



[Lighthouse Trails Research Project](#) September 23, 2024 [Lighthouse Trails Resources](#)

In This Issue	

This content will be included.

[“CDC Promotes Meditation in Public Schools to Promote ‘Equity’”](#)

[Commentary: “Voters: Remember Israel!”](#)

[The Georgi Vins’ Story: The Gospel in Bonds \(A Book Review\)](#)

[Richard Rohr: A Catholic New Age Priest, His Cosmic Christ, and Young Evangelicals](#)

[“Bearing About in the Body the Dying of the Lord Jesus”](#)

[JNS: “Trump Says Harris Hates Israel as VP Calls for Two-states”](#)

[Letter to the Editor: A Plea to My Church Leaders Regarding *Jesus Calling* and *The Message*](#)

[Letter to the Editor: My Pastor Left and Joined the Eastern Orthodox Church!](#)

[NEW BOOKLET: *The New Age Path: Finding Soul Enlightenment or Entering Spiritual Blindness?*](#)

[Supporting Lighthouse Trails](#)

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[INFORMATION ABOUT LIGHTHOUSE TRAILS](#)

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Note: Because we are a research ministry, [we do post news articles from various secular and Christian sources](#) along with our own in-house articles if we believe our readers can benefit from the information. We also post video clips from YouTube at times.

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“CDC Promotes Meditation in Public Schools to Promote ‘Equity’”



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LTRP Note: The following is posted for informational and research purposes.

By Ben Johnson
The Washington Stand

The Biden-Harris administration is promoting the use of controversial meditation, yoga, and “mindfulness” techniques derived from Buddhism and Hinduism in public schools, although studies have found the practices have a negative effect on young people’s mental health. In addition to promoting a supposedly secularized form of non-Christian religion and its attendant worldview, the administration’s guidelines encourage teachers to have students ruminate on any beliefs they have that might hinder the progress of “equity.”

As students begin heading back to school, hundreds or thousands of teachers will be conducting “mindfulness” classes purportedly aimed at reducing stress and improving focus after the pandemic lockdowns. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has drawn up a six-part strategy allegedly aimed at improving students’ mental health after the lockdowns. The “CDC has identified six school-based strategies and associated approaches that can help prevent mental health problems and promote positive behavioral and mental health of students,” states its website. [Click here](#) to continue reading.

Related Articles:

LT Booklet: [MINDFULNESS—What You May Not Know and Should Have Been Told](#)

[Children and New Age Mindfulness Meditation](#) by Berit Kjos

(image from istockphoto.com; used with permission; design by LT)

Commentary: “Voters: Remember Israel!”

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LIGHTHOUSE TRAILS READERS SUPPORTING BRYCE HOME'S INTERNATIONAL IN KENYA SINCE 2011. Visit the [Understand the Times website](#) for the latest updates on the Bryce Homes International missions outreach in Kenya, helping Christian widows and children.

Categories of Our Resources



By Chris Katulka Israel, My Glory

A record number of Americans are poised to vote for a new president on November 5 to help determine the future of the United States.

Many pressing issues drive this election cycle. According to a Gallup poll, the economy, crime and violence, and hunger and homelessness are at the forefront of voters' minds. Americans are grappling with rising costs, making it increasingly difficult to put food on the table as inflation erodes their purchasing power. Furthermore, the ongoing border crisis has raised alarm in Congress concerning the heightened risk of a terrorist attack on U.S. soil.

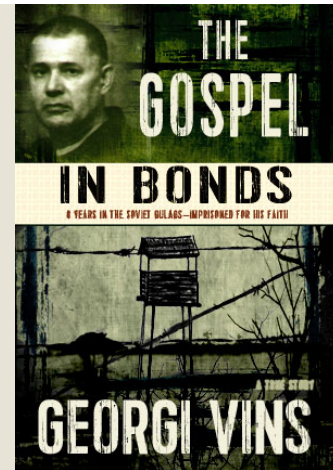
In addition to these concerns, Bible-believing Christians must consider Israel's significance as they head to the polls. Since October 7, 2023, when Hamas terrorists killed more than 1,200 innocent Israelis and took more than 200 hostages, Israel has been engaged in an existential battle with an enemy dedicated to its destruction. Although Israel's geographical distance from us may create the illusion that its struggle is separate from ours, the war Israel is fighting has profound implications for the United States. [Click here](#) to continue reading.

Related Articles:

["They Hate Christianity But Love \(Another\) Jesus – How Conservative Christians Are Being Manipulated and Ridiculed, Especially During Election Years"](#)

[Remember That We Are Pilgrims . . . Elections 2020](#) by Bill Randles

[The Georgi Vins' Story: The Gospel in Bonds \(A Book Review\)](#)



By Lois Putnam
Learn to Discern Granny

The Gospel in Bonds by Georgi Vins is a riveting book that you won't be able to put down. This astounding story tells how persecuted U.S.S.R Baptist pastor Georgi Vins survived eight years in Russian gulags. Now, if you're supposing this to be a depressing tale, be ready to be uplifted and blessed by Vin's vibrant faith which he demonstrated day after day.

Siberian Sparrows

Vins' prison saga begins with a little chapter simply titled "The Birds" telling of some small Siberian sparrows to whom Vins fed a few crumbs. These "dear little birds" reminded Vins that even at a remote Siberian prison he was not forgotten for as the words of the Lord Jesus say, "... ye are of more value than many sparrows." (Matthew 10:31)

Mini-Gospel Stories

Of all the wonderful stories in this awesome book those about the treasured mini-Gospels touched me the most. For some "mini descriptions" of these episodes please read below.

Vins Meets Victor

In the course of his imprisonment Vins met Victor. Victor had a mini-Gospel. Victor hid it beneath his pillow, but not before Vins saw the mini-Gospel. How Vins rejoiced that a Gospel had made it into one of the darkest places in Russia. (c.4) . . .

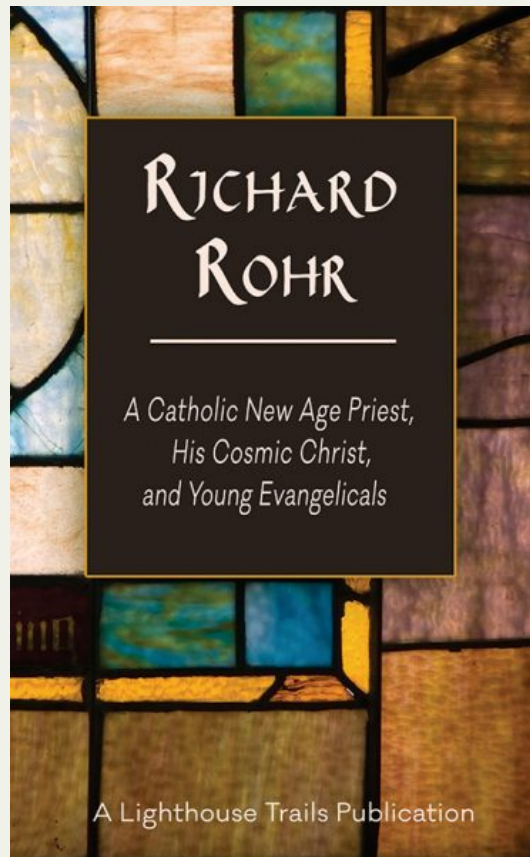
What an amazing testimony! How Vins loved his Bible. How Vins loved his Gospel. How Vins loved his Lord. May we too, learn to treasure the precious holy word of God for as Psalm 19:10 says its words are, "More to be desired ... than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb." [Click here](#) to continue reading this review.

More by Lois Putnam:

[Passion Conference Louie Giglio Gives Thumbs Up to Enneagram—Could Influence Scores of Young Evangelicals](#)

[The Enneagram—An Enlightening Tool or an Enticing Deception?](#)

Richard Rohr: A Catholic New Age Priest, His Cosmic Christ, and Young Evangelicals



Richard Rohr: A Catholic New Age Priest, His Cosmic Christ, and Young Evangelicals is our newest [Lighthouse Trails Booklet](#). The booklet is 18 pages long and sells for \$1.95 for single copies. Quantity discounts are available. Our booklets are designed to give away to others or for your own personal use. Below is the content of this new booklet. **To order copies of *Richard Rohr: A Catholic New Age Priest, His Cosmic Christ, and Young Evangelicals* [click here](#).**

Richard Rohr: A Catholic New Age Priest, His Cosmic Christ, and Young Evangelicals
A Lighthouse Trails Publication

There is one outstanding reason why Lighthouse Trails is compelled to devote a booklet to the Catholic mystic and universalist Richard Rohr—because one of his publishers told him that his biggest readership is young evangelical men.*

[*The exact statement Rohr made in an interview was “One of my publishers told me that my single biggest demographic was young evangelical males.”¹ Another time, Rohr said: “[O]ne of my publishers . . . told me that right now my single biggest demographic is young evangelicals—*young evangelicals*.”²]

That statement alone should be alarming and send shudders to any Bible-believing Christian and pastor; and it means that many of the sons and grandsons of evangelicals are under the influence of a man who is panentheistic, New Age-sympathizing, and a leader in today's emphasis on occultic New Age mystical spirituality.

But in spite of the fact that Lighthouse Trails has tried to warn the church and its leaders for years about the dangers of Richard Rohr's influence, that influence has only grown exponentially.

An April 2019 *Religion News Service* article titled, “For Millennials, Mysticism Shows a Path to Their Home Faiths” reveals how young (millennial) evangelicals are “[d]iscovering the Christian mystical tradition through the work of Franciscan friar Richard Rohr.”³ The article also states:

[Anthony] Graffagnino [28 yrs] was one of a number of millennials drawn to The Universal Christ—a four-day conference in New Mexico’s capital last month led by Rohr, one of the preeminent Christian contemplatives of the last century. . . . millennials are increasingly finding contemplative spirituality appealing.

Whether it’s in the stillness of silent meditation, walking a labyrinth, or centering prayer; the practice of engaging with scripture through Lectio Divina, the Ignatian tradition’s Daily Examen; or a combination of Buddhist mindfulness, Kundalini breath work and Taizé prayer, many young adults are happy (to borrow a line from Van Morrison) to sail into the mystic. . . . The contemplative tradition is “expansive enough . . . that it leaves room as you grow,” he said. “To be Christian is to see Christ in everything.”⁴

Research analyst Ray Yungen, who studied and wrote about New Age/contemplative meditation and its influence in the church, understood Rohr’s significant role in using mysticism to bring about global religious unity under a false “universal” christ. Yungen states:

Rohr is a prominent champion for the idea of a global religion that would unify the world. He says that “religion needs a new language.”⁵ And that language to bring about this one-world religion is mysticism (i.e., contemplative prayer)! The following two quotes by Rohr do well to illustrate the core of Rohr’s beliefs:

“Right now there is an emergence . . . it’s coming from so many different traditions and sources and parts of the world. Maybe it’s an example of the globalization of spirituality.”⁶

“God’s hope for humanity is that one day we will all recognize that the divine dwelling place is all of creation. Christ comes again whenever we see that matter and spirit co-exist. This truly deserves to be called good news.”⁷

In dispelling any confusion about what Rohr is saying, Yungen explains:

[Rohr] makes it clear in the same paragraph what he means by God dwelling in all creation. He uses a term that one finds throughout contemplative literature, which signifies that Christ is more of an energy than a personal being. Rohr explains the term “cosmic Christ,” telling readers that everything and everyone belongs to God’s kingdom.⁸ That’s even the name of one of his books, *Everything Belongs: The Gift of Contemplative Prayer*.⁹

Yungen concludes:

If these things are true, then there was no need for Jesus Christ to die on the Cross for the sins of mankind. We would not need a Savior because we would already be divine ourselves. In truth, contemplative spirituality is the antithesis of the Gospel. That is why there are countless mystics who claim to know God (or Jesus) but will have nothing to do with the Cross.¹⁰

With these things in mind, what a tragedy that so many young evangelical men (some to surely become pastors and church leaders) are drawn to Richard Rohr.

Christian Leaders Promoting Richard Rohr

In the midst of a current crisis where young people raised in Christian homes are leaving the faith of their childhoods and becoming New Agers, atheists, emergent, or Catholic, highly popular seasoned evangelical leaders have helped to escalate the crisis rather than help alleviate it. In a 2018 article, Lighthouse Trails wrote about one of these “seasoned” evangelical Rohr endorsers:

In an interview between Gloria Gaither and Catholic mystic monk, Richard Rohr, Gaither said, “First of all, I want to say thank you to you [Richard Rohr] because so many of your books have been impacting my life, especially *Falling Upward*. I think that changed my thinking about . . . just about everything. We have studied that book in our Monday night Bible study.”¹¹

In *Falling Upward*, Rohr (who is the founder of the Center for Action and Contemplation—CAC) expresses his interspiritual, universalist sentiments when he says that we (humanity) are all an “immaculate conception” (p. ix). Did Gloria Gaither even understand what Rohr’s message really is?

Gaither isn’t the only popular evangelical prominent figure to pay homage to Rohr. Eugene Peterson (author of *The Message*) and William Paul Young (author of *The Shack*) both also promote Richard Rohr as is pointed out in Lois Putnam’s article, “William Paul Young & His Connection With Panentheist Richard Rohr.”¹²

Another person who has embraced Rohr is contemplative spirituality pioneer Richard Foster. Foster had Rohr on an advisory board for a 2010 book Foster compiled and edited titled *25 Books Every Christian Should Read: A Guide to the Essential Devotional Classics*.¹³ A more appropriate title for Foster’s book would be *How to Become a Catholic Mystic*!

Adele Ahlberg Calhoun also promotes Rohr in at least two of her books, (*Invitations From God* and *The Spiritual Disciplines Handbook*—both published by InterVarsity Press, the latter of which many evangelical groups have turned to, including Saddleback Church at one time, even though it is packed heavily with the contemplative/emergent element). If you know someone or a church who is reading Calhoun’s books, you can be sure they are getting a dose

of Richard Rohr. And in case anyone reading this booklet thinks that Calhoun is not popular in mainstream Christianity, a good indicator is the book's high rating on Amazon. The Kindle edition is #10 in "Christian Meditation Worship and Devotion."

Elisa Morgan, the founder and former director of MOPS International (a very popular organization geared toward young Christian moms), quotes Rohr favorably in her book *The Beauty of Broken*.¹⁴

The highly influential author and "spiritual director" Ruth Haley Barton is a Shalem-Institute trained contemplative teacher and has been the topic of several Lighthouse Trails articles. In her book, *Invitation to Retreat*, she favorably quotes Richard Rohr, specifically regarding his breath prayers and the Enneagram. Barton spent several years at Willow Creek Church, teaching contemplative spirituality (i.e., Spiritual Formation) with John Ortberg to congregants before launching out on her own Transforming Center where she trains thousands of Christian pastors in Spiritual Formation.

We will close this section with the Enneagram, which has become very popular among many evangelical Christians. Rohr and a few of his mystic companions are mainly responsible for this surge of interest in this occult-rooted activity (we'll get more into the Enneagram later).

Are we saying all of these Rohr-endorsers or everyone who uses the Enneagram believe in all of Rohr's New Ageism? Not necessarily, but we are showing how much Rohr has influenced Protestant and evangelical Christianity.

You see, Rohr—though a Catholic, a New Ager, a panentheist, and a mystic—has found his way into the deepest veins of the Christian church.

Rohr's Cosmic Christ

It is completely accurate to put Rohr's spirituality in the same camp as someone like Episcopalian panentheist Matthew Fox (author of *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*). Rohr wrote the foreword to a 2007 book called *How Big is Your God?* by Jesuit priest (from India) Paul Coutinho. In the book, Coutinho describes an interspiritual community where people of all religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity) worship the *same* God. For Rohr to write the foreword to such a book, he would have to agree with Coutinho's views. And on Rohr's website, he has an article titled "The Cosmic Christ."¹⁵ One need not look too far into Rohr's teachings, books, and website to see he is indeed promoting the same cosmic christ as Matthew Fox—this is the "cosmic christ" whose being, they say, lives in every human; this, of course, would nullify the need for atonement by a savior if God was already in everyone. Rohr's book, *The Universal Christ* is the same as Matthew Fox's cosmic christ. On Rohr's website next to the title of this book, it states: "Another Name for Every Thing."

To further understand what (or who) the "cosmic christ" is, former New Age follower Warren B. Smith discusses this universal christ in his book *False Christ Coming: Does Anybody Care?* Smith states:

According to the New Age/New Gospel, Christ is not a person. It is an office. This New Age Gospel teaches that while Jesus of Nazareth occupied the office during His active ministry, He no longer holds that same position. Today, the office of "Christ" is occupied by someone else. And this "someone else" is presently in the process of establishing contact with humanity. This "Christ" intimates that he is already in the world awaiting mankind's call.

Warning that humanity is in peril and facing possible extinction, this "Christ" explains that his New Age/New Spirituality will unify the world's major religions and bring peace to the world. He has communicated these teachings to his designated teachers, who in turn are now conveying these same teachings to the rest of the world.

This "reinvented" Christ teaches that all humanity is the body of Christ. He, as the "Christ," is the head. This "Christ" states humanity's dilemma is that we have forgotten who we are. We are not "sinners" separate from God. We are all part of the one body of Christ and the one body of God. Salvation does not come by grace from accepting Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Rather it is achieved—when we accept ourselves as Christ and when we accept ourselves as God.¹⁶

Clearly, the cosmic christ stands against and contradicts in the most extreme manner Jesus Christ of the Bible, who offers salvation and eternal life through His death on the Cross and His resurrection from the dead to all who put their trust in Him and in no other.

A Diminished View of the Bible

In a March 14, 2019 Facebook entry, Dallas Jenkins (creator of the highly popular TV series, *The Chosen*) posted an excerpt of Richard Rohr's book, *What Do We Do With the Bible?* Jenkins stated that Rohr's quote was "rocking my world."¹⁷ In Jenkins' Facebook entry, he quotes Rohr:

Just because you use Scripture, even in a God-affirming way, does not mean you're using Scripture for life and love, growth and wisdom—and for the sake of God or others. Many of the worst genocides and atrocities in history have been supported by Scripture quotes in the mouths of selfish and scared people. Excessive God talk and quoting of Scripture are the best cover possible for a narcissistic personality. In fact, sometimes it seems to me that the churches that go on and on about "the greatness of God"—in both their sermons and their music—are often filled with the very groups and individuals that most want that greatness for themselves. I doubt if God needs us to be saying how great God is, as Satan does here with Jesus. Yes, religion is the best thing in the world and also the worst thing in the world—and so is Holy Scripture.¹⁸

In this quote, Rohr tries to attribute genocides and atrocities to the quoting of Scripture;¹⁹ but atrocities and genocides are committed by people who do not care to follow Scripture. They are committed when people add to Scripture that which does not belong there and by people who take away from Scripture that which should be there. Scripture shines a light on evilness and is the beacon that is a light unto our path. Thus, it reveals the secrets of the heart and exposes darkness.

In this and other quotes by Rohr, he expresses his lowly view of God's Word. For example, in *What Do We Do With the Bible?*, he states:

The Bible is an anthology of many books. It is a record of people's experience of God's self-revelation. It is an account of our very human experience of the divine intrusion into history. The book did not fall from heaven in a pretty package. It was written by people trying to listen to God. I believe that the Spirit was guiding the listening and writing process. We must also know that humans always see "through a glass darkly . . . and all knowledge is imperfect" (1 Corinthians 13:12).²⁰ (emphasis added)

Just as the Bible takes us through many stages of consciousness and history, it takes us individually a long time to move beyond our need to be dualistic, judgmental, accusatory, fearful, blaming, egocentric, and earning—and to see as Jesus sees.²¹

And in *Falling Upward*, Rohr states:

[T]he Jewish Scriptures, which are full of anecdotes of destiny, failure, sin, and grace, *offer almost no self-evident philosophical or theological conclusions that are always true*. . . . We even have four, often conflicting versions of the life of Jesus in Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. There is not one clear theology of God, Jesus, or history presented, despite our attempt to pretend there is.²² (emphasis in original)

In his book, *The Divine Dance*, Rohr states:

The text [of the Bible] moves inexorably toward inclusivity, mercy, unconditional love, and forgiveness. I call it the "Jesus Hermeneutic." Just interpret Scripture the way Jesus did! He ignores, denies, or openly opposes his own Scriptures whenever they are imperialistic, punitive, exclusionary, or tribal.²³

The deeper one digs into Rohr's writings, the worse it gets. In his book *The Universal Christ*, he expresses his disdain for substitutionary atonement:

I believe that Jesus' death on the cross is a revelation of the infinite and participatory love of God, not some bloody payment required by God's offended justice to rectify the problem of sin. Such a story line is way too small and problem-oriented.²⁴

Rohr is certainly not the first New Age-sympathizing mystic who has rejected the idea that Jesus Christ died a violent death because that was God's way to atone for man's sin, and through the Cross, He provided His Son to be a substitute for us. In other words, He took our place. Brennan Manning (a Catholic mystic and also a big favorite among young evangelicals) said that such a God "does not exist."²⁵ Ex-evangelical Brian McLaren said that the doctrines of the Cross and Hell are "false advertising for God."²⁶ And over the course of many years, we have documented the rejection of the atonement by numerous "Christian" contemplatives. You see in order to apprehend the mystical/occultic view that the cosmic universal christ (i.e., christ consciousness) exists in everyone, the Cross has to be thrown out.

The demeaning manner in which Rohr speaks of God's Word (*and of those who talk about it and quote it a lot*) and the atonement is typical for Rohr and other popular figures today who resist the truth of the Bible. It is disturbing that Dallas Jenkins resonates with and is "rocked" by statements such as Rohr's, especially in light of how little scriptural content Jenkins uses in *The Chosen* (by his own admission²⁷) and considering the tens of millions of people around the world who are watching the series. Incidentally, Dan Hasseltine, one of the main music composers for *The Chosen*, is also an advocate for Rohr.²⁸

Richard Rohr and the Enneagram

In 2019, Lighthouse Trails and author Lois Putnam wrote a booklet called *The Enneagram: An Enlightening Tool or an Enticing Deception?* This next section of our booklet on Richard Rohr is from that booklet.

A 2017 *Religion News Service* article states:

In 1990, Franciscan Fr. Richard Rohr effectively Christianized the [Enneagram] system for Americans when he published *The Enneagram: A Christian Perspective* in English. This sparked a growing interest that slowly crept into church pulpits and small groups. In 2016, *Christianity Today* published "An Evangelical's Guide to the Enneagram" after InterVarsity Press became the first evangelical publisher to release a book on the topic.²⁹

Richard Rohr is at the very epicenter of today's Enneagram movement. Rohr's website states:

Seven of the nine Enneagram types are associated with the "capital" or "deadly" sins which originated with the Desert Fathers. But it was not until the late 1960s that Oscar Ichazo began teaching the Enneagram as we know it today. From Ichazo's school in South America, a group of Jesuits learned the system and brought it back with them to the United States. Richard Rohr learned about the Enneagram from this group and was one of the first people to publish a book about it in English.³⁰

After Rohr learned about the Enneagram in the 1970s, he shared his Enneagram teaching on ten tapes, later writing his now classic best-selling book, *Discovering the Enneagram: An Ancient Tool for a New Spiritual Journey* (now titled *The Enneagram: A Christian Perspective*).

In Rohr's book, he explains that the underlying premise behind the Enneagram is that each person has a "true self and a "false self," and with the help of the Enneagram, we can identify our true selves, and thus having identified it, we can now be spiritually transformed to live in that true self. Rohr explains:

[Co-author] Andreas Ebert and I again offer the Enneagram as a very ancient Christian tool for the discernment of spirits, the struggle with our capital sin, our "false self," and the encounter with our True Self in God.³¹

When Rohr says "True Self in God," he is referring to his belief that the true self is the "God" within every human being. In echoing the Catholic mystics Thomas Merton and Henri Nouwen, Rohr advocates the concept of *dharmakaya* when he stated that "God's hope for humanity is that one day we will all recognize that the divine dwelling place is all of creation."³²

To further understand what Rohr's message is, we need to understand his views about Jesus Christ. In an article on Rohr's website titled, "The Cosmic Christ," he says:

Christ is not Jesus' last name, but the title of his historical and cosmic purpose. Jesus presents himself as the "Anointed" or Christened One who was human and divine united in one human body—as our model and exemplar. . . . This Christ is much bigger and older than either Jesus of Nazareth or the Christian religion, because the Christ is whenever the material and the divine co-exist—which is always and everywhere. . . . The coming of the Cosmic Christ is not the same as the growth of the Christian religion. It is the unification of all things.³³

For Rohr, Christ and humanity are not separate because Christ is not a person (or God come in the flesh to save man from his sins) but is an energy that exists in everyone and everything. Man's only problem isn't that he is sinful; rather, it is that he doesn't realize he already has divinity within him. This is where the Enneagram comes in, for according to Rohr the Enneagram is a "key to self-knowledge,"³⁴ and the goal for using the Enneagram is "an awakening of true self-love [i.e., the divinity within]."³⁵

In the foreword of *Mindful Silence: The Heart of Christian Contemplation* by Phileena Heuertz, Rohr praises how quickly "contemplative teaching is occurring in our time." He then says that "we are building on the Perennial Tradition." Rohr describes what he means by "Perennial Tradition" in a 2015 article on his website:

The things I teach come from a combination of inner and outer authority, drawn from personal experience and a long lineage of the "perennial tradition" . . . The Perennial Tradition points to recurring themes and truths *within all of the world's religions*.³⁶ (emphasis added)

The Perennial Tradition (or Perennial Wisdom as it is also called) is the belief that all the different religions in the world are interconnected through metaphysics (mysticism). The fact that the "father" of today's Enneagram movement (Rohr) promotes the Perennial Tradition in a book written by one of his foremost disciples—openly welcomed in mainstream evangelicalism—should not be overlooked or dismissed as irrelevant; nor should the Enneagram's compatibility and connection with contemplative prayer and mysticism.

Summation: Stealing God's Glory

In 2016, Richard Rohr participated in an event called SAND16 US (standing for Science and Nonduality).³⁷ Nonduality is a New Age term basically meaning there is no good and evil, no right or wrong, and no separation between God and man—thus, *all is one, all is God* (which is why New Ager Neale Donald Walsch said that even Hitler will go to Heaven³⁸). Rohr was invited to speak at SAND 16 US because New Agers resonate with him. Sharing the platform with Rohr were over one hundred other New Agers including Matthew Fox, Deepak Chopra, Ken Wilber, and Larry Dossey.

It's important to understand the concept of nonduality because it is at the heart of the New Age movement, and it greatly diminishes the view of God being greater and set apart from man.

Contrary to what New Agers and contemplative mystics teach, there *is* duality, and the Bible teaches it; there are the sheep and the goats, the wheat and the tares, the saved and the unsaved, truth and error, darkness and light, and the righteous and the unrighteous. New Age thinkers would reject this because they believe *all* is God. In the contemplative camp, when Richard Rohr says everything belongs, this is what makes it New Age. The golden calf and Yahweh are not the same "God." It was the cause for God's anger. Simply put, *everything does not belong!* Ray Yungen explains:

Virtually everyone in Christendom equates the term, satanic, with things dark and sinister. However, the Bible paints a far different picture of Satan—one that fits the New Age movement perfectly. Satan said, “I will be like the most High” (Isaiah 14:14). He did not say he would be the most High; he said he would be like the most High. The word “like” here means to correspond to. How could Satan accomplish this mission?

It is important to understand that Satan is not simply trying to draw people to the dark side of a good versus evil conflict. Actually, he is trying to *eradicate the gap between himself and God, between good and evil*, altogether. When we understand this approach, it helps us see why Thomas Merton*** said everyone is already united with God or why Jack Canfield [of *Chicken Soup for the Soul*] said he felt God flowing through all things. All means all—nothing left out. Such reasoning implies that God is sharing His glory with all creation; since Satan is part of creation, then he too shares in this glory, and thus is “*like the most High*.”³⁹

The New Age esotericist Benjamin Creme said:

The Christ is the Embodiment of the energy we call the Christ Consciousness or Principle, the energy of the Cosmic Christ. It is released into the world for us by Maitreya, the Christ, and to the degree that it manifests in us, we will recognise Him.⁴⁰

You see, for those who believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God, we know that one day the Antichrist (meaning pseudo christ) will make himself known to the world and will proclaim his equalness to God. But he will be an agent of our adversary Satan who will someday deceive the whole world (Revelation 12:9).

But in order for this Antichrist to fulfill his mission, he first must convince man that he (man) is *already* divine and has the christ consciousness within him.

When you put this into perspective and consider the detriment of Richard Rohr’s “gospel” message of the cosmic universal christ, it should, as we stated earlier, make any Bible-believing Christian or pastor shudder, knowing that young evangelical men are being rapidly drawn to Rohr. In his book, *The Naked Now: Learning to See as the Mystics See*, Rohr openly describes his distorted view of God:

The most amazing fact about Jesus, unlike almost any other religious founder, is that he found God in *disorder and imperfection*—and told us that we must do the same or we would never be content on this earth.⁴¹ (emphasis added)

Is Rohr right? That Jesus found God to be in disorder and imperfection and told us we must see God this way too? No! And to say such is blasphemous against the living and true God. Ray Yungen once told the editors at Lighthouse Trails that Rohr has essentially become today’s Thomas Merton.

It’s worth noting as we wrap up this booklet that Richard Rohr seems to be getting a “pass” from the Catholic Church hierarchy. What do we mean by that? Two other Catholic priests, Matthew Fox (b. 1940) and Pierre Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955), both openly embraced New Age ideology. In fact, Teilhard is sometimes referred to as the “father of the New Age movement.” He was severely and publicly condemned by Catholic Church leadership over the span of several decades for his beliefs; and Matthew Fox (a “giant” in the New Age movement) was defrocked because of his beliefs. During Fox’s time as a Catholic priest, he wrote a book titled *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*. Later, after leaving the Catholic Church, he became an Episcopal priest and to this day holds to his New Age beliefs. And yet, Rohr, who identifies with the same cosmic christ as Teilhard and Fox and is a New Ager in every sense does not seem to receive the same condemnation that his co-New Age priests did. Perhaps Catholic leadership knows he has a huge following of young evangelicals and see Rohr’s “evangelistic” maneuvers too important to throw away. Or, maybe it is a reflection of the Catholic Church’s readiness to absorb New Age beliefs. Whatever the case is, it’s certainly indicative of the mystical/New Age paradigm shift the world itself has gone through in the last few decades.

As for the evangelicals, perhaps many Christian leaders and pastors feel they don’t *need* to be aware of false and dangerous teachings in the church as long as they teach the Word and preach the Gospel. Or as one pastor told us once, “I don’t know about all those things. I am in a bubble.” But we told this pastor, “Pastor, you may be in a bubble, but your congregation is not.” What these silent pastors don’t seem to understand is that their congregations are being introduced to New Age mystical spirituality at every turn—through popular podcasts, books, college classes, and even many church settings such as retreats and book studies. In the case of Richard Rohr, it’s particularly the young people who are being drawn in. And if pastors and leaders continue ignoring what is taking place, the faith of countless numbers of young people (many raised in Christian homes) will be turned upside down; they will reject biblical Christianity and embrace the teachings of a false cosmic christ. The apostle Paul revealed very exactly his own attitude when it came to false teachings that had entered the church:

[O]f your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, *to draw away disciples after them*. Therefore watch, and remember, that by the space of three years *I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears*. (Acts 20:30-31; emphasis added)

In considering the ramifications of following a “cosmic christ,” we’ll leave you with these words by Ray Yungen:

Contrary to this belief of good and evil merging and man or creation becoming “like the most High,” man and God can only be brought together through the Cross. If the all-is-one view were true, then salvation through a Redeemer would become unnecessary and Jesus’ death on the Cross would be rendered altogether futile and pointless. In order for the Cross to make any sense, there must be a separation between God’s perfect nature and man’s sin nature. We know Satan has only one enemy—the Cross; he knows that without it no human being can be restored to God.

The Bible says the message of the Cross is the power of God, and while there are two opposing spiritual realms, God has always and will always, prevail. Satan can never thwart God’s ultimate plan. And yet, today’s Western society is enticed by practical mystics who deny, by their own proclamations, God’s plan of eternal salvation. Will the majority of mankind come to believe that all is one and there is no line to be drawn in the sand regarding good and evil? The Bible admonishes, “Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil” (Isaiah 5:20).⁴²

“For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent.” (1 Corinthians 1:18-19)

**In 2019, Brian McLaren became a teacher at Rohr’s organization, Center for Action and Contemplation. Rohr is now in his 80s, and the CAC website lists McLaren as the Dean of CAC. His view that the Cross and Hell are false advertising for God shows that he is a perfect fit for Rohr’s universal cosmic christ.

***Thomas Merton was a Catholic panentheistic priest (who greatly influenced Richard Foster, author of *Celebration of Discipline*). Foster is first most responsible for bringing Merton’s mystical spirituality into the Protestant church via the contemplative prayer (i.e., Spiritual Formation) movement. To gain a good understanding of Merton’s spirituality and the influence he’s had in today’s evangelical church, read *A Time of Departing* by Yungen. (If you would like to read a copy of this book and cannot afford it, please e-mail us at editors@lighthouse-trails, and we will be happy to send you a free copy; please include your mailing address).

To order copies of *Richard Rohr: A Catholic New Age Priest, His Cosmic Christ, and Young Evangelicals* [click here](#).

Endnotes:

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To order copies of **Richard Rohr: A Catholic New Age Priest, His Cosmic Christ, and Young Evangelicals** [click here](#).

"Bearing About in the Body the Dying of the Lord Jesus"



By Harry Ironside

Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body. For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. (2 Corinthians 4:10,11)

This fourth chapter of 2 Corinthians is the apostle Paul's statement of power for ministry. He shows us in these stirring verses that God is not looking for brilliant men, is not depending upon eloquent men, is not shut up to the use of talented men in sending His Gospel out in the world.

God is looking for broken men, for men who have judged themselves in the light of the cross of Christ. When He wants anything done, He takes up men who have come to an end of themselves, and whose trust and confidence is not in themselves but in God.

There were those who were calling in to question the apostleship of Paul himself, for he did not seem to them to be what an apostle, according to their estimation of the office, ought to be. There was not the pomp nor the dignity they would expect; he did not come to them with great swelling words, there was no making anything of what he was after the flesh, no drawing attention to his natural ability or education; and in this the method of the apostle Paul was in very vivid contrast to the method pursued by many today who pose as servants of our Lord Jesus Christ. This man went through the world a broken man, a lowly man, a man seeking only the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ and the blessing of souls, a man who might have occupied a very high place among the great and distinguished of earth. But he was a man who for Jesus' sake had turned his back upon all that, and could say:

God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. (Galatians 6:14)

That Cross spoke of the deepest shame and ignominy, and Paul gloried in it because through the work that took place upon it, his soul had been saved, and he had learned that the preaching of the Cross, while it is "to them that perish foolishness," is "unto us which are saved . . . the power of God" (1 Corinthians 1:18). And so he went forth, content to be broken in order that the light of the grace of God might shine out.

You will notice in verse 6 that . . .

God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us. (2 Corinthians 4:6,7)

It is easy to see what he has in mind. He is thinking undoubtedly of that very striking incident of which we read in Judges, when Gideon and his three hundred men took their lives in their hands, were delivered unto death, as it were, and went forth against the vast armies of the Midianites. Surely, no other army was accoutered [equipped] as this one. They carried in one hand a trumpet and in the other a pitcher, and in this pitcher was a lamp. The light of the lamp was not seen though it was already lit. It was not seen as long as it was in the earthen jar. They surrounded the army of the Midianites in the middle of the night, and suddenly at the command of their leader, the jars were crashed to earth, and the light shone out, and the Midianites sprang up startled. They heard the crash and saw the light, and thought that they were surrounded by a tremendous army, and they turned their swords upon one another. It was God through Gideon that led the army to victory. A broken pitcher in order that light might shine out! The apostle says, as it were, "That is it! If you want to be a light for God in a world like this, be content to be broken, to have your hopes, your ambitions, all dashed to pieces, and then God can take you up and use you in order to carry the light of Christ to darkened hearts."

How are we broken? By affliction, by trouble, by the discipline of the Lord, sometimes by sickness, by pain and anguish. All these are the divine methods for breaking God's pitchers in order that the light may shine out to His praise and glory. Men may misjudge us, misrepresent us, persecute us bitterly; we may not have enough food to eat or water to drink; we may be cast down; we may suffer all kinds of sorrows; but it is all right if it breaks us in order that God may be able the better to use us. And so he says, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed" (2 Corinthians 4:8,9); for in all these experiences, we are simply "bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our body." He "came from Godhead's fullest glory down to Calvary's depth of woe." We sometimes sing a little hymn that always stirs the heart. I remember hearing Dr. Torrey say he believed of all the hymns that were used in his meetings around the world, it was the one that seemed to be most blessed of God to the people. It is:

"I surrender all,
I surrender all,
All to Thee, my blessed Savior,
I surrender all."

But that hymn never had the appeal it ought to have for my own heart until one day I found myself changing that chorus. I was thinking of Him who though He was . . .

in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. (Philippians 2:6-8)

He surrendered all,
He surrendered all,
All for me, my blessed Savior,
He surrendered all.

And then my heart said, "O Lord, it will be easy to sing it the other way now, for what have I to give up, to surrender, in comparison with what Thou didst give up in order to redeem my guilty soul from going down to the pit?" It is as you and I realize from day to day what it all meant to Him that we can bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus. Dying day by day to our own hopes and ambitions, dying to the good opinion of people, dying to human praise and adulation, to everything that the natural heart grasps, dying in the death of Jesus to it all, because He died for us in order that "the life of Jesus may be made manifest in our body."

You will notice that verses 10 and 11 are very much alike, and yet the great difference is this: verse 10 suggests something that we do deliberately, consciously, whereas verse 11 is something that God does for us. What is it we are called upon to do? "Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus"—reminding ourselves every day

that Jesus died for us, “bearing about in the body” and because He died for us, we are gladly to put ourselves in the place of death for Him.

Looking back to the Cross, the apostle Paul could say:

| I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me. (Galatians 2:20)

But this has to be put into practice daily by putting my tastes and ambitions in the place of death. That is my part. But here is God’s part:

| We which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus’ sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. (2 Corinthians 4:11)

You tell God that you are willing to take the place of death with Christ, and He will see that it is made good; you tell God you are going to trust Him, and He will test your faith and show you what it means to trust Him; you tell Him that you are ready to surrender everything to Him, and He will put you in the place where you will begin to find out what full surrender really means. I do not know of anything that it seems should have such an appeal to the Christian heart along this line as the frequent remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ in His death, and I think it is because He realized it is so easy for us to forget, that He said to His disciples when He gave them this memorial feast,

| This do in remembrance of me. (Luke 22:19)

And the Holy Spirit said:

| As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord’s death till He come. (1 Corinthians 11:26)

Every time we are called upon thus to remember the Lord, it is a new challenge to ask ourselves, “Am I simply remembering Him in a cold, formal, intellectual way because it is customary, or am I truly in my heart remembering the One who went down beneath the dark waters of death for me, and am I truly ready now to always bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus?”

What a poor thing it is to come together in assemblies to participate in the communion of the Lord’s Supper and then go out from the building and forget what it all really means, forget that our Savior died, that we are linked up with the One who died, and that He has left us an example that we should follow His steps—that is, we should always bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus. This seems to me to be linked very intimately with several Old Testament references to which our attention is drawn in Hebrews 11. We read:

| By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones. (Hebrews 11:22)

Did you ever stop and ask why the Holy Spirit selected that particular incident to dwell upon? He has instanced something that you and I would probably have passed over altogether. What did Joseph do? “Gave commandment concerning his bones.” In Genesis 50:25, we read where Joseph, talking to the children of Israel, says:

| God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence. So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

That is the close of Genesis. What an odd way to close the book! But God wants us to think about the bones of Joseph. They are there in a coffin in Egypt, but they are to be carried to Canaan.

In Exodus 13, we find that the children of Israel who have been sheltered by the blood of the Passover lamb are starting out for Canaan, and we read:

| Moses took the bones of Joseph with him: for he had straitly sworn the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you; and ye shall carry up my bones away hence with you. (Exodus 13:19)

Who was Joseph? He was the savior of Israel. If it had not been for him, they had all been destroyed in the famine, but he was their savior, and now he says, “When you leave Egypt to go to Canaan, you carry my bones with you.” When they left, they were very careful to do as they were told, and all the way across the sands of the desert wherever that great caravan went, they were always bearing about in the body the dying of Joseph.

I think I see that great procession winding its way up over the hills; and the Amalekites and the Midianites looking at them in wonder say, “What is that strange dark casket?” Presently, they call an Israelite and ask him, and he says, “We were once in greatest distress; if God had not had mercy upon us we would have been left to die, but He raised up a savior for us, one of our own people; his name was Joseph and he delivered us; Joseph saved us. But our savior died, and we are marching on to the land that our God has given us, and until we get there, we carry with us the memorial of death, the bones of Joseph. We can never forget him; he died, but we have the memorials still.” And by-and-by when they reached the land, when they arrived at the place that God Himself had selected for them, we are told that after everything else was properly attended to,

| The bones of Joseph, which the children of Israel brought out of Egypt, buried they in Shechem, in a parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem for an hundred pieces of silver: and it became the inheritance of the children of Joseph. (Joshua 24:32)

There was no need to carry the bones of Joseph through the wilderness any more, for they were at home now. And, beloved, you and I are passing on through the wilderness of this world, we will soon be at Home, but until we reach there we are called upon to bear about in the body the dying of Jesus, and as we remember Him in the breaking of bread and the drinking of the cup, we should challenge our own hearts: Are we simply looking objectively toward that Cross and saying, "There our Savior died," or are we seeking day by day to practically make it manifest that His death means more to us than all that this world glories in?

This article is also a Lighthouse Trails booklet titled [Broken Vessels for Christ](#).

(photo from istockphoto.com; used with permission)

JNS: "Trump Says Harris Hates Israel as VP Calls for Two-states"



Jewish News Syndicate

Former President Donald Trump repeated his charge that Vice President Kamala Harris hates Israel and that if she is elected president, Israel won't exist in two years, speaking during the debate in Philadelphia that *ABC News* hosted on Tuesday.

The topic of Israel came up about one hour into the 90-minute debate, when the candidates were asked how they would reach a ceasefire deal between Israel and the terrorist group Hamas.

Harris opened by pointing out that Israel was attacked on Oct. 7 by Hamas, which "slaughtered 1,200 Israelis, many of them young people, who were simply attending a concert. Women were horribly raped.

"And so, absolutely, I said then, I say now, Israel has a right to defend itself. We would," she said.

However, she said that how Israel defends itself "matters, because it is also true, far too many innocent Palestinians have been killed; children, mothers. What we know is that this war must end. It must end immediately. [Click here](#) to continue reading.

Letter to the Editor: A Plea to My Church Leaders Regarding *Jesus Calling* and *The Message*



Dear Lighthouse Trails:

Please find below a letter I wrote to one of my pastors. I hope this will be helpful to others reading it who are in a similar situation at their own churches.

Dear _____,

I have had a brief text from Pastor _____ about a decision that was made by the leadership at _____ Baptist Church concerning the two books: *Jesus Calling* by Sarah Young and *The Message* "Bible" by Eugene Peterson.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to reach a godly decision over the use of these two books.

Jesus Calling

This is a work whose author, Sarah Young, sat down with pen and paper and asked to receive messages from Jesus Christ—a practice belonging to spiritualism rather than Christianity. As she originally stated, the inspiration for her work came from a 1930s work, *God Calling*, which is recognized to be a New Age piece of literature written by psychic mediums, albeit dressed up in Christian terminology.

When the dubious origins of *Jesus Calling* were pointed out to its publisher and editors, subsequent reprints of the book altered some of the introduction to mask the spiritualist nature of Young's techniques, and all references to *God Calling* were removed from it as well. This year (2024), Sarah Young's own denomination, The Presbyterian Church in America, announced it will be investigating *Jesus Calling* with a potential decision to ban it.

Excerpts from *Jesus Calling*, though purporting to be Jesus speaking in the first person, have been found to contradict the Bible and have had to be amended in later reprints of the book. For example, the original edition of the book had Jesus saying in its reading for 28th January: "I am with you always. These were the last words I spoke before ascending into heaven." (2004 Edition)

When critics pointed out that the *real* last words Jesus spoke before ascending into heaven were: "You are my witnesses. . . ." as recorded in Acts 1:8, the text of *Jesus Calling* was changed to read: "I am with you always. I spoke these words to my disciples after my resurrection." (10th Anniversary Edition)

If *Jesus Calling* really does contain messages from Jesus Christ, why have his words had to be corrected like this?

In addition to multiple such corrections, the book also contains much New Age terminology such as "true self," "love-light," "light-bearer," and "co-create"—a vocabulary that has been unique to the New Age movement. Why would Jesus choose to import lots of New Age terms and themes into his "messages" communicated through Sarah Young?

For further information, I suggest you read *10 Scriptural Reasons why Jesus Calling is a Dangerous Book* by Warren B. Smith at: <https://tinyurl.com/232jw2fc>.

There is ample evidence that the spirit which really did communicate through Sarah Young as she sat down with pen and paper, was in fact a spirit impersonating the person of Jesus Christ and thereby leading people up the garden path. In Matthew 24:4-5 we are warned:

And Jesus answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many.

Absence of Responsibility

Can I ask why there appears to be an absence of responsibility on the part of _____ Baptist Church in this matter?

If the book *Jesus Calling* is read from in church as I have heard at least once (and I think more than once), then there's a risk that someone in the congregation will take a liking to the book and buy a copy for him or herself. If that individual happens not to be born again, he will be especially vulnerable to the influences of any spirit speaking through the book!

Indeed, the "Jesus" of *Jesus Calling* says in various excerpts:

- Let Me control your mind.
- My main work is to clear out debris and clutter, making room for My Spirit to take full possession.
- Sit quietly in My Presence, letting My thoughts reprogram your thinking.
- While you relax in My Presence, I am molding your mind and cleansing your heart.
- Your relationship with Me is meant to be vibrant and challenging, as I invade more and more areas of your life.

The Bible forbids contact with a familiar spirit (Deuteronomy 18; Leviticus 19) precisely because such spirits can mislead and cause harm. Jesus Christ bestowed power upon his disciples to drive out spirits because they inflict harm.

Yet I've heard no real concern from leaders at _____ Baptist Church that this book has been used; no decision to stop its use for safety's sake; and no sense of responsibility towards your listeners who could be impacted in a bad way.

All I've heard is a claim that all should be "left to the Holy Spirit to sort out." Respectfully, no it shouldn't! For a start, Scripture abounds with warnings and exhortations to identify and call out false spirits and false teaching. Human beings and not just the Holy Spirit are expected to speak up. Thus, the author of 1 John 2:26 wrote, "These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you."

Second, *Jesus Calling* has sold some 45 million copies around the world, with millions of people now reading *it* instead of the Bible—while church leaders say nothing.

In 2 Corinthians 11:4 we read:

For if he that cometh preacheth another Jesus, whom we have not preached, or if ye receive another spirit, which ye have not received, or another gospel, which ye have not accepted, ye might well bear with him].

Is that not a description of _____ Baptist Church? The "Jesus" of *Jesus Calling* appears to be another *Jesus* and different spirit—and you, sadly, may well put up with it.

The Message "Bible"

The following is a partial list of problems I have identified with Eugene Peterson's *The Message*. They include:

1) A large occult and New Age vocabulary inserted into the text, which is difficult to put down to factors of chance and coincidence.

2) Hundreds of meanings added that do not appear in the original text of the Bible, as well as hundreds of meanings removed.

3) Bits of false teaching such as pantheism apparently added in as well. This then leads to a range of scriptural problems such as:

- Jesus said that if anyone loves Him, they will obey his commands (John 14:15), and His Word, the Bible, expressly commands us not to alter His words (Proverbs 30:6; Revelation 22:18-19).
- Scripture tells us to be honest and tell the truth (Colossians 3:9-10; Ephesians 4:15). Reading from *The Message* is only honest if the reader tells his listeners beforehand all the problems to do with the book. Merely calling the book a "rewrite" (as our leaders have done) doesn't achieve this.
- Christians are required to test everything carefully for their own good (1 Thessalonians 5:21-24). Using *The Message* without disclosing all the problems to do with the book gets in the way of this.
- Church leaders making references to the Holy Spirit without being prepared to do what the Holy Spirit tells them to do in the Bible is unconvincing.

Absence of Honesty

Can I ask why there appears to be an absence of honesty on the part of _____ Baptist Church leadership in this regard?

According to our leaders at church, *The Message* can still be used if it comes with the preface: "This is a rewrite of the Bible and should always be read alongside an accurate Bible." But this preface doesn't inform the congregation that Christian apologetics organizations document errors and advise against any such use of the book. It doesn't tell them that Christians who were once immersed in the occult recognize the language of *The Message* and recommend that people avoid it. It doesn't tell them that God forbids His words to be tampered with in this way in the first place. And so on.

If I were to attend a church and hear *The Message* read to me for the first time, I would want the speaker to be honest enough to disclose all the above problems, so that I could use my own discernment to evaluate the use of it. Please explain why it is considered acceptable to withhold this information from the congregation at your church.

For the Record

When Pastor _____ came to my house a few weeks ago, he brought with him a character assassination of myself which he expected me to wear. Much of what I said was interrupted and twisted out of context for about an hour.

At a worship meeting, I had simply told a couple of people things I thought they needed to know—one of them an individual who was reading from *Jesus Calling* herself, and another a lady who has accepted what amounts to a very public role within the church. I didn't try to "bully," offend, name-call, or blame anyone in any way.

Respectfully, I do need to say that I find it a bit stretched for leaders to display the worrying absence of responsibility and honesty detailed above, and then complain that I was a bit too forward in my conversations with those two people.

Yours sincerely,
Joe _____

(photo from istockphoto.com; used with permission)

Letter to the Editor: My Pastor Left and Joined the Eastern Orthodox Church!



Dear Ones at Lighthouse Trails:

I truly appreciate all the research work you have been doing, much of which is hard to find elsewhere.

Have you looked into the Eastern Orthodox Church and its influence on the evangelical churches?

Our church's pastor recently resigned and turned to Eastern Orthodoxy, leaving our Chinese speaking congregation without a pastor. He and his family have been attending an EO church since then. I am a friend with the pastor's wife and had had several conversations with her before and after the pastor's resignation. I was attempting to point out the errors of the EO church. That effort was proven in vain. She is now fully on board with EO as well.

What is more saddening and puzzling is, as I later learned, that this pastor's turning to EO was not alone. A few of his seminary school mates made similar moves, converting from evangelical to either Roman Catholicism or Eastern Orthodox. One thing I can think of is that EO is very mystical and thus may be appealing to my ex-pastor who was a Buddhist for decades before becoming a Christian. Anyway, I would love to hear your research findings on this topic.

When my now-previous pastor's sermon, in which he preached on the perpetual virginity of Mary and praying to dead saints, alarmed the congregation, I suspected his turning to Eastern Orthodox and began looking into the matter. I watched a video on Hank Hanegraaff's ("Bible Answer Man") conversion to EO, which I found helpful.

Your article is very insightful [see an excerpt below – from 2017]. The Eucharist being instrumental in Hanegraaff's conversion concurred with what I saw in my ex-pastor's. The mentioning of the Eucharist, along with the emphasis on *theosis*, kept appearing in his preaching for several months before his final disturbing sermon.

In Christ, Dee

LT Comments:

In 2017, Lighthouse reported on Hank Hanegraaff's conversion to the Eastern Orthodox Church. Below is an excerpt of that article:

It is no surprise to Lighthouse Trails that Walter Martin's successor Hank Hanegraaff (host of the Bible Answer Man) has converted to the Orthodox Church (which is a bridge between Protestantism and Roman Catholicism). Several years ago, we saw something like this coming because of Hanegraaff's embracing of Rick Warren, Richard Foster, and other ecumenical contemplative figures.

Hanegraaff admits that the Eucharist was instrumental in his conversion. According to the Catholic Church, the Eucharist is "the real Presence" of Christ in the sacraments which blasphemously contradicts Hebrews 10:10-12, recrucifying Christ. Many in the Orthodox Church embrace this view of the Eucharist as well, though they may reject the term "transubstantiation."¹

Hanegraaff, a Reformed preterist, has also provided a platform for anti-Israel figure Stephen Sizer.

Something to consider: Romans 11 gives a stern warning to Gentiles not to become puffed up or arrogant against the Jews. When a proclaiming Christian turns his back on Israel and the Jews and becomes puffed up as Romans 11 describes, is it possible that the Holy Spirit departs, and if that happens, a replacement would be sought. This is where contemplative mysticism comes in to play. We find it interesting that many who embrace contemplative spirituality also reject Israel and the Jews as having any significant role from God's point of view.

Proclaiming Christians who have turned against Israel saying that the church has replaced Israel should take heed and realize they have put themselves in great peril and at risk of becoming apostate.

Given the large audience of followers that Hank Hanegraaff has, we expect his conversion [to the Orthodox Church] will lead many to follow suit in converting out of Protestantism.

A 2008 article from Way of Life ministries describes some important facets of Eastern Orthodoxy:

- "Orthodoxy refers to that branch of sacramental Christianity which broke off from the Roman Catholic Church in 1054 A.D."
- "Roman Catholicism and Eastern Orthodoxy both claim direct descent from Christ and the Apostles."
- "In addition to rejecting the papacy, with its doctrines of supremacy and infallibility, Eastern Orthodoxy rejects purgatory and the doctrine of indulgences. Like Roman Catholicism, Orthodoxy has a consecrated priesthood and seven sacraments which only the priests have authority to perform—baptism, anointing, communion, penance, holy orders, marriage, and holy unction (Handbook of Denominations in the United States, 9th ed.). Infants and adults are baptized by threefold immersion. Sacraments are believed to be channels of grace, as contrasted to the New Testament ordinances of baptism and the Lords Supper which are simple memorials rather than actual means of grace. Orthodoxy practices the mass or the "Holy Eucharist" [eucharist means praise] whereby Christ supposedly is sacrificed anew and the bread and wine of the "eucharist" becomes the actual body and blood of Christ. Orthodoxy worships Mary as the Mother of God. Prayers are offered for the dead, who also are believed to pray for those on earth. Justification is attained through faith and works."
- "Orthodoxy preaches a false gospel. According to Orthodox teaching, baptism (even of infants) is the means whereby an individual is born into Christ and becomes a Christian."
- "The Orthodox Church also advocates prayers to and for the dead, and the false, wicked idea that the living can aid in the salvation of the deceased through good works. [The Eastern Orthodox church] holds the same basic set of false beliefs as the Roman Catholic Church from which it broke away in the ninth century. . . . The Eastern Orthodox churches are members of and form an influential block within the World Council of Churches. In recent years steps have also been taken to reconcile the Eastern Orthodox with the Roman Catholic Church. In 1965 Pope Paul VI and Patriarch Athenagoras I formally lifted the excommunications of 1054."([source](#))

Endnote:

1. <https://oca.org/orthodoxy/the-orthodox-faith/worship/the-sacraments/holy-eucharist>.

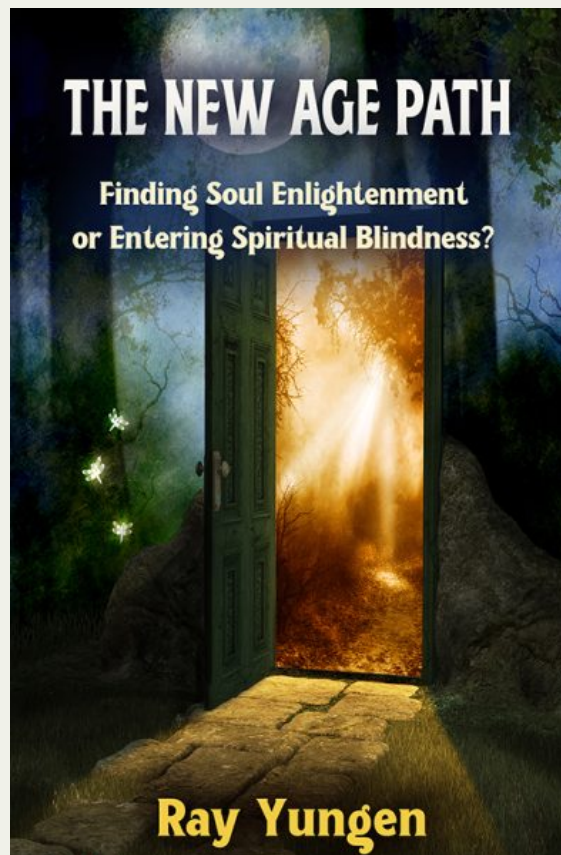
Related Information:

(2017) "'Bible Answer Man' Hank Hanegraaff Leaves Evangelicalism, Joins Eastern Orthodox Church"

(2018) Letter to the Editor: My Former Baptist Pastor Went From Spiritual Formation Into the Orthodox Church

(2021) "Francis Chan's Dangerous Path to "Unity" and a Eucharistic Christ"

NEW BOOKLET: The New Age Path: Finding Soul Enlightenment or Entering Spiritual Blindness?



The New Age Path: Finding Soul Enlightenment or Entering Spiritual Blindness? by Ray Yungen is our newest [Lighthouse Trails Booklet](#). The booklet is 14 pages long and sells for \$1.95 for single copies. Quantity discounts are available. Our booklets are designed to give away to others or for your own personal use. Below is the content of this new booklet. **To order copies of *The New Age Path: Finding Soul Enlightenment or Entering Spiritual Blindness?* [click here](#).**

The New Age Path: Finding Soul Enlightenment or Entering Spiritual Blindness?

By Ray Yungen

After 22 years of research, I fully understand why so many people have embraced metaphysics and why they seek transformation for humanity as a whole. By and large, they have rejected orthodox (old paradigm) Christianity considering it unacceptable but still want to retain spiritual meaning and a Utopian vision in their lives. In addition, they see metaphysics as helpful toward improving the quality of their daily lives, whether it be better health, more loving relationships, inner peace, or guidance for success and prosperity. They would think it the height of ignorance and folly to condemn such seemingly wonderful ways to better the human condition.

It is widely believed in New Age circles that Jesus Christ was Himself a metaphysician of great stature. They quote verses where Jesus proclaims: "The kingdom of God is within you" (Luke 17:21)—meaning a reference to the higher self, they believe; "Be still and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10)—a reference, they say, to meditation; and "Greater works than these shall he do" (John 14:12)—meaning New Agers can have His powers. As far out as this may sound to many Christian readers, New Age adherents are quite sincere in this belief. They firmly argue that reincarnation was originally in the Bible but was taken out at the Council of Nicea so that church and state could better control the common people by fear. Although there are still plenty of skeptics and critics, these beliefs are becoming less offensive and more acceptable all the time.

One of the most common New Age attitudes is that there are *many* paths to God and that it is wrong to judge or condemn another person's path because not all people are suited for the same one. New Agers teach that each person should find the path best suited for himself.

To Judge or Not Be Judged

There are two questions to be answered here: Is it right to judge? And do all paths lead to God? Jesus Christ foretold in Matthew 7:22-23:

Many will say to me in that day, "Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works?" And then will I profess unto them, "I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."

I find it most interesting that people who were doing "many wonderful works" or miraculous works in *His* name were, in reality, working "iniquity" or evil. This leads me to believe that a great deception is occurring.

These verses also tell me that all paths *do not* lead to God and, because they do not, one had better judge which path is correct. Many people, of course, counter with, "Judge not, that ye be not judged." However, taken in context, this verse (Matthew 7:1) is talking about hypocrisy in human behavior and not about withholding critical examination of spiritual teachings. Galatians 1:8 bears out the necessity to evaluate spiritual teaching with proper discernment. Paul warns:

But though we, or an angel from heaven, *preach any other gospel* unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. (emphasis mine)

And 2 John 1:9-11 says:

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*. If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed: For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds. (emphasis mine)

And again in Ephesians 5:11, "... have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather *reprove them*" (emphasis mine).

How may we reprove something if we don't determine whether or not it fits the bill of "unfruitful works?" In 2 Timothy 3:16-17, we read:

All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, *for reproof, for correction*, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect [complete], thoroughly furnished [fully equipped] unto all good works. (emphasis mine)

Familiar Spirits

Noticing the New Age propensity for also quoting Bible verses to support the claims of metaphysics, I have focused in my research on the obvious *conflict* between the Ancient Wisdom and the God of the Bible that runs from Genesis through Revelation. The continuity of this apparent contrast is undeniable to the point that any New Ager would have to acknowledge that it exists. This contrast and objection is the foundation for any logical Christian opposition to metaphysics. Notice the list of metaphysical arts in Deuteronomy 18:9-12:

When thou art come into the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not learn to do after the *abominations of those nations*. There shall not be found among you any one that maketh his son or his daughter to pass through the fire, or that useth divination [a psychic, or an observer of times, meaning festivals connected to nature worship], or an enchanter [one who manipulates people by occult power], or a witch [one who uses occult power]. Or a charmer [hypnotist], or a *consulter with familiar spirits* [one who receives advice or knowledge from a spirit], or a wizard [one who uses a spirit to do his will], or a necromancer [one who believes he is contacting the dead]. For all that do these things are an abomination unto the Lord: and because of these abominations the Lord thy God doth drive them out from before thee. (emphasis mine)

The word abomination in verse 12 means "abhorrent" or "disgusting." Please note the reference to *familiar spirits* in the following verses from Leviticus. This term is found throughout the Old Testament and has a negative connotation:

And the soul that turneth after such as have *familiar spirits*, and after wizards, to go a whoring after them, I will even set my face against that soul, and will cut him off from among his people. (Leviticus 20:6, emphasis mine)

An example of this is a book called *Creative Visualization* by Shakti Gawain, which could be called one of the *bibles* of the New Age movement (over three million copies have been sold in the US and another three million in thirty translated languages). Gawain explains the basic process of visualization. First comes "relaxing into a deep, quiet meditative state of mind,"¹ which is to be done every morning and afternoon. This opens the "channel" for "higher wisdom and guidance to come to you."² Gawain then describes the nature of this *guidance*:

The inner guide is known by many different names, such as your counselor, spirit guide, imaginary friend, or master. It is a higher part of yourself, which can come to you in many different forms, but usually comes in the form of a person or being whom you can talk to and relate to as a wise and loving friend.³

Your guide is there for you to call on anytime you need or want extra guidance, wisdom, knowledge, support, creative inspiration, love or companionship. Many people who have established a relationship with their guide meet them every day in their meditation.⁴

What Shakti Gawain is talking about is the same thing spoken of in Deuteronomy 18—familiar spirits. The so-called higher self is nothing more than a familiar spirit out to manipulate those people who open themselves to it. It has been common in Christian circles to speak of them as demons. The word demon comes from the Greek term *daemonion*, which literally means spirit guide. Familiar spirits make contact while the person's mind is in neutral (usually done through meditation) and try to establish a strong connection; the result is control of the person by the spirit. The core of New Age spirituality is that the higher self (i.e., familiar spirit) is supposed to be the guiding principle in every area of one's life—period! That is why in Ephesians 6:12, the apostle Paul warns us:

For we wrestle not against *flesh and blood*, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. (emphasis mine)

He is saying there are non-human powers (forces) that are in opposition to God. The nature of this is apparent to anyone who takes a close look at metaphysics with this verse in mind. After a certain point, influence and guidance from the familiar spirit progresses to outright possession. This, I believe, is the *kundalini effect*. One New Age proponent explains it the following way:

Before, kundalini had seemed like a fable to me, fascinating and appealing, but as improbable in its way as God talking to Moses through a burning bush or Jesus raising the dead. But now I was sometimes aware, toward the end of the third stage of Dynamic Meditation, of something moving as elusively as neon up my spine, flashing like lightning in my limbs. . . . When, in the fifth and final stage, I danced, I now sensed myself moved by a force more powerful, more inventive, than any I could consciously summon.⁵

I believe that the occultist Alice Bailey's "Tibetan" are familiar spirits. I also believe they are revealing their *plan of operation* in their writings. The intent of these beings can be seen by what the following metaphysical practitioners convey:

It is all there—just look for it. Seek the immortal, eternal Spirit that dwells within you—the "I am presence," containing all that was, is, or ever shall be. . . . The whole of life will become more meaningful as you live from the center within. Remember that you are Gods in the Making.⁶

It is not necessary to "have faith" in any power outside of yourself.⁷

The Angel of Light

Who do you think would want you to believe something like that? Who would want you to believe that God does not exist *outside of yourself*—that you don't need to have faith in anything external. New Age writer/philosopher David Spangler reveals who in his book *Reflections on the Christ* when he writes:

Some being has to take these energies into his consciousness and substance and channel them as it were to those other beings who must receive them, in this case humanity. The being who chose to embody these energies and to be in essence the angel of man's inner evolution is the being we know as Lucifer.⁸

He lays out the entire program behind the New Age movement in the following explanation:

He [Lucifer] comes to make us aware of our power within, to draw to ourselves experience. He comes to make us aware of the power of creative manifestation which we wield. When you are working with the laws of manifestation you are in essence manifesting a Luciferic principle.⁹

Even if Spangler had not written these words, the link between Lucifer and the New Age movement would still be evident to Christians from reading 2 Corinthians 11:13-15:

For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for *Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light*. Therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the *ministers of righteousness*; whose end shall be according to their works. (emphasis mine)

For this deception to be effective, he would have to come as an "angel of light." To judge a belief system as being satanic, one should compare how close it comes to Satan's own statements about himself. God is asking him, "How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations!" (Isaiah. 14:12). Then He reminds Satan of his own words when he challenged God:

For thou [Satan] hast said in thine heart, "I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; *I will be like the most High*." (Isaiah 14:13-14, emphasis added)

Then later, when Satan deceived Eve in the Garden, he said:

For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and *ye shall be as gods*, knowing good and evil. (Genesis 3:5, emphasis mine)

Without a doubt, the New Age movement fits that bill.

The “Wiles” of Satan

Ephesians 6:11 warns: “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (emphasis mine). The word *wiles* in this verse translates *ingenious trap or snare*. In order for a trap to be effective, proper bait is needed—something that is alluring, that looks and feels valid. For example, let’s take the case of the energy healing technique, Reiki. The average Reiki practitioner would think it outrageous and ridiculous that someone would even *suggest* that Reiki is linked to Satan. One Reiki practitioner offered this comment on the positive nature of Reiki:

During a Reiki treatment, you can expect to feel any number of sensations; warmth, coolness, tingling, deep relaxation, or at times you may not feel anything discernible. Sessions usually last one hour, and afterward you will feel calm and relaxed. You will sleep better and have a general sense of well-being.¹⁰

Does this sound like something that is satanic? Most people would not only say no but would feel that something of this nature probably would have to come from God. In *The Reiki Factor*, Reiki master Barbara Ray says:

Reiki has reemerged as a transformative tool for energy balancing, for natural healing, for wholing, and for creating peace, joy, love, and, ultimately, for achieving higher consciousness and enlightenment.¹¹

Enlightenment is the same as self-realization, especially in the context of a metaphysical practice. When a Christian hears someone claim to be God, he immediately should recognize the pronouncements of Satan, “Ye shall be as gods” (Genesis 3:5) and “I will be like the most High” (Isaiah 14:14). Hear this closely. He said, I will be *like* the most High (God) . . . *I will be like God*.

In view of this, the only logical conclusion is that the power behind Reiki is *satanic*. The key is not to think in terms of how the popular culture sees Satan, but rather how the inspired writers of the Bible portrayed Satan—a master deceiver and counterfeiter of the truth. He is one who comes as “an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14) to offer mankind *godhood* (i.e., you are divine and the master of your own destiny).

The sad thing about all this is that these experiences are so real and convincing. People experiencing the superconscious testify that deep meditative states are incomparably beautiful and rapturous. They experience intense light flooding them, and have a sense of omnipotent power and infinite wisdom. In this timeless state, they experience an ecstasy compared to nothing they have ever known before. They feel a sense of unity with all of life and are convinced of their own immortality. Such experiences keep them returning for more. One is not going to believe he or she is God if one doesn’t *feel* like God.

The late New Age leader Peter Caddy related an incident in which a group of Christians confronted him and tried, as he put it, *to save my soul*. He told them to come back and talk to him when they’ve had the same wonderful mystical experiences he has had. The point he was trying to make was that these naive Christians had no idea what the metaphysical life is all about and if they did, they would want what *he* had rather than trying to convert him to *their* way of thinking.

Feelings such as this are common in New Age circles and have hooked many over the past twenty years. They feel something this great *has* to be of God. A similar account is related in Acts 8:9-11:

But there was a certain man, called Simon, which beforetime in the same city used sorcery, and bewitched the people of Samaria, giving out that himself was some great one: To whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, This man is the *great power of God*. And to him they had regard, because that of long time he had bewitched them with sorceries. (emphasis mine)

In the Greek, the word *bewitched* means to amaze or astound. *Sorcery* means using the power of familiar spirits. What this man was doing had to have appeared good, otherwise the people would not have felt that “this man is the great power of God.” The truth of the matter is, he wasn’t of God; it just appeared that way.

In light of all this, it is easy to see why the coming of the Christian Gospel to Ephesus, that bastion of the Ancient Wisdom, had such a dramatic effect:

And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. Many of them also which used *curious arts* brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed. (Acts 19:18-19, emphasis mine)

The word *curious* is translated from a Greek word meaning magical. The magical or metaphysical arts went out the door when the Gospel of Christ came in. The two were not only incompatible, but totally opposite as the following account reveals:

And when they were at Salamis, they preached the word of God in the synagogues of the Jews: and they had also John to their minister. And when they had gone through the isle unto Paphos, they found a certain *sorcerer, a false prophet*, a Jew, whose name was Barjesus: Which was with the deputy of the country, Sergius Paulus, a prudent man; who called for Barnabas and Saul, and desired to hear the word of God. But Elymas the sorcerer (for so is his name by interpretation) withstood them, seeking to *turn away the deputy from the faith*. Then Saul, (who also is called Paul,) filled with the Holy Ghost, set his eyes on him, And said, O full of all *subtily* and all *mischief* thou *child of the devil*, thou *enemy of all righteousness*, wilt thou not cease to *pervert the right ways of the Lord*? (Acts 13:5-10, emphasis mine)

A Distinct Division

If you feel (as many New Agers do) that Jesus' real teachings were suppressed and distorted, then consider this: Jesus was a good Jew who strictly adhered to what we now call the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, as we have seen, contact with familiar spirits (spirit guides) was strictly forbidden. King Saul is a prime example of what happened to those who ignored this restriction:

So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the *word of the Lord, which he kept not*, and also for asking counsel of *one that had a familiar spirit*, to inquire of it; And inquired not of the Lord: therefore He slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse. (1 Chronicles 10:13-14, emphasis mine)

Also in Judaism, there was a distinct division between God and man as the following verses indicate:

Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am He: *before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord; and beside me there is no saviour*. I have declared, and have saved, and I have shewed, when there was no strange god among you: therefore ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord, that I am God. (Isaiah 43:10-12, emphasis mine)

Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer, and He that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens *alone*; that spreadeth abroad the earth *by myself*. (Isaiah 44:24, emphasis mine; also see Isaiah 46:9)

In view of this, Jesus *could not* have been a purveyor of the Ancient Wisdom and a devout Jew as well. In the Jewish religion, there is *one* Creator/Sustainer and man is *not* Him. God *created* man to worship and give glory to Him. This view remains the basis for the Christian view of God.

Jesus' claim to divinity was based on His Messiahship, a uniquely *Jewish* concept, *not* compatible with the Ancient Wisdom teachings of human divinity. He told the Samaritan woman "salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22).

To those who have embraced metaphysics as the truth of the universe and the way of salvation, let me say this: I know you are sincere. I know metaphysics makes you feel good about yourself. I know you have rejected *old-paradigm* Christianity as unsuitable. But please give serious consideration to Jeremiah 10:6,11:

Forasmuch as there is *none like unto thee, O Lord*; thou art great, and thy name is great in might. . . . Thus shall ye say unto them, the gods that *have not made the heavens and the earth*, even they *shall perish from the earth*, and from under these heavens. (emphasis mine)

The Folly of the Ages

In 2 Corinthians 1:9, the apostle Paul says:

But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead.

The verse does not say we should trust in ourselves who are God—it says we should *not* trust in ourselves but *trust in God*. God is a personal Being, not the Universe, not a spirit guide, and most certainly *not* humanity.

The reason the New Age is wrong is that it takes devotion, trust, and glory *away* from the One who created us and gives it to man and the rebellious familiar spirits who deceive man into self-glorification. An analogy of this would be that of an artist's canvas or paint—rather than the artist taking credit for the painting, the canvas or paint takes the credit.

That is why the Gentile nations were separated from the true God. They were the metaphysicians of old (the Mystery Schools) "who changed the truth of God into a lie, and *worshipped* and served [honored] the *creature* [man] more than the *Creator* [God], who is blessed forever. Amen" (Romans 1:25, emphasis mine).

This folly was due to the same error that millions are making right now. They turned to the realm of familiar spirits for guidance, just as people are doing today.

There is one account in particular that brings out what I want to convey. It is found in Acts 16:16-19:

And it came to pass, as we went to prayer, a certain damsel possessed with a *spirit of divination* [familiar spirit] met us, which brought her masters much gain by soothsaying [psychic predictions]: The same followed Paul and us, and cried, saying, "These men are the servants of the most high God, Which shew unto us the way of salvation." And this did she many days. But Paul, being grieved, turned and said to the spirit, "I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her." And he came out the same hour. And when her masters saw that the hope of their gains was gone, they caught Paul and Silas, and drew them into the marketplace and unto the rulers. (emphasis mine)

These verses above show four things that are *critical* to understanding the nature and aim of the New Age movement:

1. The spirit was the *source* of her power, *not* some latent faculty inherent in the human makeup. When it went, her ability was *gone*.
2. The spirit was accurate to a high degree. Otherwise she would not have brought her masters "much gain." You don't become a success with a poor showing.
3. Paul and the spirit were *not on the same side*. This is quite evident by the fact that he cast it out of her.
4. Most important of all, the spirit tried to *identify itself with God*. When it followed Paul and Silas, it was saying the truth, "These men show us the way of salvation." By doing this, the spirit could continue its practice of deceiving all concerned and perhaps later undo what Paul's ministry had accomplished.

These spirits are doing the same thing today. This girl, no doubt, believed that it was her *inner divinity* giving her the information that was so effective in *aiding* the community. The truth of the matter is, when you say you have connected with your inner divinity and that you are God, sadly, you have joined the ranks of those who, "Professing themselves to be wise [knowing the truth], they became fools [absurd], and changed the glory of the *uncorruptible* God into an image made like to *corruptible* man" (Romans 1:22-23, emphasis mine).

Swami Muktananda was one of the most admired and respected New Age leaders during the 1970s and early 1980s. He was thought by many to be the virtual embodiment of the *God-realized* master. He told His disciples:

Kneel to your own self. Honor and worship your own Being. Chant the mantra always going on within you. Meditate on your own self. God dwells within you as you.¹²

When Muktananda died in 1982, one of his closest followers revealed that his master "ended as a feeble-minded, sadistic tyrant luring devout little girls to his bed every night with promises of grace and self-realization."¹³ Without realizing he was echoing the truth of the verses just quoted, he concluded:

There is no absolute assurance that enlightenment necessitates the moral virtue of a person. There is no guarantee against the weakness of anger, lust, and greed in the human soul. The enlightened are on an equal footing with the ignorant in the struggle against their own evil.¹⁴

It is very clear that the metaphysical explosion that our society is currently immersed in is a continuation of what Leviticus 19:31 warned against:

Regard not them that have familiar spirits, neither seek after wizards [metaphysicians], to be *defiled* by them: I am the Lord your God. (emphasis mine)

On this basis alone, Christians have a duty to challenge the validity of the New Age message that we are God.

To order copies of *The New Age Path: Finding Soul Enlightenment or Entering Spiritual Blindness?* [click here](#).

Endnotes:

1. Shakti Gawain, *Creative Visualization* (San Rafael, CA: Whatever Publishing, 1978), p. 14.
2. Ibid., p. 56.
3. Ibid., p. 91.
4. Ibid., p. 93.
5. James S. Gordon, *The Golden Guru* (Lexington, MN: The Stephen Greene Press, 1988), p. 8.
6. Donald Yott, *Man and Metaphysics* (New York, NY: Sam Weiser, Inc., 1980), p. 103.
7. Shakti Gawain, *Creative Visualization*, op. cit., p. 15.
8. David Spangler, *Reflections on the Christ* (Findhorn Foundation, second edition, 1978, 2nd edition), p. 36.
9. Ibid., p. 41.
10. Jennifer Thebodeau, "What Happens During a Reiki Treatment?" (*Mountain Sky Reiki*, Osaka, Japan, <https://web.archive.org/web/20090601212840/http://www.mountainskyreiki.com/reikitrements.htm>).
11. Barbara Ray, Ph.D., *The Reiki Factor* (Smithtown, NY: Exposition Press, Inc., 1983), p. 12.
12. David Eastman, "Kundalini Demystified" (*Yoga Journal*, September/October 1985), p. 43.
13. "Baba Beleaguered" (*Yoga Journal*, July/August 1985), p. 30, (reprinted from CoEvolution Quarterly Winter 1983).
14. Stan Trout, excerpts from an open letter (*Yoga Journal*, July/August 1985), p. 30.

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