangelical church through Peale and Schuller and their followers. "Christian" psychology and the related practices of inner healing or healing of memories and 12-Step programs have accelerated that invasion as well.

All of these streams are now coming together through the ecumenical movement. Its scope is unprecedented in human history. What we are seeing can only be the great apostasy which Paul said must come in order for the day of Christ to dawn and the Antichrist to be revealed. All that remains for the occult invasion to triumph is the establishment of a New World Religion in partnership with a world government. One would have to be blind not to see that this New World Order heralded by President Bush and the Pope is fast coming upon us.

Few are the voices sounding the alarm and few are those who heed warnings such as the following, voiced by former Vineyard pastor John Goodwin. Goodwin came to Christ out of the occult and eventually realized that the Vineyard was involved in the very occult practices he had abandoned:

I was a Vineyard pastor, and according to John Wimber, in his words, I "could do the stuff . . . anywhere and any time. . . ." I was tuned in . . . I was in lock-step with what John was teaching. . . . I have literally been to hundreds of Vineyard conferences. . . .

I'm here to [explain] that this is part of the last days heresy that's bringing the church into the New Age and into the New World Order. . . . It's all part of the Antichrist system of a one world church, a one world government and a one world economy.



**Already the high priests, prayers and
temples of the universal cult are with us.
Curriculums are being drafted to indoctrinate
our children in what John Rockefeller, Jr.
calls "The Church of all People." . . .
The first step is to break down loyalty
to a single religious faith. . . .**

—EDITH KERMIT ROOSEVELT

FIRST LADY OF THE U.S., 1901-1909



Anti is a Greek prefix that is generally understood to mean "opposed to or against." It has, however, another meaning: "in the place of or a substitute for." Antichrist will embody both meanings, according to the Bible. He will indeed oppose Christ but in the most diabolically clever way it could be done (anything less would not be worthy of Satan's genius): by posing as Christ and thus corrupting Christianity from within.

That being the case, Antichrist's followers will be "Christians." No wonder, then, that the apostasy must precede his ascension to power. A false, ecumenical, and antichrist "Christianity" must sweep the world in preparation for his takeover. True Christians will have been taken to heaven in the rapture, and Antichrist will be wor-

shipped by those who are left—except for those who come to faith in Christ during this horrible time and are martyred for their faith.

A popular Christmas card a few years ago was already in tune with the coming world religion: "May the spirit of the holidays give us faith in ourselves and help us to believe in each other's dreams so we can make this world a better place."

Already the label "Christian" has lost its true meaning and can now be attached to any anti-Christian belief. The latest poll identifies 26 percent of Mormons as "born-again Christians," yet their "God" is an exalted man and their "Christ" is the half-brother of Satan! Not only in Roman Catholicism but in all denominations, there are pastors, teachers, and other leaders who are spreading a false gospel. They misrepresent Christ and His teachings and lead entire congregations astray. They pretend to represent Christ but do not accept all that He taught. The Christ they present is more like Antichrist. Such is the "Christianity" which the White House now seems to espouse.

Even former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, an atheist turned pantheist, dares to say of socialists: "We promote the

cause of Christ.” Articles too numerous to quote follow Gorbachev across the country as he meets with religious leaders . . . and praises the importance of “religion” in the New World Order. What he advocates sounds like Antichrist’s coming world religion.

Gorbachev is likely not the Antichrist, but he is a very good prototype of him. In Israel, a peace dove landed on Gorbachev’s head on the occasion of his acceptance of “three honorary degrees for speeding up Jewish immigration . . . [and he] praised Jesus as ‘the first socialist.’” Gorbachev “is framing an ‘Earth Charter’ intended to fuse socialism and mysticism into a UN-approved new world religion. The Earth Charter is scheduled to be presented to the UN General Assembly sometime before the year 2000, and Gorbachev insists that its adoption is necessary . . . to save the earth from its rapacious inhabitants.”

Gorbachev and the late Pope John Paul II were great friends and mutual admirers. Gorbachev professes an interest in spirituality (but without truth), and the pope encouraged him in this delusion. Gorbachev wrote:

I have carried on an intensive correspondence with Pope John Paul II since we met at the Vatican in December, 1989 . . . we share a desire to move forward and complete what we began together. . . . What I have always held in high esteem about the Pope’s thinking and ideas is their spiritual content, their striving to foster the development of a new world civilization. . . .

The “spiritual content” of the pope’s ideas and his powerful-“political role” are agreeable to Gorbachev. They were partners in planning a new world. One cannot imagine Christ, who was and is hated by the world, playing a political role in partnership with this world’s Caesars—but those who claim to be His Vicars have done it for centuries.

The willingness to accommodate any kind of spirituality (a necessary ingredient of the coming world religion) is a growing attitude even among those who call themselves evangelicals. Pat Robertson refers to members of his Christian Coalition (Catholics, Mormons, Moonies, and followers of other religions) as *people of faith* who, he says, “are under attack as never before . . . by forces which wish to destroy all religious values, all worship, and all freedoms. . . .” Therefore, says Robertson, “We must lay aside certain Protestant differences to join hands to support those things upon which we all agree. . . .”

In fact, Coalition members hold many faiths whose “religious values” and “worship” are totally incompatible. It is deceitful to speak of “people of faith” standing together, when to do so individual faith must be abandoned. Nor is it honest to call an organization that includes those of other religions “the Christian Coalition.” And for a Christian to stand only for the least common denominator that everyone can agree upon is to abandon Christ himself, whom the world hates and its religions reject or redefine. Far more than “Protestant differences” must be overlooked for Christians to join hands with non-Christians! Pat’s coalition sounds more like what occult leader and priest Matthew Fox proposes:

Deep ecumenism is the movement that will unleash the wisdom of *all* world religions—Hinduism and Buddhism, Islam and Judaism, Taoism and Shintoism, Christianity in all its forms, and native religions and goddess religions throughout the world. This unleashing of wisdom holds the last hope for the survival of the planet we call home.

It is this loose merging of Christianity with whatever spirituality one fancies that will characterize the coming world religion—and destroy Christianity.

An evangelical pastor spent ten days at an ecumenical gathering of the World Council of Churches (WCC) and National Council of Churches (NCC), held under the auspices of New York City’s Auburn Theological Seminary. He was shocked at the overt rejection of Christianity and its replacement by paganism. The occult was honored as though it were of God. Here is part of the report he filed:

I knew we were in trouble when our first worship “celebration” found us outdoors at a garden pond offering prayers and water libations to the Seven Spirits of the seven directions of the Universe (“O Spirit of the North, blow upon us . . . O Spirit of the East . . . West . . . South . . .”).

What to any objective observer was sheer paganism, we were told was simply an exercise in discovering the ecumenical variety of spiritual expression and experience that we must learn to share if we are to be truly one. . . .

[There] was the outright denial of the Doctrine of the Trinity. . . [as] an archaic *symbol* for God so loaded with classical Western sexism and images of oppression that it must be abandoned in favor of something more palatable to enlightened sensitivities . . . [like] Sophia. . . .

While some of us may prefer to relate to Jesus as our personal “Christ-figure,” we dare not make him exclusive. We must be inclusive of all potential “Christ-figures,” so that we can learn to see through them all and behind them all to that one Savior Spirit of Liberation working through all the various “Christ-

figure” masks of the world’s religions. . . . The awful thing is that, judging from the participants at this conference, many of the ecumenical leaders of mainline Protestantism are happily following this primrose path to apostasy.

Concern for morality and ecology becomes the excuse for compromising theology. Kenneth S. Kantzer, a senior editor of *Christianity Today* (CT), wrote: “With the spread of moral rot that destroys the roots of a free and just society, we evangelicals need to close ranks with our Catholic neighbors. And with Mormons, conservative Jews, and secularists who share our values. . . .” Had Christ joined the rabbis in such a coalition for moral improvement, think of the great ethical reformer He could have become and the immense good He could have accomplished—all without going to the cross!

At the same time, Christianity is being confused with Americanism. Millions of “Christians” of all stripes, from evangelicals to Catholics to Mormons and Moonies, have joined together to



**Global education must prepare our children
for the coming of an interdependent,
safe, prosperous, friendly, loving, happy
planetary age as has been heralded by all
great prophets. The real, the great period of
human fulfillment on planet Earth is only
now about to begin.**

—SECRETARY-GENERAL U THANT

UNITED NATIONS



Christianize America by calling it back to the “traditional moral values” upon which it was founded. Somehow this “mission” has captured the imagination and loyalty of multitudes of evangelicals and has replaced the biblical Great Commission in their hearts and minds.

There is a new optimism in the air, the determined hope that “America can be saved” by a compromised ecumenical gospel. Even J. I. Packer seems to have succumbed to this delusion. Writing in *CT*, he transmutes Christ’s command to proclaim the gospel into a call “to re-Christianize the North American milieu . . . [and] rebuild the ruins . . . [of] North American culture . . .”! Where does the Bible suggest that? Llewellyn Rockwell writes:

Christianity is now thoroughly politicized. The [Catholic] bishops and [Ralph] Reed have no trouble speaking about the importance of pro-family legislation, or the glories of religious pluralism, but they are shy about such basics as the Christian teaching on salvation. The longer the process of politicization continues, the thinner the faith gets. Political ambition causes people to water down their beliefs for the sake of gaining favor. . . . The first stage of sell-out comes with the exaltation of political pluralism above doctrinal truth, the second stage with the denial of doctrinal truth altogether for achieving political goals.

The document “Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium” was not a sudden development but the inevitable result of much earlier preparation. Charismatic magazines (from *Voice* to *Charisma*) and leaders (from the late Kathryn Kuhlman to Rex Humbard) have heaped praise upon Pope John Paul II in spite of his false gospel. In praising the pope as a Christian leader, Jack Hayford said, “You don’t have to be a Catholic to stand tall and say, ‘I’m a Christian, too.’” Billy Graham called John Paul II “the greatest religious leader of the modern world, and one of the greatest moral and spiritual leaders of the century.” James Dobson, one of the world’s most highly respected Christian psychologists, called the pope “the most eminent religious leader who names the name of Jesus Christ.”

For all his inventions and modern developments, man has not changed. He is still the descendant of Adam, fallen into sin and in need of reconciliation to his Creator. He still needs love and purpose and meaning not only in this life but beyond. Eternity is all that matters, and it hasn’t changed. God hasn’t been renovating heaven to keep up with the ideas current upon earth, nor has He revised the entrance requirements to broaden the spectrum of belief among its citizens.

God doesn’t hire a Madison Avenue advertising and promotion team to persuade us that heaven will be a nice place to retire to. “Repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ” (Acts 20:21), no longer popular even among evangelicals, is still the only entrance ticket to heaven. Those who do not love God wholeheartedly and desire Him to have His way with them would be miserable there.

Heaven and hell are not states of mind, as Templeton and his cohorts imagine, but the real and eternal destinations of every human soul and spirit. Hell is where people go who turn to occult powers in rejection of God, who are determined to have things their own way, to enjoy their own passions, to create their own universe with their thoughts. Its inhabitants are self-centered, utterly lonely souls. Self has become so all-consuming that there is room for nothing else.

Christ was born the Savior of sinners. How marvelous that He who is God, one with the Father and the Holy Spirit, loves us so much that He was willing to be born of a virgin, to grow up in a world that hated Him, to be despised, rejected, mocked, scourged, crucified—and more than the physical suffering, to bear our sins and to pay the infinite price of our redemption demanded by His own infinite justice! He is still mocked and rejected by the world and His gospel perverted even within the professing church.

Heresy and compromise on the part of those who claim to be His followers is perhaps the most painful mockery He endures. It rejects Him as He really is and undermines His real purpose in coming to earth. Every true Christian should be deeply offended and concerned that serious error is being promoted not only in the world but even in seemingly sound churches and by those who are looked up to as evangelical leaders. It is our love for Christ in response to His love for us, and our love for the lost whom He loves and for whom He suffered and died, which causes us to hate heresy, to denounce the occult invasion and to earnestly contend for the faith once for all delivered to the saints. May we remain true to Him until He takes us home!

We face some trying days ahead if the Lord tarries. Recently this author watched a John Bradshaw seminar series that lasted five days on Public Broadcasting TV. While talking about faith in God (Bradshaw had his own unbiblical definitions for both faith and God), he denounced those who claim to be saved and who thereby “destroy the self-image of others who don’t believe exactly as they do.” It was all extremely clever and persuasive. The audience was obviously convinced of all he said. One could easily see the day coming

when such arguments would be used to stifle or muzzle evangelicals as a menace to society.

The Christian martyrs throughout history (and those being martyred today, particularly in Muslim countries) could have chosen an ecumenical path of compromise and of affirming the “common beliefs of all religions,” and thus have escaped the flames or the sword. But they chose instead to stand firm for the truth, to contend earnestly for the faith. Dare we do otherwise?

For us, at this crossroads in history, the issues have broadened. The deadly tentacles of the occult in its many guises have invaded the world, but also the church. What will be our response? One day we will give an account before God for that choice. What joy there is now and eternally in being true to Him!

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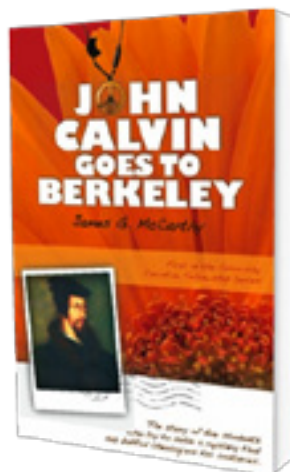
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