

The Quarterly Journal



THE NEWSLETTER PUBLICATION OF PERSONAL FREEDOM OUTREACH

VOL. 33, NO. 1

JANUARY-MARCH 2013

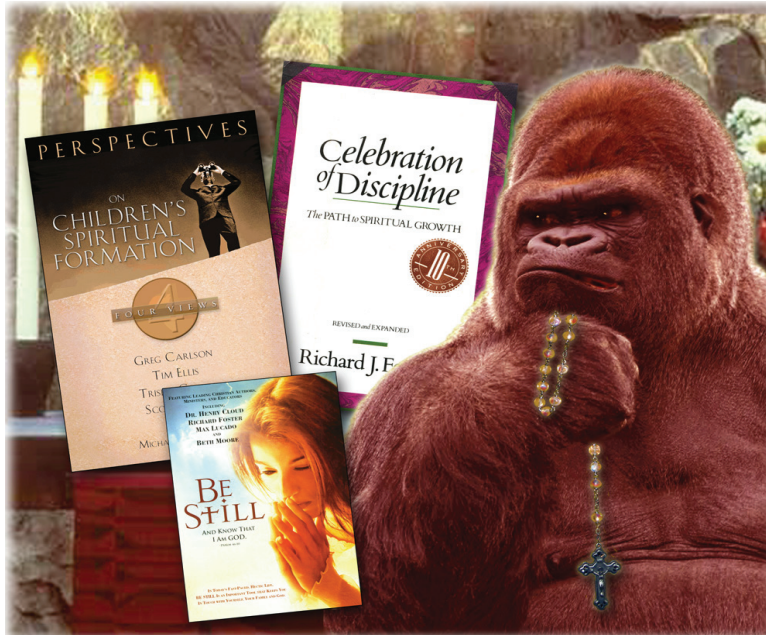
EDITOR: KEITH A. MORSE

The Ape of God

How New Age Spirituality Has Interlaced Into the Fabric of Evangelicalism

by David M. Tyler

Charles Spurgeon, Martin Luther, Saint Augustine, and others have called Satan “the ape of God.” As an ape will mimic a person’s actions, so Satan mimics God’s plan. God sends Christ; Satan sends false christs (Matthew 24:5). God sends prophets to lead and instruct; Satan sends false prophets to mislead and confuse (Matthew 7:15-23). God raised up men to become apostles; Satan has his own apostles (2 Corinthians 11:13). God gave us His Gospel; Satan gave another (Galatians 1:6-8). Satan’s plan is to convince men they are following God when they are actually following him.



attacked the Creator in all His works. He fouled creation. He dragged man down from his lofty place as steward and custodian of the earth and rolled him in the mire of depravity. But Satan was not content just to spoil the first creation; he attacked the second. Now Satan uses all his tactics, craft, and power to destroy man recreated in the image of Jesus Christ. There is no believer in Christ who will not find himself attacked by Satan or one of his demons. Satan is a formidable foe. He is not a myth or the product of our imaginations. He is as real today as when Christ met

(continues on page 11)

Theologian G.C. Berkouwer said, “There can be no sound theology without a sound demonology.”¹ From the moment man was created and placed in the Garden of Eden, Satan vowed perpetual opposition against the God of Heaven. He

Inside this Issue:

WHAT IS IT? WHAT DOES IT DO?	PAGE 2
UNIFICATION CHURCH FOUNDER MOON DIES	PAGE 3
ATONEMENT WARS	PAGE 4

tian Thought. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Academic, 2006, pg. 240.

11. H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Kingdom of God in America*. New York: Harper and Row, 1959, pg. 193. This statement is also cited in "H. Richard Niebuhr" on Wikipedia. Document accessed at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/H._Richard_Niebuhr.

12. Robert E. Webber, *Ancient-Future Faith*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1999, pp. 43-44.

13. See *A Concise History of Christian Thought*, op. cit., pp. 279-281.

14. *Ancient-Future Faith*, op. cit., pp. 50-55.

15. *Ibid.*, pg. 51, emphasis added.

16. Brian McLaren, *Everything Must Change*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2007, pg. 129.

17. John R.W. Stott, *The Cross of Christ*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press,

2006, pg. 226.

18. Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1994, pg. 579.

19. Erickson cited by Richard Mayhue, "The Scriptural Necessity of Christ's Penal Substitution," *The Master's Theological Journal*, Vol. 20, No. 2, pg. 140.

20. Erickson cited by Vlach, "Penal Substitution in Church History," op. cit., pp. 200-201.

21. "Nothing But the Blood," op. cit.

22. Green and Barker cited by David Wells, *Above all Earthly Pow'rs*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2005, pg. 219, first ellipses added, second in original.

23. *The Story We Find Ourselves In*, op. cit., pg. 102.

24. Horatius Bonar, "'Twas I That Shed the Sacred Blood," cited in *The Cross of*

Christ, op. cit., pg. 63.

25. J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*. Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1973, pg. 141.

26. Schreiner in *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*, op. cit., pg. 88.

27. Dave Clotfelter, *Sinners in the Hands of a Good God, Reconciling Divine Judgment and Mercy*. Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004, pg. 196.

28. *The Cross of Christ*, op. cit., pg. 173.

29. James R. White, *The God Who Justifies*. Bloomington, Minn.: Bethany House, 2001, pg. 195.

30. *The Cross of Christ*, op. cit., pp. 179-180.

31. *Pierced for Our Transgressions, Rediscovering the Glory of Penal Substitution*, op. cit., pg. 80.

32. Schreiner in *The Nature of the Atonement: Four Views*, op. cit., pg. 89.

THE APE OF GOD

(continued from page 1)

him in the wilderness of temptation. He is a spirit and can influence men.

The Lord's soldiers do not carry guns because the battle is not with men. We fight against "spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12). It is unfortunate that some of God's soldiers make Christ's war a war against men, against "flesh and blood" (Ephesians 6:12). When there is a doctrinal disagreement between two believers, they will often part company angry and bitter. The Christian call to battle is not a call against men, but *for* men and *against* Satan. We fight for God and truth; against error and sin. It is a terrible thing when Christians forget who their enemy is.

We are at war against unbelief, but are to love unbelievers. We are at war with heresy, but we do not hate heretics. There are false teachers spreading damnable lies, but we earnestly pray for them. We are opposed to everything that rises up against God and His truth, but toward every man we endeavor to obey Christ's command to "love your enemies."

DISARMING THE CHURCH

Spiritual formation, contemplative prayer, centering prayer, soaking

prayer, breath prayer, the silence, labyrinth, and "Christian yoga" might all sound familiar to readers of *The Quarterly Journal*. And these "disciplines" are appearing in churches across America. Under the guise of faith-producing techniques, New Age spirituality has been woven into the fabric of numerous church prayer, youth, and Christian education programs. These practices, of which most believers do not realize are a counterfeit to Christianity, are seen by many as aids to Christian living.

The "Bible thumping," as they say, of traditional evangelicalism and the superficiality of pragmatic or seeker-friendly evangelicalism have given way to a new trend in Christian churches. Eastern style meditation, labyrinths, and "Christian yoga" are the "in" thing. The train headed for the East has left the station and many of evangelicalism's biggest names are on board: Max Lucado, Beth Moore, Richard Foster, Dallas Willard, and Henry Cloud, just to name a few. On a DVD by Fox Home Entertainment entitled *Be Still and Know That I Am God*, they are promoting a New Age practice rooted firmly in Buddhist and Hindu tradition called contemplative or centering prayer. The DVD features "interviews with some of today's most highly respected authors, pastors, and educators."² Others on the contemplative bandwagon, not

included in the DVD, are Rick Warren, Bill Hybels, Brian McLaren, Rob Bell, and others of the emergent conversation.

Many Christians have never heard of the New Age contemplative prayer movement. Nevertheless, many believers are practicing or know someone who is practicing its teachings even though they may not be familiar with the terms. It is also referred to as contemplative spirituality or the spiritual formation movement. Spiritual formation refers to the use of Eastern mystical techniques to experience greater spiritual growth and an intimate union with Christ.

THE DESERT FATHERS OF EGYPT

The spiritual formation movement is widely seen as the way to satisfy the spiritual hunger of postmodern man. From books, magazine articles, conferences, sermons, and seminary courses by popular Christians, spiritual formation or contemplative spirituality is the "new" thing. To the average church-goer it is the new and contemporary word for discipleship. It is said to be essential to progressive sanctification. But spiritual formation is not the same as discipleship or progressive sanctification.

The contemplative spirituality movement has its roots in the Middle

Ages. During the 4th through the 6th centuries, a group of monks known as the Desert Fathers — there were also Desert Mothers — lived in the wilderness of the Middle East in isolated communities for the purpose of devoting their lives to God.³ They integrated Eastern mystical meditative practices into Roman Catholic theology in an attempt to experience God. Ken Kaisch, an Episcopal priest and contemplative prayer instructor, in his book *Finding God*, admitted to the indiscriminate and random way the Desert Fathers experimented with prayer techniques from many world religions:

“It was a time of great *experimentation* with spiritual methods. *Many* different kinds of disciplines were tried, some of which are too harsh or extreme for people today. *Many* different methods of prayer were created and explored by them.”⁴

The Desert Fathers believed any technique, as long as the person was sincere, could be used to connect and commune with God. If a Hindu or Buddhist can experience God through meditation and use of a mantra,⁵ then why not a Christian, they asked.

FROM THE DESERT OF EGYPT TO AMERICA

A resurgence of interest in the ancient practice began in 1961 when Father Thomas Keating⁶ was named Abbot⁷ of St. Joseph’s monastery in Spenser, Mass. In 1974, Father William Menninger (1899-1966), a monk, discovered in the library of St. Joseph’s Abbey a 14th-century book titled *The Cloud of Unknowing*. The book was written to teach people contemplative meditation methods that the Desert Fathers and Mothers had used to experience “union” with God. Menninger started teaching the methods to priests. Keating and another monk, Father Basil Pennington (1931-2005), were instrumental in spreading the concepts Menninger taught. Pennington organized the first retreat for lay people in Connecticut where the term contemplative prayer was referred to as centering prayer.⁸

In 1978, the popularity of the spiritual formation movement skyrocketed with the publication of Richard Foster’s book *The Celebration of Discipline*. Foster, a theologian in the Quaker tradition, is considered to be the leading exponent and teacher of the contemplative movement today.⁹ Within 15 years of its publication, readers of *Christianity Today* voted *The Celebration of Discipline* number three on a list of books as having “the most significant impact on [their] Christian life.”¹⁰

Tony Campolo says in his book, *Speaking My Mind*, that mysticism “provides some hope for common ground between Christianity and Islam.”¹¹ Elsewhere he also states:

“As I lie alone in bed in the early-morning quiet, I wait for God to invade me, to fill my soul, and to take possession of me. ... I learned this way of having a born-again experience from reading the Catholic mystics, especially *The Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola*. ... *The Spiritual Exercises* has become a rich resource for Christians of all denominational persuasions who seek a deep intimacy with God.”¹²

According to Lighthouse Trails Research Project, Tilden Edwards, founder of the *Shalem Institute for Spiritual Formation*, said “contemplative prayer is the bridge between Christianity and Far Eastern religions.”¹³

Campolo and other contemplative practitioners have experienced a self-induced trance-like state where they are taken into a spiritual realm. They contend that in this realm they experience the presence of God and there God speaks to and guides them. They also believe that *anyone*, not just Christians, *can enter this realm*. They maintain that anyone can experience the presence of God, Allah, the Great Spirit, or whatever name a person calls God; He is the same God.

Many believers today think that the architects of the spiritual formation movement — those like Keating,

Menninger, and Pennington — were devout Christians. They were, however, Catholic monks. They were men who could not see through the Church of Rome’s foundational heresies, and further promoted the integration of pagan practices such as Zen Buddhism and Hindu yoga with Christianity. Pennington, in his book *Centering Prayer: Renewing an Ancient Prayer Form*, refers to “our brothers and sisters in the Hindu tradition.”¹⁴ He obviously made no distinctions between Christian and Eastern beliefs in God. In Father Thomas Ryan’s book, fellow Catholic priest Henri Nouwen (1932-1996)¹⁵ wrote in the foreword that integrating some of the practices from the East can have a positive and transforming effect on Christians:

“When Thomas Ryan took a sabbatical and went to India to study the religions of the Hindus, the Buddhists and the Moslems, he was most struck by their practices. In India he came to realize that there was nothing wrong with the ‘How to do it?’ question and that *all the great Hindu, Buddhist and Moslem teachers taught their disciples very practical disciplines to transform their lives. He became deeply convinced that unless Christians offer similar disciplines, the Christian faith will never become a true transforming faith, with concrete and specific implications for daily life.*”¹⁶

The cover of a 2008 *Christianity Today* magazine proclaims “Lost Secrets of the Ancient Church” eliciting attention to its story entitled “The Future Lies in the Past.”¹⁷ The article describes those lost secrets that are being rediscovered by present-day Evangelicals. The ancient church is the Roman Catholic Church and the secrets the early Church fathers discovered are Eastern methods for hearing and experiencing what they believe to be God.

The article describes how young Evangelicals are growing tired of “traditional” and the pragmatic “seeker-sensitive” churches. Traditional churches focus too much on “being

right." They focus too much on "Bible studies" and "apologetics." Believers want to "seek a renewed encounter" with God beyond "doctrinal definitions." Experiencing God beyond the boundaries of God's Word is a perfect definition of mysticism.

BACK TO ROME

Christian mysticism, under the guise of piety and godliness, is the work *par excellence* of Satan. Mysticism, when it takes hold of a person's life, will progress in an anti-Reformation direction and an increased tolerance of Roman Catholicism and paganism. An illustration can be found in the above-mentioned issue of *Christianity Today*, which addresses evangelicalism's interest in ancient Roman Catholic beliefs and practices. What was amazing was the author of a previously cited feature story and *Christianity Today's* own senior managing editor saying that this movement toward Roman Catholicism is a good thing. The editor, Mark Galli, states: "While the ancient church has captivated the evangelical imagination for some time, it hasn't been until recently that it's become an accepted fixture of the evangelical landscape. *And this is for the good.*"¹⁸

The author, Chris Armstrong, wrote that the movement is being led by individuals such as "Dallas Willard, Richard Foster, and living, practicing monks and nuns" and "that they are receiving good guidance on this road from wise teachers [which] is reason to believe that Christ is guiding the process."¹⁹

On the cover of that issue of *Christianity Today* is a modernistic illustration of a man kneeling in a pile of sand with a shovel nearby. The magazine's headline reads: "Lost Secrets of the Ancient Church." He is depicted as having unearthed a Catholic icon — an ornate cross relic. These rediscovered secrets include *lectio divina* and monasticism. Willard, who is mentioned in the article as one of the trustworthy guides, has promoted monastic practices which he admits are not taught in the Bible. Willard has rejected *sola Scriptura* on the

grounds that churches which adhere to it have a "problem" he labels as "a theological deficiency."²⁰ He says:

"All pleasing and doctrinally sound schemes of Christian education, church growth, and spiritual renewal came around at last to this disappointing result. But whose fault was this failure?"²¹

Willard states that the failure was that the Gospel focused too little on man and his body.²²

DISARMING THE CHURCH

Satan's strategy is to offer something in place of a relationship with the true God without arousing suspicion, like a bait concealing a fish hook. Satan's goal is not to tempt people to become immoral, materialistic, or drunkards, but to receive worship from all mankind. This must be done in a way such that humans will *think* they are having a true experience with the true God.

Prayer is the highest activity of our Christian life. Therefore it is not surprising that Satan attacks us in the area of prayer. Through the contemplative prayer movement, Satan is producing confusion about how to pray and our communion and fellowship with God. We must never forget we are engaged in a battle. It is a struggle against the devil, "against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places" (Ephesians 6:12). If the devil can take away from the Church its most potent weapon, the Church will be powerless and incapable of resisting him and standing firm (Ephesians 6:14). He will disarm the Church with his lies and distortions about prayer, thus depriving it of a means of attack and defense. It will render the Body of Christ harmless.

The devil knows better than to try to persuade believers not to pray at all, so he will teach them a "better way" to pray. And so he provides the Church with the contemplative way. Christians will learn how to listen to God, because, they are told, "prayer is a relationship and two-way communi-

cation with God."²³ Contemplative prayer will help "develop the inward attentiveness to God's divine whisper."²⁴ It will show us how to "stop and quiet ourselves to spend time in *real relationship* with God."²⁵

MEDITATION: BEYOND THINKING

Any Christian saying that he had learned to communicate with God via a Ouija board would arouse suspicion. After all, the Ouija board is an instrument of divination, which is forbidden in the Bible (Deuteronomy 18:10). Nevertheless, under the guise of "spiritual exercise," "prayer," and "experiencing God," programs and practices rife with New Age methodology have infiltrated the Christian Church.

The popularity of contemplative spirituality in the Church is based primarily not on experience and understanding, but on the words (books, CDs, etc.) of popular Christian leaders. In turn, many of these leaders have not researched the contemplative movement and do not understand it themselves. They associate the New Age movement with people on the fringe of society. In addition, many people mistakenly associate New Age with the 1960s counterculture. They believe that the New Age influence peaked back then and has declined over the years. Church leaders consider it such a recognizable evil that it would be impossible for it to enter the Church. This could not be further from the truth. The New Age movement, like a soaking rain, has seeped into the roots of our culture and has been integrated into the Church.

Attuning oneself to a higher consciousness to experience a deeper communion and spiritual growth is the objective of evangelicalism's infatuation with contemplative prayer.

WHAT IS MEDITATION?

The idea of meditation might conjure up images of someone sitting alone by a rippling brook, thinking about something intently as birds chirp in the trees and a gentle breeze blows. New Age contemplative medi-

tation is the opposite. The intent of meditation, whether it is Hindu Transcendental Meditation (TM), Buddhist, Islamic, or "Christian" contemplative meditation, is to relax and rid the mind of all thought. It is to *still* the mind and to stop thinking. The mind, we are told, is a hindrance to meditation. The goal of contemplative meditation is for the mind to become thoughtless and empty.

T.A. McMahon, president of *The Berean Call*, said the goal of the contemplative movement "is to get people beyond thinking and understanding and into the realm of *experiencing*. Adherents are taught that while reason has some value, truly knowing God can only come through experiencing Him."²⁶

Wayne Dyer, motivational speaker and author, said in his book, *Getting in the Gap: Making Conscious Contact with God Through Meditation*:

"For it's in this silent space called the gap that you'll come to make conscious contact with God. ... The paramount reason for making meditation a part of our daily life is to join forces with our sacred energy and regain the power of our Source (God). ... By meditating, we come to *know* God rather than *know about* God."²⁷

Beth Moore states that it is only through meditation that we can truly know God:

"God's Word is so clear that if we are not still before Him we will *never truly know* to the depths of the marrow in our bones that He is God."²⁸

It is a dangerous trend which teaches that God can only truly be known by using a technique which leads to a subjective experience. Although a person may be sincere in trying to contact God, he places himself in jeopardy of possibly contacting a demon posing as God, Jesus, an angel, or a departed loved one.

Contemplative prayer, also called centering prayer by Keating, Menninger, and Pennington, is said to be a

method of prayer that prepares people to receive the gift of God's presence. It "is a prayer of silence, an experience of God's presence ... Contemplative Prayer is the opening of mind and heart — our whole being — to God ... whom we know by faith is *within us*."²⁹

Centering prayer is sometimes called centering down. It involves emptying the mind of all conscious thought. The objective is to enter into a non-verbal, experiential communion with God in the center of one's being by bypassing the senses and the intellect. The aim is to receive direct revelation from God.

The problem many Christians have is they do not understand the words and phrases the Christian mystics use. They use language that sounds biblical but the meaning is not the same. This is part of the devil's ability to ape God and His Word.

The heart and soul of Christian and non-Christian mysticism is meditation or contemplation. Prayer as taught in the Bible is talking to God. God in turn speaks to us through His Word. Biblical prayer flows from our mind and is rational and intelligent. The Apostle Paul said he prayed with his spirit and with his mind (1 Corinthians 14:15). He did not pray with either his spirit or his mind, but with both. In prayer, believers are to let their requests be made known to God (Philippians 4:6), confess sin (1 John 1:9), and praise and worship God (1 Chronicles 29:10-13).

The techniques Christian mystics use are identical to those of Eastern religions. Richard Foster says:

"I ... find it best to sit in a straight chair, with my back correctly positioned in the chair and both feet flat on the floor. ... Place the hands on the knees, palms up in a gesture of receptivity. Sometimes it is good to close the eyes to remove distractions and center the attention on Christ. At other times it is helpful to ponder a picture of the Lord or to look out at some lovely trees and plants for the same purpose."³⁰

Brennan Manning, in his book, *The Signature of Jesus*, instructs his readers:

"The first step in faith is to stop thinking about God in prayer ... *Contemplative spirituality tends to emphasize the need for a change in consciousness* ... we must come to see reality differently. Choose a single, sacred word ... repeat the sacred word inwardly, slowly, and often. [E]nter into the great silence of God. Alone in that silence, the noise within will subside and the Voice of Love will be heard."³¹

The repetition of the "sacred word," the mantra, triggers the blank mind. In this altered state of consciousness the heart is open to spiritual influences; voices and/or visions. It is this mystical state that is valued by the practitioner of contemplative prayer. For the individual the mystical experience becomes the source of revelation and a privileged avenue of insight into God and His workings. Foster encourages his readers:

"Though it may sound strange to modern ears, we should without shame enroll as apprentices in the school of contemplative prayer."³²

Such encouragement is not found in Scripture.

THE BIBLE AND MYSTICS

Mystics do not grapple with the historical and textual arguments put forward by serious Bible students. Mystical thinking is fuzzy and inconsistent. Mystics take what they can use from the Bible and will rip it out of its historic context. Mystics seldom if ever deal with sin. Therefore they are blind and open to deception by the Adversary.

If God's purpose was to communicate with His children through mystical practices such as contemplative prayer, the Bible would not be silent on the subject. If God had ordained that mystical experiences would be the means whereby He would guide and direct the Church, then He would have given examples and instructions on how to meditate.

THE “SEEKER-SENSITIVE” GOES MYSTICAL

In 1976, Jimmy Carter, a professing born-again Christian, was elected president. *Newsweek* magazine proclaimed 1976 “the year of the evangelical.” Chuck Colson’s book *Born Again* became a best-seller. In 1981, with the help of Evangelicals, Ronald Reagan became the 40th president. A growing relationship between the mass movement of evangelical Christians and the Republican Party was hard to miss.

Somewhere in all the commotion Evangelicals began to lose their theological distinctions. Theology or doctrine did not just disappear, but it was neglected. This neglect eventually led to an anti-theological or anti-doctrinal mood within the Church. Traditional evangelicalism with its inflexible beliefs about salvation and the Bible was seen as outdated.

Within this context arose the pragmatic or seeker-friendly church movement which advocated a new way to do ministry. For the past several decades evangelicalism has been romanced by the “seeker-sensitive” movement. Pioneered by Bill Hybels, pastor of Willow Creek Community Church near Chicago, pastors and church leaders were told they needed to throw out their old method and replace it with a new way of “doing church.” Demographic studies, professional strategists, marketing research, and sermons that addressed “felt needs” were the focus. Doctrine was moved to the back burner and being relevant was *avant-garde*. The over-flowing crowds, not the depth of discipleship and biblical knowledge, determined success. If the church was full, then surely God was blessing the ministry. Talk about sin was at a minimum. However, a Starbucks-like coffee house was very popular.

Evangelical pastors hung on every word that proceeded out of the mouth of the church-growth experts. Church leaders flocked to the church-growth seminars to learn the secrets and hear of the successes of Hybels and others, such as Rick Warren of Saddleback Church. Those who challenged the

seeker-sensitive approach to ministry were labeled traditionalists and unwilling to change.

For the most part the seeker-friendly church was quietly orthodox so as not to scare away the seekers. However, ignoring doctrine fostered superficial Christians. Hybels admitted as much when he stated:

“Some of the stuff that we have put millions of dollars into thinking it would really help our people grow and develop spiritually, when the data actually came back it wasn’t helping people that much.”³³

After decades of Sunday morning rock bands, Christian magicians, and an inspirational speech from the church’s pastor, people were left craving more depth and spirituality. Entertainment church was fun for a while, but the popcorn had grown stale and the bells, whistles, and calliope music started to get on everyone’s nerves. Discontent with the superficiality, trendiness, and artful pandering of the seeker-friendly movement led people to gravitate to the “emergent church.”

Thus the seeker-sensitive churches are adapting their product to a spiritual market that believes it can have spiritual comfort with very little truth. The emergents are adapting their product to a spiritual market that is younger, postmodern, and leery about truth. But in both cases we see this anomaly. Here are those who think of themselves as being biblical, the followers of Jesus and the apostles, embracing an alternative spirituality disconnected from truth in order either to be successful or cutting-edge.

A study released by Willow Creek Church and published in a book titled *Reveal: Where Are You* tells the story. The book, co-authored by Cally Parkinson and Greg Hawkins with its foreword written by Hybels, is an admission by the leaders that their approach for the past 30 years had not produced solid and grounded Christians. Hybels called the studies “earth shaking,” “ground breaking,” and “mind blowing.”³⁴

The book asks questions such as: “Is your church really making a difference? How do you know? Do you ever lie awake at night wondering ... Do our church programs really help people grow? Are we putting our resources into ministries that genuinely change lives? Are we helping people become more like Christ, or just keeping them busy?” Additional questions asked are: “How many ... members? Baptisms? Decisions for Christ? How many attend each week? Are in small groups? Actively serve? Tithe?” The authors point out that, “Numbers can be helpful, but they don’t reveal the whole story. Numbers can’t peer into the human heart. When it comes to spiritual growth, we need to be able to measure more than numbers.”³⁵

Christianity Today’s “Out of Ur” website references comments that Hybels offered in a video while speaking at his 2007 *Leadership Summit*. In its citation of the video, the publication stated that Hybels confessed:

“We made a mistake. What we should have done when people crossed the line of faith and become Christians, we should have started telling people and teaching people that they have to take responsibility to become ‘self feeders.’ We should have gotten people, taught people, how to read their bible between service, how to do the spiritual practices much more aggressively on their own.”³⁶

Following Hybels’ confession, the magazine proposed:

“In other words, spiritual growth doesn’t happen best by becoming dependent on elaborate church programs but through the age old spiritual practices of prayer, bible reading, and relationships. And, ironically, these basic disciplines do not require multi-million dollar facilities and hundreds of staff to manage.”³⁷

And so from Willow Creek Community Church, with its past mistakes, comes a new approach. While it may be new for this megachurch, it is

really centuries old. It is a shift toward the pagan concepts and practices of the spiritual formation movement. In a Willow Creek-published article titled "Rediscovering Spiritual Formation," Keri Wyatt Kent, author and spiritual formation retreat leader, writes, "From *monastic* communities to the *emergent* church, *spiritual formation* continues to shift and change a whole new generation of Christians."³⁸ Kent goes on to describe how contemplative guru Richard Foster has awakened the Church to a new understanding of the Christian life. Kent quotes or references the "who's who" of contemplative authors and teachers including Dallas Willard, John Ortberg, Ruth Haley Barton, and others.

Biblical theology is the chief casualty in this spiritual formation (the formation of a deeper spirituality in the believer) or contemplative prayer movement. Mystical experiences have replaced theology. For a minority of believers their Christian beliefs have not drastically changed, however, the search to "experience God" must never be hampered by those beliefs. Experience trumps doctrine is the key to understanding this movement.

Biblical spirituality and contemplative spirituality are not variations of the same theme. They are antithetical to one another. The spiritual formation movement promotes a counterfeit spirituality of which its primary enablers are evangelical pastors and churches. This is especially true of the seeker-sensitive and emergent churches.

A FAIR CONCERN TO OFFER

For thirty years church leaders have operated on the "insights" of the architects of Willow Creek. They have misled a generation of pastors. Now Willow Creek, having failed to produce true disciples, wants to wipe the slate clean and ask pastors to follow new ideas. In light of where Willow Creek has been and the decision it has made to pursue contemplative spirituality, one can doubt whether Willow Creek is a trustworthy source for ministry advice. Their motives are not being questioned here. Willow

Creek's leaders truly believe spiritual formation is the direction God is taking them. However, this is another example of how Satan apes God. Critics of the seeker-sensitive movement have been pointing out these flaws for years. The brotherly warnings by critics have brought ridicule, but they were spot-on.

It is no secret that Willow Creek is an integral part of the emerging spirituality movement. One only has to go to Willow Creek Association's online resource page where there is a list of New Age/spiritual formation exponents such as Rob Bell, Brian McLaren, John Ortberg, Ken Blanchard, Mindy Caliguire, Tony Campolo, Henry Cloud, Larry Crabb, Max Lucado, Dallas Willard, and others.

The contemplative spirituality movement is the vehicle or "framework" through which Willow Creek will influence millions of Christians around the world. Many undiscerning people have been and will be led astray.

One thing that makes it difficult for the average Christian to detect spiritual formation doctrines is that they come from respected teachers, who are themselves deceived. Hybels, Moore, and Lucado will quote or recommend an individual who is committed to New Age and spiritual formation doctrines. Those who are not familiar and do not research the person being quoted will not easily recognize the false teaching. For example, Lucado, on the back cover of Brennan Manning's book *The Ragamuffin Gospel* states, "Brennan Manning does a masterful job of blowing the dust off of *shop-worn theology* [i.e., *sola Scriptura*] and allowing God's grace to do what only God's grace can do — amaze."³⁹

Lucado is one of America's most beloved Christian authors, but his endorsement of Manning is unfortunate. PFO director G. Richard Fisher writes:

"[Manning] is now a defunct Roman Catholic priest who also had a broken marriage which ended in divorce. As an ex-priest he has a love/hate relationship

with the Catholic Church. It can be added to all that a lifetime of admitted alcohol addiction, wildly skewed beliefs, and his distorted understanding of grace. His view of unconditional acceptance by God of just about anything he says or does moves him in extreme antinomianism (literally, lawlessness) and an unbiblical view of the Christian life. ... Brennan Manning's life was a horrible mess even by the world's standards. His distorted view of grace, gratuitously applied to all, produced in his own life the by-product of a man mired in gross sinful habits, drunkenness, and broken commitments. He is a man who was always seeking something more, but never seemed to find it. He is a man who thought that God and grace always accepted anything he wished to do and anyway he wished to live. Manning is totally self-centered and does not care for others or he would not be living in violation of Romans 14:12-13, being a constant stumbling block to the weak."⁴⁰

It is no accident that the deception is so complicated. Satan makes it so. The undiscerning Christian is not suspicious in the least. He thinks he believes biblical teachings. This is how Satan apes God.

THE BLIND LEADING THE BLIND

The Apostle Paul said, "Let no one cheat you of your reward" (Colossians 2:18). He refers to the reward or prize which was offered to athletes who ran in the Olympic Games. It is good for believers to recall how very frequently Paul points to this by his metaphors to the race course. He describes the Christian as a runner, urging us to strive, at other times agonize. He speaks of wrestling and competing. Paul's words ought to make us feel what an intense and focused thing the Christian life is. It is like running a race or an obstacle course. It is filled with hazards and dangers and one will not attain the prize if one is lazy, half-hearted, and undiscerning. It demands all our

strength and energy. All it takes to rob us of our reward is indifference and neglect.

There were individuals in the church at Colossae: mystics who said that they had a deeper and fuller union with God than Christ alone could give. They would “cheat” or “beguile” (KJV) the Colossian believers by intimidating them. They characterized themselves as being more spiritual — “puffed up” — boasting how they had found a better way, to which Paul instructs:

“Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen [experiences beyond the five senses], vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God” (Colossians 2:18-19, brackets added).

Mystics today are still trying to intimidate and demean people by claiming they (the mystics) have a better way. They boast of their visions and experiences with God in the silence. They maintain that those who do not believe their doctrines and have similar esoteric visions and experiences live a subpar Christian life.

Henri Nouwen is a prime example of how mystics boast of being more enlightened than ordinary believers. He writes:

“One of the *discoveries* we make in [meditative] prayer is that the closer we come to God, the closer we come to all our brothers and sisters in the human family. God is not a private God. The God who dwells in our inner sanctuary is also the God who dwells in the inner sanctuary of *each* human being.”⁴¹

Likewise, Foster refers to those who practice contemplative spirituality as “*pioneers* in this frontier of the Spirit.”⁴²

John Caddock, a critic of Manning, observes that “While Manning would acknowledge that some elementary truths of God can be found by reading the Bible, intimate knowledge of God *only* comes through centering prayer.”⁴³ The truth is it comes only through God’s Word and the Living Word, Jesus Christ. It is Christ, through the Holy Spirit and Word of God that produces true spirituality.

Gnosticism was one of the early heresies of the Christian Church and it is alive in the spiritual formation movement. Gnostics see themselves as people who have attained a level of spiritual knowledge higher than the average Christian’s. Gnosticism resulted in believers seeking to attain hidden, extrabiblical knowledge through mysticism. Gnosticism is inherently competitive with Scripture and denies its sufficiency.

Nearly all the New Testament epistles defended Christian teaching from Gnostic influences. In Colossians, Paul assured believers there is no knowledge of God outside of Jesus. Paul wrote in Colossians 2:2-3:

“... that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, and attaining to all riches of the full assurance of understanding, to the knowledge of the mystery of God, both of the Father and of Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.”

MORE DECEPTION

Years ago, The Navigators cultivated young mystics with its *PrayKids!* newsletter, a publication aimed at children ages 7 to 12, luring them into emotionalism, subjectivism, and mysticism. So it is no surprise to hear that the Awana organization, which helps Cubbies and Sparkies learn Scripture, may be headed down the spiritual formation path, too. In the February 2006 edition of Lighthouse Trails Research, it was disclosed that Awana leader Kevin White sent an announcement to Awana youth leaders promoting an upcoming Willow Creek Association’s Student Ministries Conference.⁴⁴ Later that year, Lighthouse Trails Research

reported that Awana promoted and offered a book by Saddleback Church youth pastor Doug Fields. Fields is a regular speaker at Youth Specialties, which is one of the strongest promoters of the mystical youth ministry. Field’s book, published by Youth Specialties and Zondervan, contains sidebar comments by a variety of individuals who promote and practice contemplative spirituality.

More recently, in the April 2012 edition of “The Blog of Lighthouse Trails Research,” the question was asked if “Awana [is] naive about contemplative spirituality? If so, then we beseech them to educate themselves and request a recall on their book *Perspectives on Children’s Spiritual Formation*.”⁴⁵

Awana’s promotion and use of this publication has concerned many people. The following is a description of the book:

“The book offers four different views on *how to transform children*. One author, Scottie May, a professor at Wheaton, writes the section titled, ‘Contemplative-Reflective Model.’ May gives a hearty promotion of *centering prayer, the Jesus prayer, Christ candles, the Catholic Eucharist* and a strong endorsement for contemplative spirituality ala Thomas Merton, whom he favorably quotes in the book. Two Awana staff writers [Gregory C. Carlson and John K. Crupper] respond in the book to May’s contemplative approach and give it a thumbs up with only minor cautions. But overall they believe that contemplative is a valid approach for all Christians, including children. *Perspectives on Children’s Spiritual Formation* is giving a green light to Awana leaders around the world to practice contemplative prayer.”⁴⁶

In the February 2008 edition of *The Berean Call* newsletter, a reader submitted a question: “I’ve heard that Awana is drifting toward mysticism in the way they are ministering to children. What do you know about that?”⁴⁷

The response from *The Berean Call* was "Although Carlson and Crupper rightly object to some key points in May's mystical model, they naively give the impression that the Contemplative-Reflective model has something to offer, even quoting favorably Richard Foster, arguably the foremost advocate of Catholic mysticism in the church. Compounding the confusion, they commend 'the Contemplative-Reflective Model [as an] important tool in helping provide a balanced development of the Christian spiritual life' (p. 87). Here they are showing their ignorance of the occultism rooted in mysticism."⁴⁸

Commenting upon *The Berean Call's* observations, Lighthouse Trails Research further explained that if naïveté was the issue it is not an acceptable excuse because it can be spiritually misleading. However, if they were honestly naïve then Awana needs to do two things:

"First, they must educate Awana leaders who are under their tutelage about the true nature of contemplative spirituality. Secondly, they will need to request a recall of the present edition of *Perspectives on Children's Spiritual Formation* and revise it so statements like the following [which endorse contemplative spiritual teaching and teachers] are no longer in the book."⁴⁹

Lighthouse Trails Research then cites numerous examples of comments made by Carlson and Crupper, executives of Awana.

A CALL TO DISCERNMENT

Undiscerning Christians desiring something deeper than what their experience has been are becoming fixated on mysticism. These mystical practices, which once occupied a tiny corner of the Christian subculture, have moved into the mainstream. This should not be surprising because some of the most popular Christian pastors, authors, and speakers publicly acclaim contemplative prayer as a new and improved way of communicating with God. Christian denominations, organizations, colleges, and seminaries wholeheartedly promote

the superiority of mystical Christianity, integrating Eastern mysticism with Christianity. These facts demonstrate with unquestionable clarity that the Church today lacks biblical discernment.

The popularity of Eastern New Age beliefs and practices is a condemnation of the failings of the Christian Church. If the Church were functioning as she should be, these philosophies would not have the influence and impact that they have today. Believers are looking for satisfaction and power to overcome the difficulties and problems they face. It is a difficult world and they are perplexed and bewildered. They are looking for something that is authoritative and helpful.

There are many people who will say that mystical practices such as meditation, walking the labyrinth, yoga, and reiki⁵⁰ have made them feel better and produced positive results. Thousands of Christians from every denomination will tell you that contemplative prayer has changed their lives.

Beth Moore states that through contemplative prayer, God "really can change my circumstances, that [He] really can change my heart, that [He] really can empower me to be different than I'd be, to do what I cannot do, to know what I cannot possibly know."⁵¹

Those who believe that these practices are of God because they give a positive experience and feeling have been tricked. Feelings are not a sufficient test of whether a spiritual practice is valid (Jeremiah 17:9).

The Bible's emphasis is not on how one feels, but on one's relationship with God. Jesus tells of a Pharisee and tax collector who went to the temple to pray. The Pharisee was a good man, happy and content. He had no complaints. He prayed, "God, I thank You that I am not like other men ... even as this tax collector" (Luke 18:11). However, Jesus said that the Pharisee did not leave justified. While the Pharisee felt fine, his experiences left him confident that he was right with God. But his experiences deceived him.

The great leaders of the Christian faith always derived their teachings from Scripture. This is not true of Satan's counterfeits, such as the contemplative movement, who use Scripture out of context to support their beliefs.

Another common aspect of the wiles of the devil generally speaking, and particularly in the contemplative prayer movement, is that their teaching ultimately depends upon the "personal testimony" of those who practice it. When viewing the *Be Still* DVD, one will notice that everybody talks about experience. They tell about their former prayer life. They talk about how unexciting their religious experience was and how meditation has changed everything. Contemplative prayer is said to be the means where God changes and charges (guides, motivates, enables) His people. It is the formula and the personal testimony of what happened to the person who applied the formula. The point throughout the DVD is if you practice the formula you will have the same results of God speaking to you.

BLIND GUIDES

Our Lord asked, "Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into the ditch?" (Luke 6:39). The most important thing, if you agree you need a guide, is to examine carefully the person who claims the title "guide." Some people follow a leader because he has been appointed by a particular church authority. He is accepted on that ground alone.

How foolish would a person be who hired a guide just because he said he was a guide? The person follows him into the Alaskan wilderness only to discover he is blind. It would not be long until both were lost.

Many believers blindly follow the blind teachers of the spiritual formation movement. They defend their "various and strange doctrines" (Hebrews 13:9) and twisted interpretation of Scripture. They affirm they are confident that their guides have, with great care and discernment, integrated

into their teaching pagan ideas and practices that are consistent with Scripture. They do not examine their guide's eyes.

Some of these misguided people are not misguided at all. It is sometimes true of teachers as it is of idols: we make them in our own image. A man with good vision would not choose a blind man to follow because he sees the danger and disaster on the horizon. A blind man may choose to follow a blind man because he too cannot see and that is why he is immersed in the errors of the spiritual formation movement.

Then there are those believers who have, because of spiritual immaturity, chosen a blind guide. This sightless instructor comes highly recommended by students who have lost their sight under his tutelage. The old saying that the student "will be like his teacher" (Luke 6:40) is well-founded. The young believer who puts his confidence in a blind guide will in time become blind.

Charles Darwin's erroneous explanation was that man descended from the ape; apes mimic, and that is why people mimic one another. However, you will imitate the one you follow: your guide. Choosing a mentor is serious business. One either excels in true godliness or moves in a direction away from God. The blind man and his guide may miss and overlook a number of things, but they will not miss falling into the ditch. One does not need vision to fall into a ditch.

Endnotes:

1. Berkouwer cited by Randy Alcorn in "Lord Foulgrin's Letters: Afterword." Eternal Perspective Ministries website, Dec. 23, 2009. Document accessed at: www.epm.org/resources/2009/Dec/23/Lord_Foulgrin_s_Letters_Afterward/.
2. *Be Still And Know That I Am God -Psalm 46:10*, DVD by Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2006. Written, directed, and produced by Amy Reinhold, Judge Reinhold, and David Kirkpatrick. Back cover of the DVD insert.
3. See further, "Desert Fathers" on Wikipedia. Document accessed at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Desert_Fathers.
4. Ken Kaisch, *Finding God: A Handbook of Christian Meditation*. New York: Paulist Press, 1994, pg. 191, emphasis added.

5. A mantra is a word or phrase used in meditation. It is repeated over and over to induce an altered state of consciousness and free a person from thoughts.
6. See further, "Thomas Keating" on Wikipedia. Document accessed at: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Keating.
7. The abbot is the superior or governor of an abbey or monastery for men.
8. "Thomas Keating," Wikipedia document, op. cit.
9. See further, "Richard Foster (theologian)" on Wikipedia. Document accessed at: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Foster_\(religion\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Foster_(religion)).
10. "Book of the Year Reader's Poll," *Christianity Today*, April 5, 1993, pg. 27.
11. Tony Campolo, *Speaking My Mind*. New York: Basic Books, 2006, pp. 30-31. Cited in "Interspirituality - The Outcome of Contemplative Prayer," Lighthouse Trail Research Project website. Document accessed at: www.lighthouse trailsresearch.com/marchnewsarticle.htm.
12. Tony Campolo, *Letters to a Young Evangelical*. New York: Basic Books, 2006, pp. 30-31.
13. "Interspirituality - The Outcome of Contemplative Prayer," op. cit.
14. M. Basil Pennington, *Centering Prayer: Renewing an Ancient Prayer Form*. New York: Image Books Doubleday, 2001, pg. 29.
15. For additional information on Henri Nouwen, see G. Richard Fisher, "Evangelicalism's Favorite Priest - Is Henri Nouwen a Friend or Foe?" *The Quarterly Journal*, April-June 2011, pp. 1, 15-21.
16. Henri Nouwen in Thomas Ryan, *Disciplines for Christian Living*. Mahwah, N.J.: Paulist Press, 1993, pg. 2, emphasis added.
17. Chris Armstrong, "The Future Lies in the Past," *Christianity Today*, February 2008, pp. 22-29. The quoted words that follow are from pg. 26.
18. Mark Galli, "Ancient-Future People," *Christianity Today*, February 2008, pg. 7.
19. "The Future Lies in the Past," op. cit., pg. 29.
20. Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*. New York: Harper/Collins, 1991, pg. 18.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid, pg. 19.
23. *Be Still* DVD, op cit., statement made by Judge Reinhold, narrator at 01:58 timemark. Concerning the concept that "Prayer is two-way communication with God," this, we believe, is an unbiblical concept. Prayer is a "one-way" not a "two-way" communication. Praying is outward and upward to God. The Bible says absolutely nothing about listening to God in prayer because people are to listen to God in Scripture (Matthew 22:31). The words "pray" and "listen" are not even remotely connected. Prayer is prayer and

- listening is listening. All of the Greek words translated "prayer" refer to talking to God, not God talking to us. Christians do not receive instruction from God in prayer by waiting for Him to respond in their thoughts. Within prayer, we may begin the process of receiving guidance by asking for it (James 1:5), but in Scripture, prayer is always represented as man addressing God. Never are we told to "listen" for an "answer" in prayer. Prayer is a way of asking God to show you guidance. To discover the Lord's will we should pray for help to understand and use the Bible in a proper way.
24. Ibid., at 02:38 timemark.
25. Ibid., at 02:14 timemark, emphasis added.
26. T.A. McMahon, "Please Contemplate This," *The Berean Call* newsletter, March 2000, pg. 1, italic in original.
27. Wayne Dyer, *Getting in the Gap: Making Conscious Contact with God Through Meditation*. Carlsbad, Calif.: Hay House, Inc., Publishing, 2002, pp. xi, 2, italics in original.
28. Beth Moore, *Be Still* DVD, op. cit., at 15:02 timemark, emphasis added.
29. "Centering Prayer," The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society website, emphasis added. Document accessed at: www.contemplativemind.org/practices/tree/centering-prayer.
30. Richard Foster, *Celebration of Discipline*. New York: HarperCollins, 1998, pg. 28.
31. Brennan Manning cited by Ray Yungen, *A Time of Departing*. Silverton, Ore.: Lighthouse Trails, 2002, pg. 84, emphasis added, ellipses and brackets in original.
32. *Celebration of Discipline*, op. cit., pg. 15.
33. Bill Hybels cited in Denny Hartford, Vital Signs Blog, Wednesday, October 31, 2007. Document accessed at: <http://vitalsignsblog.blogspot.com/2007/10/bill-hybels-we-made-mistake-seeker.html>.
34. Bill Hybels cited in URL Scaramanga, "Willow Creek Repents?," *Leadership Journal's* Out of Ur website, October 18, 2007, quote rendered in italics in original. Document accessed at: www.outofur.com/archives/2007/10/willow_creek_re.html.
35. *Reveal Where Are You?* product page on Amazon.com, ellipses in original. Document accessed at: www.amazon.com/Reveal-Where-Hawkins-Cally-Parkinson/dp/074419234X.
36. Hybels cited in "Willow Creek Repents?," op. cit. The video from which this statement was taken was originally posted on Willow Creek's own website (<http://revealnow.com/story.asp?storyid=49>). It has since been removed and replaced with the message: "Page Error - You appear to have clicked on a broken or outdated link."
37. "Willow Creek Repents," op. cit., emphasis added.

38. Keri Wyatt Kent, "Rediscovering Spiritual Formation," *Willow*, Fall 2007, Volume 14, Issue 4, pg. 10, emphasis added. Document accessed at: www.print-epro.net/freeport/willowcre/willowvol14iss4/index.php.

39. Brennan Manning, *The Ragamuffin Gospel*. Sisters, Ore: Multnomah Publishers, Inc., 1990, pg. 1, emphasis added. This endorsement is also found on the back cover.

40. G. Richard Fisher, "When Grace is No Longer Amazing - The Tragic Life and Legacy of Brennan Manning," *The Quarterly Journal*, April-June 2012, pp. 1, 11, 18.

41. Henri Nouwen, *Here and Now*. New York: The Crossroad Publishing Co., 1994, pg. 25, emphasis added. It should be noted that if God already dwells in each person regardless of their religious or non-religious beliefs, as Nouwen states, then Jesus' words to Nicodemus about being born again (in John 3:3) are meaningless.

42. Foster cited in Bob DeWaay, "Richard Foster — Celebration of Deception," *Critical Issues Commentary* website, emphasis added. Document accessed at: <http://cicministry.org/commentary/issue112.htm>.

43. John Caddock, "What is Contempla-

ive Spirituality and Why is It Dangerous? — A Review of Brennan Manning's *The Signature of Jesus*," *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*, Autumn 1997 — Volume 10:19, emphasis added. Document accessed at: www.faithalone.org/journal/1997ii/Caddock.html. In addition to drawing his conclusion from Manning's *The Signature of Jesus*, Caddock further supports his remarks by citing Manning's *Gentle Revolutionaries* (Denville, NJ: Dimension Books, 1975).

44. "Awana Clubs — Are they heading toward contemplative?" Lighthouse Trails Research Project website, February 26, 2006. Document accessed at: www.lighthouse trailsresearch.com/awana.htm.

45. "Revisiting Awana's Move Toward Contemplative - And Another Look at 'Perspectives on Children's Spiritual Formation'," Lighthouse Trails Research Project website, April 14, 2012. Document accessed at: www.lighthouse trailsresearch.com/blog/?p=1864.

46. "Awana News," The Berean Call website, emphasis and book title italics added. Document accessed at: www.thebereancall.org/content/awana-news.

47. "Question: I've heard that Awana is

drifting toward mysticism in the way they are ministering to children. What do you know about that?," *The Berean Call* newsletter, February 2008. Document accessed at: www.thebereancall.org/content/question-ive-heard-awana-drifting-toward-mysticism-way-they-are-ministering-children-what-do.

48. *Ibid.*, brackets in original.

49. "Revisiting Awana's Move Toward Contemplative - And Another Look at 'Perspectives on Children's Spiritual Formation,'" *op. cit.*

50. According to The International Center for Reiki Training, "Reiki is a Japanese technique for stress reduction and relaxation that also promotes healing. It is administered by 'laying on hands' and is based on the idea that an unseen 'life force energy' flows through us and is what causes us to be alive. If one's 'life force energy' is low, then we are more likely to get sick or feel stress, and if it is high, we are more capable of being happy and healthy." Document accessed at: www.reiki.org/faq/whatisreiki.html.

51. Beth Moore, *Be Still* DVD, *op. cit.*, at 26:45 timemark.



EDITORIALS

(continued from page 2)

finding himself at Cape Canaveral, Fla., staring at the space shuttle. As he inspects this strange object he would naturally ask "What is it?" and "What does it do?" The meaning and purpose of the space shuttle cannot be accurately ascertained by the man in and of himself. A NASA scientist would have to explain to the man what it is and what it does. Apart from that explanation the true meaning and purpose of the large object cannot be known by the man.

There is no academic field of study and application more immersed with evolutionary thinking than psychology. Ever since Charles Darwin, and especially Sigmund Freud, psychologists have evaluated man's behavioral problems on an animalistic basis. Experiments with animals and even insects are routinely used for guidance in dealing with human beings. Although many modern-day psychologists have disavowed Freud, they nevertheless have built on his foundation. They theorize within an evolutionary framework. They believe man is merely a highly evolved animal with animal problems and animal solutions.

Psychology's attempt to understand man's nature, his behavior, attitudes and thoughts, apart from the Creator is impossible. Man exists by virtue of the fact that God exists. God is man's environment. Man cannot be lifted

out of his God-environment and be understood. To understand man, as psychology attempts to do, one must understand God's purpose for creating man in the first place. God, the Creator, is the Interpreter of what He has created. To say there is no God who created man with meaning and purpose is to deny man has meaning and purpose.

The theory of evolution maintains that man evolved out of chaos and by chance. Man, therefore, has no meaning and purpose because chance has no meaning and purpose. Chance has no plan because there is no Planner. If there is no NASA scientist to explain and interpret the meaning and purpose of the large object then it is impossible to know. The object has no discernible meaning and purpose. The man can hypothesize and guess, within the context of a man living a thousand years ago. However, all that the man will know for sure is that the object is; it exists. Why? Because it is there. But what it is and what it does, he will never know.

Man will never understand himself apart from God who created him. To deny God and then attempt to gain knowledge of man, as psychology professes to do, is an attempt to do the impossible. It is impossible because God made man with meaning and purpose. Psychology ignores man's real meaning and purpose and presupposes a false meaning and purpose. The result is man's behavior, disturbing moods, and uncomfortable feelings are confusing and difficult to explain; hence the reason there are hundreds of conflicting theories of psychology.