

14 DANGERS IN CHRISTIAN BOOKSTORES

By David Cloud

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(David Cloud, Fundamental Baptist Information Service, P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061, 866-295-4143, fbns@wayoflife.org; for instructions about subscribing and unsubscribing or changing addresses, see the information paragraph at the end of the article)

Never have Christian books been so readily available to the average Christian and never has the spiritual danger associated with such books been so great. Sadly, the average member of a Bible-believing church does not know how to protect himself and his family from these dangers.

The following three crucial Bible truths can protect the child of God in these end times:

FIRST, THE LAST DAYS ARE CHARACTERIZED BY APOSTASY, NOT REVIVAL. Thus it is not surprising that we are confronted today with a vast amount of heresy and spiritual compromise. If ever there were a time when God's people need to be knowledgeable and cautious it is today. "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived. ... For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables" (2 Tim. 3:13; 4:3-4).

SECOND, GOD WARNS HIS PEOPLE TO TEST EVERYTHING BY THE SCRIPTURES. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thess. 5:21). "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world" (1 John 4:1).

THIRD, SPIRITUAL ERROR IS CLOTHED IN THE APPEARANCE OF TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS. It is subtle and can deceive us if we are not well educated biblically and exceedingly careful. "Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves" (Matt. 7:15). "But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ" (2 Cor. 11:2). "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" (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

One of the greatest dangers in Christian bookstores is not dealt with in this book, since we have already dealt with them in other books. This is the Contemporary Christian Music that is promoted by the vast majority of bookstores today. (See the video series Music for Good or Evil and the new free eBook The Directory of Contemporary Worship Musicians, which are available from Way of Life Literature -- www.wayoflife.org.)

Here we are going to deal with **14 other dangers in Christian bookstores.**

1. SMORGASBORD OF MODERN BIBLE VERSIONS

The place we will begin our investigation into heresies and high places in the Southern Baptist Convention is the Bible section of any LifeWay bookstore.

There is a complete capitulation to the heresy of modern textual criticism and its Alexandrian Greek text and a capitulation to the idea that a multiplicity of versions is a blessing.

The smorgasbord principle in Bible versions is a very slippery slope. When the modern version path is first entered from a conservative KJV stance, it is typical for the individual to stay with the more conservative, literal modern translations. But these are very treacherous waters, and they frequently lead to the capitulation of all sense of spiritual discernment and to the acceptance of the strangest, most radical “versions” such as The New Living Bible and The Message. We will give many examples of this.

Before we go farther, though, we want to say that when we warn against the modern versions and promote the King James Bible, we are not fighting for some Ruckmanite principle such as that the King James was given by inspiration or that the King James is advanced revelation over the Greek and Hebrew or that to modernize or change the spelling of a word in the King James is to corrupt God’s Word. We are not saying that it is unimportant to learn the biblical languages or that we should throw away all of the lexicons. Some King James defenders do take such a stand, but that is not our position, and we are convinced that Peter Ruckman and Gail Riplinger and their followers have done nearly as much damage to the cause of the King James Bible as the modern versions have done.

The first great error of the modern versions is that they are based on a Greek text that was created in the 19th century through the humanistic “science” of modern textual criticism. This “science” treated the Bible as just another book and denied the divine inspiration of Scripture and God’s promise to preserve the Scripture. A large percentage of the principle names in the field of modern textual criticism are Christ-denying Unitarians and theological Modernists. (e.g., Simon, Bengel, Wettstein, Griesbach, Lachmann, Westcott, Hort, Schaff, Thayer, Briggs, Driver, Brown, Nestle, Liddle, Scott, von Soden, Kittel, Conybeare, Kenyon, Burkitt, Robinson, Lake, Souter, Clark, Moffatt, Goodspeed, Dodd, Bratcher, Colwell, Kilpatrick, Nida, Ehrman, Childs, Aland, Martini, Metzger, and Karavidopoulos).

We have documented this extensively in our book *The Modern Bible Version Hall of Shame*.

The modern Greek text removes or questions dozens of entire verses: Matthew 17:21; 18:11; 23:14; Mark 7:16; 9:44, 46; 11:26; 15:28; 16:9-20; Luke 17:36; 23:17; John 5:4; 7:53 - 8:11; Acts 8:37; 15:34; 24:7; 28:29; Romans 16:24; 1 John 5:7.

The word difference between the Received Greek New Testament underlying the KJV and that underlying the modern versions is very large. More than 2,800 words are removed in the modern Greek text. That is the equivalent of the entire epistles of 1 and 2 Peter. (This exposes the myth that only 1/2 page of text is in question.)

Textual criticism creates a Greek text that weakens many doctrines, such as the doctrine of Christ’s deity. Consider, for example, 1 Timothy 3:16, where the word “God” is removed in all of the modern versions. We give many other examples of this in the book *Why We Hold to the King James Bible*.

John Burgon and many other Bible-believing scholars exposed modern textual criticism at its inception and warned that the textual critics were preferring Bible manuscripts that can be traced to Egypt at a time when heretics were tampering with the Scriptures and introducing heresies.

We have documented this in *For Love of the Bible: The History of the Defense of the King James Bible and*

Its Received Greek Text.

Another great error associated with the modern versions is the principle of dynamic equivalency which has given translators great and frightful liberty in changing God's words.

At this point, the waters get even more treacherous.

Consider The Message, which is extremely popular throughout evangelicalism and beyond. The following examples are typical:

Matthew 5:3

KJV - "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

THE MESSAGE - "You're blessed when you're at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule."

Matthew 5:8

KJV - "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

THE MESSAGE - "You're blessed when you get your inside world, your mind and heart, put right. Then you can see God in the outside world."

Matthew 5:14

KJV - "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid."

THE MESSAGE - "Here's another way to put it: You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world."

You might say, "Who in the world would use and recommend such a corruption?"

The answer is a Who's Who list of evangelicals and Southern Baptists. The Message has been recommended by Billy Graham, Warren Wiersbe, Jack Hayford, J.I. Packer, Michael Card, Leighton Ford, Bill Hybels, Lamar Cooper of Criswell College, Paul House of Southern Baptist Seminary, Bill and Gloria Gaither, Chuck Swindoll, Gary Smalley, Gordon Fee, Gordon MacDonald, Jerry Jenkins, John Maxwell, Joyce Meyer, Max Lucado, Michael W. Smith, the Newsboys, Phil Driscoll, Rebecca St. James, Stuart and Jill Briscoe, Tony Campolo, and Vernon Grounds, to name a few. Rick Warren quotes it frequently, five times in the first chapter of *The Purpose-Driven Life*. Joni Earckson Tada says, "WOW! What a treasure The Message is." (This information was gathered from the NAVPress web site.)

A major problem with the modern version movement is a very practical one: it has weakened the authority of God's Word through the smorgasbord principle. This has happened through an ever-expanding, almost bewildering, multiplicity of versions, and the people are encouraged simply to pick their favorites with no solid standard of biblical authority as an anchor. Consider the following testimony by a former Southern Baptist pastor:

“The problem with the SBC is that they have no absolute biblical authority. Although, while I was still SBC, we claimed to have settled the matter of the inerrancy of Scripture in 1986, we did not settle what Scripture is. The plethora of translations has continued unabated in the two decades since they ‘settled the matter of inerrancy.’ The abundance of translations provoked me to study the translation issue. I spent two years studying the issue, in an effort to disprove the idea that the King James was any better than the rest. Of course, when I approached the issue with an open mind and heart, the Holy Spirit taught me the truth. That was the ‘straw that broke the camel’s back’ for me. I left the convention in October 1996. With each translation saying something different, the casualty has been biblical discernment. The typical SBC church has no less than four different translations in any given service. So, it is impossible for the people to hear ‘Thus saith the Lord.’ EVERY ISSUE BECOMES DEBATABLE. EVERY CONVICTION BECOMES QUESTIONABLE. Then, spiritual discernment becomes typical of the time of the Judges (i.e., every man doing that which is right in his own eyes). Therefore, it makes sense that they are so willing and ready to accept the abominable heresies of The Shack.” (Marty Wynn, Lighthouse Baptist Church, Columbus, Georgia, e-mail to D. Cloud, May 21, 2011).

Consider Rick Warren, the most prominent and influential Southern Baptist today. He uses a multiplicity of versions in every sermon and in every book he writes. On a visit to Saddleback Church in 2003 I was interested to see that most people weren’t carrying Bibles. The reason became obvious when the sermon was preached. Six or seven versions were quoted, most of them loose paraphrases or dynamic equivalencies such as the Living Bible, the New Living Translation, The Message, the Today’s English Version, and the Contemporary English Version. It would be impossible to follow along in one’s Bible. The result is that many of the people do not bring Bibles and even those who do, have no way to test the preaching, because any biblical passage they would attempt to examine has dozens of variations.

This is a recipe for spiritual deception and an ideal environment for the promotion of heresy.

2. THE DANGER OF NEW EVANGELICAL POSITIVISM

One of the greatest dangers facing fundamentalist Christians today is the New Evangelical philosophy that has pervaded evangelicalism over the past 50 years. It is particularly dangerous because it appears at first glance to be biblically sound. The heart of New Evangelicalism is not the error that it preaches but the truth that it neglects. It focuses on the positive, largely avoids theological controversy and unpopular subjects (i.e., ecclesiastical separation, a fiery hell, separation from the world).

The New Evangelical narrows down his message, focusing only on a portion of the whole counsel of God (Acts 20:27). This means that much that the New Evangelical preaches and writes is scriptural and spiritually beneficial. The New Evangelical might say many good things about salvation, Christian living, love for the Lord, marriage, child training, sanctification, the deity of Christ, even the infallibility of Scripture.

When faced with a requirement of coming out plainly against error and naming the names of popular Christian leaders, though, he will refuse to take a stand and will, more likely, attack the one who is trying to force his hand or will lash out against “extreme fundamentalism” or “second degree separation” or some such thing.

Billy Graham is the king of positivism and non-judgmentalism. Graham’s books are on the shelves of the vast majority of Christian bookstores today. He is extremely influential, and his message has been described as “hard at the center but soft at the edges.” He says his job is merely to preach the gospel, that he is not called to get involved in doctrinal controversies.

In 1966 the United Church Observer, the official paper of the ultra liberal United Church of Canada (in 1997

Moderator Bill Phipps said Jesus Christ is not God), asked Graham a series of questions. His answers demonstrate the New Evangelical positive-only, non-judgmental style:

Q. In your book you speak of ‘false prophets’. You say it is the ‘full-time effort of many intellectuals to circumvent God’s plan’ and you make a quotation from Paul Tillich. Do you consider Paul Tillich a false prophet?

A. I HAVE MADE IT A PRACTICE NOT TO PASS JUDGMENT ON OTHER CLERGYMEN. ...

Q. Do you think that churches such as The United Church of Canada and the great liberal churches of the United States that are active in the ecumenical movement and whose ministers study and respect the work of Paul Tillich and other great modern teachers are ‘apostate’?

A. I COULD NOT POSSIBLY PASS THIS TYPE OF JUDGMENT ON INDIVIDUAL CHURCHES AND CLERGYMEN WITHIN THE UNITED CHURCH OF CANADA -- my knowledge of The United Church of Canada is too inadequate, and my ability to make such discernment is too limited. My books and writings are public knowledge but I love fellowship and work with many Christians who don’t agree with me theologically in everything. As to my calling everyone ‘apostate’ who reads and gets help from Tillich -- this is preposterous. There are too many shades of theological opinion in a large denomination to lump them all off as liberal, neo-orthodox, conservative, fundamentalist, or what have you!

Q. Does your organization stand with us for a modern, enlightened, scholarly attempt to explain to our people what ‘The Bible says’? Or does it stand with those who describe us as ‘an apostate church spreading our unbelief’?

A. OUR EVANGELISTIC ASSOCIATION IS NOT CONCERNED TO PASS JUDGMENT -- FAVORABLE OR ADVERSE -- ON ANY PARTICULAR DENOMINATION. WE DO NOT INTEND TO GET INVOLVED IN THE VARIOUS DIVISIONS WITHIN THE CHURCH. We are simple Gospel preachers, not scholarly theologians -- though several of our team members have their earned doctorates. We feel that our calling is that of specialists -- winning people to a personal commitment to Jesus Christ! We do not intend to allow ourselves to become bogged down in the many religious crosscurrents (“Billy Graham Answers 26 Provocative Questions,” United Church Observer, July 1, 1966).

This is pure New Evangelicalism. The New Evangelical will preach against error in general terms but rarely will he do it plainly and specifically.

Graham’s refusal to preach anything beyond the most basic aspects of the gospel (and even that much is questionable) is why he is acceptable both to Roman Catholics and theological Modernists. Charles Dullea, Superior of the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome, said: “Because he is preaching basic Christianity, he does not enter into matters which today divide Christians. He does not touch on Sacraments or Church in any detail. ... The Catholic will hear no slighting of his Church’s teaching authority, nor of Papal or Episcopal Prerogatives, no word against the mass or sacraments or Catholic practices. GRAHAM HAS NO TIME FOR THAT; he is preaching only Christ and a personal commitment to Him. The Catholic, in my opinion will hear little, if anything, he cannot agree with” (Dullea, “A Catholic Looks at Billy Graham,” Homiletic & Pastoral Review, January 1972).

Graham is only one example of the multiplicity of New Evangelical authors who fill the shelves of the average Christian bookstore today. David Jeremiah, Charles Stanley, and Max Lucado are prime examples. What they say is often scriptural; the error and danger lies in what they refuse to say. They refuse to deal with the whole counsel of God. They neglect the “hard things” like biblical separation but these are the very things that need to be preached in this day and time.

The emphasis of the books available in these bookstores is not on solid Bible preaching and teaching and plain exposure of those errors that are corrupting God’s people and work today. Rather, the emphasis is on “a positive proclamation of the truth” and feel-good shallow pabulum. It’s feel-good psychobabble fluff with a thin veneer of “Bible” falsely so-called (often some loose paraphrase such as The Message).

As J.I. Packer says about Richard Foster and the Renovare books, they are “mild on sin but firm on grace” (back cover to Foster’s book *Life with God*). Packer meant this to be a compliment, but it is actually an indictment, because the Bible is firm on sin as well as firm on grace. You can’t have a proper perspective of grace without a proper emphasis on sin, because it is the awfulness of sin and the greatness of God’s holiness and terrible justice that allows us to see grace in its proper perspective. Otherwise, it is “cheap grace,” and cheap grace is what lines the shelves of the average Christian bookstore.

You have, for example, Robert Schuller’s “Turning Hurts into Halos” and Kay Arthur’s “Lord, Heal My Hurts” and Charles Stanley’s “The Source of My Strength (Healing Your Wounded Heart),” David Jeremiah’s “A Bend in the Road (Experiencing God When Your World Caves In), and “Disappointment with God” and “What’s So Amazing about Grace” by Philip Yancey.

3. THE DANGER OF ECUMENICALISM

Christian bookstores today are filled with volumes promoting the ecumenical philosophy, which says that unity and fellowship are more important than doctrine and zeal for the truth and exposure of error. Consider some examples.

In his popular autobiography, *Just As I Am*, Billy Graham praises the pope and tells of how he turned his converts over to Roman Catholic churches. He also describes his close association with theological modernists for the sake of “evangelism.”

Chuck Colson’s popular book *The Body* claims that Protestant and Catholic doctrine is converging and says that they are part of the same “body.”

John Maxwell’s book *Failing Forward* promotes Catholic missions as a genuine form of Christianity.

Philip Yancey’s *Where Is God When It Hurts* claims that Roman Catholic missions are part of the “body of Christ.”

Jim Cymbala, in his book *Fresh Power*, says that Jesus prayed for all his people to become one, whether they are Evangelical, Charismatic, Baptist, or Lutheran.

Max Lucado, in his book *In the Grip of Grace*, praises God for the Church of Christ (who teach the heresy of baptismal regeneration), Pentecostals, Anglicans, Southern Baptists, Presbyterians, and Roman Catholics.

The popular author Richard Foster is a radical ecumenist whose vision is described like this: “I see a Catholic

monk from the hills of Kentucky standing alongside a Baptist evangelist from the streets of Los Angeles and together offering up a sacrifice of praise. I see a people” (Streams of Living Water, 1998, p. 274).

Popular author Elisabeth Elliot, who is an Episcopalian and ecumenical in philosophy, spoke at the Roman Catholic Franciscan University in 1989 and at Notre Dame in 1998. She had nothing negative to say when her brother Thomas Howard joined the Roman Catholic Church.

Consider Robert Webber. He said: “A goal for evangelicals in the postmodern world is to accept diversity as a historical reality, but to seek unity in the midst of it. This perspective will allow us to see Catholic, Orthodox, and Protestant churches as various forms of the one true church...” (Ancient-Future Faith, p. 85).

Consider John Michael Talbot. A priest encouraged him to be a bridge-builder between Protestantism and Catholicism (Troubadour for the Lord, p. 90). His winsome personality, ecumenical ventures, and soft rock, hymn-like music has created this bridge. His albums were the first by a Catholic artist to be accepted by both Protestant and Catholic listeners. In 1996 Talbot produced an ecumenical album (Brother to Brother) jointly with fellow CCM performer Michael Card, an evangelical. Of this venture, Card testified: “Doing this project has enabled us to become real friends. And along the way, the denominational lines have become really meaningless to me, and to John, too” (CCM Magazine, July 1996).

Consider Tony Campolo. You can find him practically anywhere--preaching the same ecumenically-popular message: He spoke at the National Council of Churches’ “A Gathering of Christians,” May 1988. He was on the editorial board for the production of the film Mother Teresa, which exalted the Roman Catholic nun and contained no warning about her false gospel. Campolo often uses Mother Teresa as an example of biblical Christianity, though she preached a false gospel, believed that all men are children of God, worshiped the wafer of the mass, and prayed to Mary. Campolo has spoken at self-esteem guru Robert Schuller’s Institute for Church Growth. He referred positively to Seventh-day Adventism in his book 20 Hot Potatoes Christians Are Afraid to Touch (chapter 3). Any lip service Campolo gives to the importance of doctrinal correctness is negated by his constant fellowship with heretics.

4. THE DANGER OF ANTI-FUNDAMENTALISM

Another popular philosophy you will find in the average Christian bookstore today is the spirit of anti-fundamentalism. The popular authors rarely denounce the Roman Catholic Church or theological modernism, but they are very bold to denounce biblical fundamentalism.

Jerry Bridges, for example, in his misnamed book Transforming Grace, says that “legalism” is expecting faithful church attendance, worrying about the length of a man’s hair, preaching against worldliness, and setting up fences. He says that “legalists: “have cast iron opinions” and see things as black and white, as if this were a terrible thing!

Chuck Swindoll, in his popular book The Grace Awakening, claims that “grace” includes an absence of “Bible bashing and dogmatism” and warns about strict fundamentalist ministries.

The average Christian bookstore is no friend of fundamentalist congregations.

5. THE DANGER OF THE CHARISMATIC MOVEMENT

The average Christian bookstore today is filled with books by Pentecostals and Charismatics who promote their

unscriptural doctrines.

Jack Hayford, for example, is a very popular author in evangelical circles, even though he teaches that one must begin to speak in “baby tongues” before you can speak in mature tongues, and he says that God spoke to him and told him not to judge the Roman Catholic Church. (See our article “Beware of Jack Hayford” at the Way of Life web site.)

We have dealt extensively with the great danger of the Charismatic movement in *The Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements: The History and the Error*, which is available in print and eBook editions, as well as in a video series.

6. THE DANGER OF THE CONTEMPORARY CHURCH GROWTH PHILOSOPHY

The average Christian bookstore also features books by the popular church growth gurus such as Rick Warren of Saddleback Church and Bill Hybels of Willow Creek Community Church.

There is a soft message, downplaying the “non-essentials” for the sake of attracting a crowd.

Rick Warren says, “I’m not going to get into a debate over the non-essentials. Why be divisive?”

Willowcreek Community Church says, “There is no hell-fire and brimstone here, no Bible-thumping, just positive witty messages.”

Church growth gurus promote the music is neutral philosophy in order to draw crowds through popular musical styles.

In his book *The Purpose Driven Church*, Rick Warren says: “We need to admit that no particular style of music is ‘sacred.’” Saddleback Church has nine “worship venues,” including country line-dancing and island hula.

The church growth gurus promote the “non-judgmentalism” doctrine.

In *The Purpose Driven Life*, Warren says: “God warns us over and over not to criticize, compare, or judge each other. ... Whenever I judge another believer, four things instantly happen: I lose fellowship with God, I expose my own pride, I set myself to be judged by God, and I harm the fellowship of the church” (p. 164).

In this heretical statement Warren makes no distinction between judging hypocritically (which is forbidden in Matthew 7) or judging on the basis of personal preference in matters not taught in Scripture (which is forbidden in Romans 14) and judging on the basis of the Bible (which is required by God).

7. THE DANGER OF CHRISTIAN PSYCHOLOGY

Many of the books lining the shelves of the average Christian bookstore promote the error of “Christian psychology.”

A prominent heresy in this field is the pursuit of self-esteem, which was borrowed from humanistic God haters

like Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers.

James Dobson has been at the forefront of promoting psychology heresies. He claims that “lack of self-esteem produces more symptoms of psychiatric disorders than any other factor yet identified” (Dr. Dobson Answers Your Questions about Confident Healthy Families, 1987, pp. 73-74). His 1974 book *Hide and Seek* was designed “to formulate a well-defined philosophy--and approach to child rearing -- that will contribute to self-esteem from infancy onwards.” He says, “... lack of self-esteem is a threat to the entire human family, affecting children, adolescents, the elderly, all socioeconomic levels of society, and each race and ethnic culture” (What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew, p. 24). Dobson believes that lack of self-esteem is the cause of every social ill.

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

Because his teaching focuses on psychology rather than God’s Word, Dobson’s writings are popular across all denominational lines. Dobson has a large Roman Catholic audience and refuses to warn about Rome’s heresies. Mother Teresa was praised in his *Clubhouse* magazine. He accepted an honorary degree from the Roman Catholic Franciscan University. And he has been featured on the cover of the Roman Catholic *New Covenant* magazine, which teaches that we should pray to Mary.

David Seamands is another pioneer of the self-esteem movement. His hugely popular books *Healing for Damaged Emotions* and *Healing of Memories* seek to heal the believer of “Satan’s most powerful psychological weapon” which is “low self-esteem.” He aims to take the client back into the past to recover and heal memories of events that injured one’s self-esteem. Seamands’ mystical path toward self-esteem is “healing of memories” through psychological counseling and New Age techniques. He promotes things as positive visualization, guided imagery, dream analysis, and venting of emotions. Through visualization, the individual is taught to imagine painful past events in perfect detail and to imagine Jesus entering the scenes to bring healing. This is not only vain fantasy; it is occultic and it is a recipe for communing with deceiving spirits masquerading as angels of light.

Larry Crabb is another promoter of humanistic psychology under the guise of Christian counseling. He teaches psychological heresies such as self-esteem, Freud’s unconscious mind, unconditional love, and unconditional forgiveness. He claims that salvation and sanctification through God’s Word are not sufficient. Believers also need psychological counseling. He writes that the “the Word--understood, proclaimed, and obeyed--is itself sufficient to change lives” is wishful thinking because “it leaves large and significant areas of human experience untouched--and therefore unchanged” (*Understanding People*, p. 10).

Other authors who have brought the errors of humanistic psychology into Christian homes and churches are Clyde Narramore, Selwyn Hughes, Frank Minirth, Paul Meier, and Gary Collins.

In *The Dark Side of Christian Counselling and Christ or Thereapy?* E.S. Williams has exposed the great spiritual danger of Christian psychology. Williams is a medical doctor and a member of the Metropolitan Tabernacle in London, England.

8. THE DANGER OF CONTEMPLATIVE PRAYER

The contemplative movement has spread within evangelicalism like wildfire over the past decade. It has its own evangelical gurus, such as Richard Foster, but its methods and principles come from Roman Catholic monasticism.

Some of the popular Catholic mystics you will find in many evangelical bookstores are Julian of Norwich, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Francis of Assisi, Ignatius of Loyola (founder of the Jesuits who were at the forefront of the violent papal counter-reformation), Thomas Aquinas, Bernard of Clairvaux, Madame Guyon, Henri Nouwen, Brother Lawrence, Thomas Ryan, Henri Nouwen, John Main, Peter Kreeft, John Michael Talbot, Basil Pennington, Thomas Keating, and Thomas Merton.

Some of the popular contemplative writers are as follows:

RICHARD FOSTER claims that through thought-less meditation one can “center” deep within oneself and “actually encounter the living Christ” and “be addressed by his voice” (Celebration of Discipline, p. 26). He even says that the meditation practitioner can enter “into a deep inner communion with the Father where you look at Him and He looks at you” (p. 27). Foster promotes a visualization practice where the individual leaves his body and goes “deep into outer space” into the very “presence of the eternal Creator” and there listens carefully and gets instruction directly from God (Celebration of Discipline, 1978 edition, pp. 27-28).

KEN BLANCHARD encourages borrowing from pagan religions. He says, “Our folks get to hear words of wisdom from great prophets and spiritual leaders like Buddha, Mohammed ... Yogananda and the Dalai Lama” (foreword to What Would Buddha Do at Work? 2001). Blanchard has strong ties with the New Age and recommends many New Age books. For example, he wrote the foreword to the 2007 edition of Jim Ballard’s book Little Wave and Old Swell, which is inspired by Hindu guru Paramahansa Yogananda. This book is designed to teach children that God is all and man is one with God. In the foreword Blanchard makes the amazing statement: “Yogananda loved Jesus, and Jesus would have loved Yogananda.” I was a disciple of Yogananda before I was saved, and there is no doubt that he did NOT love the Jesus of the Bible! I renounced Yogananda and his false christ after I was born again.

THOMAS MERTON was a Catholic Trappist monk who intertwined pagan yogic practices with the contemplative practices of the Catholic “saints.” Merton not only studied Buddhism and Sufism (mystical Islam), he said, “I’m deeply impregnated with Sufism” (Rob Baker, Merton and Sufism, p. 109), and, “I see no contradiction between Buddhism and Christianity. ... I intend to become as good a Buddhist as I can” (David Steindl-Rast, “Recollection of Thomas Merton’s Last Days in the West,” Monastic Studies, 7:10, 1969). Merton also said: “Asia, Zen, Islam, etc., all these things come together in my life. It would be madness for me to attempt to create a monastic life for myself by excluding all these” (Baker, Merton and Sufism, p. 41).

BASIL PENNINGTON taught that man shares God’s divine nature. “We are united with everybody else in our human nature and in OUR SHARING OF A DIVINE NATURE, so we are never really alone, we have all this union and communion” (interview with Mary NurrieStearns, “Transforming Suffering,” 1991, Personal Transformation website, <http://www.personaltransformation.com/Pennington.html>). Pennington also said, “... the soul of the human family is the Holy Spirit” (Centered Living, p. 104).

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

issue 4, 1995). Keating even recommends occultic Kundalini yoga.

JOHN MICHAEL TALBOT, who is very influential in the contemplative prayer movement, says that Mary “intercedes to God on my behalf” and testifies that he has felt “the presence of Mary becoming important in my life” (Contemporary Christian Music Magazine, November 1984, p. 47). In his book *Simplicity*, he says: “I have found praying the Rosary to be one of the most powerful tools I possess in obtaining simple, childlike meditation on the life of Jesus Christ.”

PHILIP YANCEY promotes the contemplative movement in his book *Prayer: Does It Make Any Difference?* He quotes the Buddhist-Catholic monk Thomas Merton, goddess worshiper Sue Monk Kidd, pantheist Meister Eckhart, David Steindl-Rast (who denies the substitutionary atonement of Christ), Richard Rohr (who worships as New Age “cosmic” Christ). Yancy also quotes Catholic “saint” Teresa of Avila and the heretical Catholic contemplative text *The Cloud of Unknowing*, which promotes a mindless communion with “God” by means of a “mantra.”

TONY CAMPOLO promotes the contemplative movement in his book *The God of Intimacy and Action*. He praises Catholic saints such as Francis of Assisi, Ignatius of Loyola, Teresa of Avila, and Catherine of Siena. He seems contemplative mysticism as the path to interfaith unity. Campolo describes his own practice: “I get up in the morning a half hour before I have to and spend time in absolute stillness. I don’t ask God for anything. I just simply surrender to His presence and yield to the Spirit flowing into my life. ... An interviewer once asked Mother Teresa, ‘When you pray, what do you say to God?’ She said, ‘I don’t say anything. I just listen.’ So the interviewer asked, ‘What does God say to you?’ She replied, ‘God doesn’t say anything. He listens.’ That’s the kind of prayer I do in the morning” (*Outreach Magazine*, July/ August 2004, pp. 88, 89).

BRENNAN MANNING promotes the contemplative movement. In *The Signature of Jesus* Manning promotes the dangerous practice of centering prayer, which involves chanting “a sacred word” to empty the mind and allegedly enter into silent experiential communion with God within: “[T]HE FIRST STEP IN FAITH IS TO STOP THINKING ABOUT GOD AT THE TIME OF PRAYER. ... enter into the great silence of God. Alone in that silence, the noise within will subside and the Voice of Love will be heard. ... Choose a single, sacred word ... repeat the sacred word inwardly, slowly, and often” (pp. 212, 215, 218). Manning calls centering prayer a “GREAT DARKNESS” (*The Signature of Jesus*, p. 145) and an entire chapter of his book is devoted to “Celebrate the Darkness.” Manning recommends repeating an eight-word mantra (“The Lord is my Shepherd, I lack nothing”) for 10 minutes. “The first step toward rejuvenation begins with accepting where you are and exposing your poverty, frailty, and emptiness to the love that is everything. DON’T TRY TO feel anything, THINK ANYTHING, or do anything ... Don’t force prayer. Simply relax in the presence of the God you half believe in and ask for a touch of folly” (*The Ragamuffin Gospel*, p. 196). Manning recommends spending three days in silence without reading the Bible.

9. THE DANGER OF INCLUSIVISM

We could give many examples of how that the heretical idol of inclusivism is present in the Southern Baptist Convention. Here I am referring to the doctrine that men can be saved apart from faith in Christ.

Billy Graham has blazed the trail in this. In an interview with *McCall’s* magazine, January 1978, entitled “I Can’t Play God Any More,” Graham said: “I used to believe that pagans in far-off countries were lost—were going to hell—if they did not have the Gospel of Jesus Christ preached to them. I no longer believe that. ... I believe that there are other ways of recognizing the existence of God—through nature, for instance—and plenty

of other opportunities, therefore, of saying ‘yes’ to God.” In 1985, Graham affirmed his belief that those outside of Christ might be saved. Los Angeles reporter David Colker asked Graham: “What about people of other faiths who live good lives but don’t profess a belief in Christ?” Graham replied, “I’m going to leave that to the Lord. He’ll decide that” (Los Angeles Herald Examiner, July 22, 1985). In 1993, Graham repeated this doctrine in an interview with David Frost. “And I think there is that hunger for God and people are living as best they know how according to the light that they have. Well, I think they’re in a separate category than people like Hitler and people who have just defied God, and shaken their fists at God. ... I would say that God, being a God of mercy, we have to rest it right there, and say that God is a God of mercy and love, and how it happens, we don’t know” (The Charlotte Observer, Feb. 16, 1993). In an interview with Robert Schuller in May 1997, Graham again said that he believes people in other religions can be saved without consciously believing in Jesus Christ. “[God’s] calling people out of the world for His name, whether **WHETHER THEY COME FROM THE MUSLIM WORLD, OR THE BUDDHIST WORLD, OR THE CHRISTIAN WORLD OR THE NON-BELIEVING WORLD, THEY ARE MEMBERS OF THE BODY OF CHRIST BECAUSE THEY’VE BEEN CALLED BY GOD. THEY MAY NOT EVEN KNOW THE NAME OF JESUS** but they know in their hearts that they need something that they don’t have, and they turn to the only light that they have, and I think that they are saved, and that they’re going to be with us in heaven” (television interview of Billy Graham by Robert Schuller, broadcast in southern California, Saturday, May 31, 1997).

Some conservative SBC leaders like Al Mohler have reproved **Rob Bell** and his book *Love Wins*, but what is Rob Bell saying today that Billy Graham hasn’t been saying for more than 30 years?

Speaking of **Rob Bell**, his universalistic book *Love Wins* (“even the most ‘depraved sinners’ will eventually give up their resistance and turn to God”) isn’t sold in LifeWay bookstores, but an earlier book, *Velvet Elvis*, has been sold since it was first published in 2005. Here Bell claims that Jesus is already with people even in their false religions, thus “the issue isn’t so much taking Jesus to people who don’t have him, but going to a place and pointing out to the people there the creative, life-giving God who is already present in their midst” (*Velvet Elvis*, p. 88).

C.S. Lewis, whose writings are fervently loved among Southern Baptists and are sold in LifeWay bookstores, claimed that followers of pagan religions can be saved without faith in Jesus Christ: “There are people in other religions who are being led by God’s secret influence ... Many of the good Pagans long before Christ’s birth may have been in this position” (C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, HarperSanFrancisco edition, 2001, pp. 64, 208, 209). Lewis’s *The Chronicles of Narnia* intertwines a few vague biblical themes with pagan mythology: nymphs, fauns (part man and part goat), dwarfs, centaurs (part man and part horse), Dryads (tree-women), and Naiads (well-women). All of these creatures are depicted as serving Aslan, the alleged Christ figure. Lewis presents the deeply heretical idea of good magic. He calls Aslan’s power “Deep Magic” and Aslan’s father’s power as “Emperor’s Magic.” He introduces the pagan god Bacchus and his orgies as a desirable thing. He presents the myth of “Father Christmas.” He teaches that Adam’s first wife was not Eve but rather a woman named Lilith and that she was a witch.

Henri Nouwen wrote: “Today I personally believe that while Jesus came to open the door to God’s house, all human beings can walk through that door, whether they know about Jesus or not. Today I see it as my call to help every person claim his or her own way to God” (*Sabbatical Journey*, 1998, p. 51).

Max Lucado, whose books are sold in LifeWay bookstores and whose writings are hugely popular among

Southern Baptists, preaches the same heresy. In the book *Max on Life* the following question is asked: “What about the people who have never heard of God? Will God punish them?” Lucado replies: “No, He will not. Heaven’s population includes throngs of people who learned the name of their Savior when they awoke in their eternal home” (p. 222).

Richard Mouw, president of Fuller Theological Seminary and author of *Uncommon Decency*, says that after a rabbi friend of his died, he “held out the hope that when he saw Jesus he would acknowledge that it was Him all along, and that Jesus would welcome him into the heavenly realm” (Christian Post, March 20, 2011).

Popular author **Josh McDowell** says that he does not know whether “those who have never heard about Jesus will be automatically damned” (5 Minutes with Josh, April 1985). He believes that the Scriptures imply that “someone who has never heard of Jesus can be saved.” He says, “We do believe that every person will have an opportunity to repent and that God will not exclude anyone because he happened to be born ‘at the wrong place and time.’”

Clark Pinnock, author of *Salvation in a Pluralistic World*, writes: “Faith in Jesus as the Savior of the world leaves room for us to be open and generous to other religious traditions. ... I welcome the Saiva Siddhanta literature of Hinduism ... Japanese Shin-Shu Amida ... Buddha as a righteous man ... Mohammed as a prophet...”

Dallas Willard says, “It is possible for someone who does not know Jesus to be saved” (Cutting Edge magazine, Winter 2000).

Tony Campolo said: “I am not convinced that Jesus only lives in Christians” (The Charlie Rose Show, cited from *Calvary Contender*, October 1, 1999). When asked by Bill Moyers on MSNBC in 1996 whether evangelicals should try to convert Jews he replied: “I am not about to make judgments about my Jewish brothers and my Muslim brothers and sisters.”

Popular author **Brennan Manning**, in his books *The Signature of Jesus* and *Gentle Revolutionaries*, describes a dream he has had about judgment day. He sees Adolf Hitler and Hugh Hefner (founder of *Playboy* magazine) and himself and others going before God to be judged, but God just takes them by the hand and walks them home. The implication is that everyone is accepted by God through grace, regardless of whether they repent and believe the gospel and have a born again experience.

10. THE DANGER OF THE EMERGING CHURCH

Emerging Church is the name for a new approach to missions and church life among some “evangelicals” for these present times. Since society is changing, the church must change. It is the latest heresy within the broad tent of evangelicalism. Fifty years ago they rejected “separatism” for a more “positive” Christianity. The breaking down of the walls of separation between sound churches and unsound, truth and heresy, has results in the wholesale corruption and compromise of “evangelicalism,” including the largest evangelical denomination, the Southern Baptist Convention.

Consider **BRIAN MCLAREN**. His book *A New Kind of Christian* won a Christianity Today Award of Merit, but it is filled with heresy. It is about an evangelical pastor who has a crisis of faith and submits himself to the guidance of a liberal Episcopalian who leads him into “Postmodern Christianity.” The book teaches that the Bible is not the infallible Word of God and that all doctrines and theologies are non-absolute, that we need to

approach the Bible “on less defined terms” (p. 56). It teaches that the Bible alone should not be the authority, but that the Bible should only be one of the authorities, that others include tradition, reason, exemplary people and institutions one has come to trust, and spiritual experience (pp. 54, 55). It teaches that it is wrong and Pharisaical to look upon the Bible as “God’s encyclopedia, God’s rule book, God’s answer book” (p. 52).

Consider **ROB BELL**, author of *Velvet Elvis*. He claims that Jesus is already with people even in their false religions, thus “the issue isn’t so much taking Jesus to people who don’t have him, but going to a place and pointing out to the people there the creative, life-giving God who is already present in their midst” (*Velvet Elvis*, p. 88). Bell says that Christ has given believers the authority to come up with new interpretations of the Bible (*Velvet Elvis*, p. 50). He says the New Testament epistles “aren’t first and foremost timeless truths” (p. 62) and claims that the apostles didn’t “claim to have the absolute word from God” (p. 57). In his 2011 book *Love Wins*, Bell teaches that most people will eventually be reconciled to God and that there is opportunity for salvation for those who do not name the name of Christ. “The love of God will melt every hard heart, and even the most ‘depraved sinners’ will eventually give up their resistance and turn to God.” He says the statements in Bible about hell being a place of fire and torment are mere poetry.

Consider **DONALD MILLER**, author of *Blue Like Jazz*. His popular book is a harsh rant against traditional evangelical Christianity and he frequently takes shots at doctrinal dogmatism. In discussing his involvement in church in his youth he writes, “I wished I could have subscribed to aspects of Christianity but not the whole thing” (p. 30). He says, “In order to believe Christianity, you either had to reduce enormous theological absurdities [i.e., Garden of Eden, universal flood] into children’s stories or ignore them” (p. 31). He wanted to believe the gospel “free from the clasp of fairy tale” (p. 35). He says it is wrong to have “rules and laws and principles to judge each other against” (p. 215).

Consider **ERWIN MCMANUS**, author of *The Barbarian Way*. Erwin McManus calls upon Christians to live “the barbarian way” in contrast to the traditional Bible path, which he describes as “civilized.” He says those on the barbarian way “have little patience for institutions” and do not focus on “requirements” (p. 6). He says faith should not be restrained and domesticated (p. 10). Those who follow the barbarian way “are not required or expected to keep in step” and “there is no forced conformity” (p. 71). He says that those who are on the barbarian way follow Christ’s voice but this voice is not necessarily found in the Bible (p. 84).

Consider **DAVID FOSTER**, author of *A Renegade’s Guide to God*. Foster says, “We won’t be ‘told’ what to do or ‘commanded’ how to behave.”

Consider **DONALD MCCULLOUGH**, author of *If Grace Is So Amazing Why Don’t We Live Like It?* He says that he doesn’t like the type of preaching that says “... don’t do that, curb your appetites, reign in desire, discipline and sacrifice yourself.”

Consider **MARK DRISCOLL**, senior pastor of Mars Hills Church in Seattle. He describes himself as “theologically conservative and culturally liberal.” His church hosts champagne dance parties and beer brewing lessons; the men watch and discuss R-rated movies. The church operates a theater called Paradox that hosts secular rock concerts.

11. THE DANGER OF PROCESS SALVATION

Dallas Willard. He writes, “Why is it that we look upon salvation as a moment that began our religious life instead of the daily life we receive from God?” (*The Spirit of the Disciplines*). He rejects the gospel of Christ’s

blood atonement (The Divine Conspiracy, pp. 44, 49).

Consider the very popular author **Elisabeth Elliot**. In the book Taking Flight she writes: “Those who receive Christ are given not an ‘instant’ kingdom’ but the ‘right to become children of God.’ ... It does not say God makes them instant children of God. It says He gives them the right to become” (page 12).

Consider popular writer **Tony Campolo**. In Letters to a Young Evangelical he writes: “When I was a boy growing up in a lower-middle-class neighborhood in West Philadelphia, my mother, a convert to Evangelical Christianity from a Catholic Italian immigrant family, hoped I would have one of those dramatic ‘born-again’ experiences. ... BUT IT NEVER WORKED FOR ME. ... It took me quite some time to realize that entering into a personal relationship with Christ DOES NOT ALWAYS HAPPEN THAT WAY. ... In my case INTIMACY WITH CHRIST WAS DEVELOPED GRADUALLY OVER THE YEARS, primarily through what Catholic mystics call ‘centering prayer.’ ... I learned about this way of having a born-again experience from reading the Catholic mystics, especially The Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola” (pp. 25, 26, 30, 31).

There is no process salvation found in the New Testament. That is Catholicism. That is sacramentalism, but it is not New Testament salvation. Jesus described salvation as a “birth” and a “conversion” (John 3:3; Matthew 18:3). The salvations that are described for us in the book of Acts were all of the born again/conversion type. We consider the 3,000 on the Day of Pentecost, the Apostle Paul, the Ethiopian eunuch, Lydia, the Philippian jailer, among others. Paul described salvation as a dramatic spiritual event with a clear before and after (Ephesians 2:1-2).

12. THE DANGER OF THE PRO-HOMOSEXUAL MOVEMENT

There is a rapidly growing tendency among popular Christian writers to accept unrepentant homosexuals as genuine Christians and to refuse to “judge” them.

Chris Seay, author of Faith of My Fathers, says churches are not “called to be moral police” and that we should “approach homosexuals without condemnation” (“Shayne Wheeler and Chris Seay on Homosexuals and the Church,” ChurchRelevance.com, June 19, 2007).

Donald McCullough says that “condemning homosexuality feels natural because about 95 percent of us could never imagine engaging in such a practice” but “in a world turned upside down by grace, we must distrust whatever feels natural” (If Grace Is So Amazing, Why Don’t We Like It, pp. 201, 202).

Dan Kimball says: “Because this is such a huge issue in our culture, and because all of the tension and discussion on this issue is over what the Bible says about it, we can no longer just regurgitate what we have been taught about homosexuality. ... Homosexual attraction is not something people simply choose to have, as is quite often erroneously taught from many pulpits” (They Like Jesus but Not the Church, pp. 137, 138).

Philip Yancey was scheduled to be the keynote speaker at the Gay Christian Network’s annual Mountain Top Experience in January 2011. The other main speaker was “Rev.” Ann Phillips who “has been married for four years to her soulmate, Heather Wayne.” Obviously he will not be condemning their unrepentant sin. In a 2004 interview with Candace Chellew-Hodge for Whosoever, a homosexual publication, Yancy said, “When it gets to particular matters of policy, like ordaining gay and lesbian ministers, I’m confused, like a lot of people (“Amazed by Grace,” Whosoever online magazine).

Tony Campolo believes that homosexuals are usually born that way, that it is not a “volitional” issue, and they should be allowed to join churches and be ordained without renouncing homosexuality as such as long as they remain “celibate.” Campolo’s wife, Peggy, “argues that the church’s traditional teaching on homosexuality is mistaken--just as the church’s traditional teaching on the role of women, slavery, and divorce is also mistaken” (Wikipedia, source: “Straight But Not Narrow,” keynote address, Evangelicals Concerned, Western Region 1994, audio cassette). Peggy Campolo is a national leader of the Association of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists, which urges Baptist congregations to be supportive of homosexuals.

Brennan Manning identifies “homophobia” as “among the most serious and vexing moral issues of this generation” (Abba’s Child).

Brian McLaren says: “Frankly, many of us don’t know what we should think about homosexuality. ... We aren’t sure if or where lines are to be drawn, nor do we know how to enforce with fairness whatever lines are drawn. ... Perhaps we need a five-year moratorium on making pronouncements” (“Brian McLaren on the Homosexual Question,” Jan. 23, 2006, http://blog.christianitytoday.com/outofur/archives/2006/01/brian_mclaren_o.html).

13. THE DANGER OF HATING THE RAPTURE

Christian bookstores feature many writers that hate the doctrine of an imminent Rapture of the saints.

Tony Campolo hates dispensationalism and rejects the doctrine of Christ’s imminent return. He calls it “a weird little form of fundamentalism.” Speaking at the Cooperative Baptist Fellowship’s annual meeting in June 2003, Campolo said: “That whole sense of the rapture, which may occur at any moment, is used as a device to oppose engagement with the principalities, the powers, the political and economic structures of our age” (“Opposition to women preachers evidence of demonic influence,” Baptist Press, June 27, 2003).

Brian McLaren mocks the “fundamentalist expectations” of a literal second coming of Christ with its attendant judgments on the world and assumes that the world will go on like it is for hundreds of thousands of years (A Generous Orthodoxy, p. 305). He calls the literal, imminent return of Christ “pop-Evangelical eschatology” (Generous Orthodoxy, p. 267) and the “eschatology of abandonment” (interview with Planet Preterist, Jan. 30, 2005, <http://planetpreterist.com/news-2774.html>). McLaren says that the book of Revelation is not a “book about the distant future” but is “a way of talking about the challenges of the immediate present” (The Secret Message of Jesus, 2007, p. 176).

Mark Driscoll mocks the idea of a rapture for believers and a one-world government with an Anti-christ who makes people wear a mark to buy, sell or trade (Confessions of a Reformissional, pp. 49-50). He added that this kind of end-time ‘mission’ was not a message from Jesus but rather one ‘concocted from a cunning Serpent’” (“Mark Driscoll Rejects McLaren but Embraces Contemplative,” Jan. 11, 2008, <http://www.lighthouse trailsresearch.com/blog/index.php?p=931&more=1&c=1>). Driscoll also mocks the imminent Rapture doctrine. He claims that the Rapture doctrine is evidence of the sickness of American Christians and mocks those who have the goal of leaving “this trailer park of a planet before God’s tornado touches down on all the sinners” (The Radical Reformission, p. 78). He calls dispensationalists “nutty, Christian, end-times-prophecy Kaczynskis” (p. 165). [Ted Kaczynski was the “Unabomber” terrorist who murdered three people and maimed 23 others in his 18-year-long campaign against modern technology.]

Dan Kimball describes how that he rejected dispensational theology and the doctrine of an imminent

Rapture to his current position, that “the kingdom of God is here, now” (Listening to the Beliefs of Emerging Churches, pp. 87-90, 102).

Ed Stetzer says it is wrong to worry about whether the Rapture is coming. “When the disciples had an inordinate interest in the end times, much like we do today in North America among evangelicals, Jesus said, ‘Do not get focused on that’” (Breaking the Missional Code, p. 40). He is referring to Acts 1:6-8, but Jesus was not talking there about the timing of the Rapture but about the coming of the kingdom of God. The disciples were expecting the kingdom to be set up immediately, but Jesus told them to focus rather on preaching the gospel and leave the timing of the kingdom to Him. This passage corrects the emerging church doctrine that we are building the kingdom of God in the world today, but it does not support the idea that we shouldn’t be concerned about the imminent return of Christ.

14. THE DANGER OF OTHER MISCELLANEOUS HERESIES AND HERETICS

Consider the popular author **C.S. LEWIS**. He (1) Promoted ecumenism. (In the book Mere Christianity he said that Christianity is a large house with many different acceptable rooms, such as Catholicism, Protestantism, etc.) (2) He denied the substitutionary atonement of Christ. (3) He believed in theistic evolution. (5) He rejected the Bible as the infallible Word of God. (5) He denied the doctrine of an eternal fiery hell. (5) He believed in prayers for dead and confessed his sins to a priest. (6) He claimed that followers of pagan religions can be saved without faith in Jesus Christ: “There are people in other religions who are being led by God’s secret influence ... Many of the good Pagans long before Christ’s birth may have been in this position” (C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity, HarperSanFrancisco edition, 2001, pp. 64, 208, 209).

Lewis’s The Chronicles of Narnias intertwines a few vague biblical themes with pagan mythology: nymphs, fauns (part man and part goat), dwarfs, centaurs (part man and part horse), Dryads (tree-women), and Naiads (well-women). All of these creatures are depicted as serving Aslan, the alleged Christ figure. Lewis presents the deeply heretical idea of good magic. He calls Aslan’s power “Deep Magic” and Aslan’s father’s power as “Emperor’s Magic.” He introduces the pagan god Bacchus and his orgies as a desirable thing. He presents the myth of “Father Christmas.” He teaches that Adam’s first wife was not Eve but rather a woman named Lilith and that she was a witch.

Consider **NORMAN VINCENT PEALE**. He died in 1994 but his books are still popular. In an interview with Phil Donahue in 1984, Peale said: “It’s not necessary to be born again. You have your way to God; I have mine” (Hugh Pyle, Sword of the Lord, Dec. 14, 1984). In an interview with Modern Maturity magazine, December-January 1975-76, Peale was asked if people are inherently good or bad. He replied: “They are inherently good--the bad reactions aren’t basic. Every human being is a child of God and has more good in him than evil--but circumstances and associates can step up the bad and reduce the good. I’ve got great faith in the essential fairness and decency--you may say goodness--of the human being.”

Consider **ROBERT SCHULLER**. In his book Self Esteem New Reformation Schuller says, “It is shallow and insulting to define sin as rebellion against God,” and, “Positive Christianity does not hold to human depravity, but to human inability,” and, “Hell is the loss of pride that follows separation from God,” and “Jesus never called a person a sinner.” (See the article “Evangelicals and Heretic Robert Schuller” at the Way of Life web site for documentation.)

Consider **BRUCE WILKINSON**. His A Prayer of Jabez has been turned into a marketing bonanza. There is a Prayer of Jabez for women and one for the overweight. There are Prayer of Jabez teddy bears, book

markers, bracelets, Bible covers, posters, coins, and shawls. In this book Wilkinson said: “I want to teach you how to pray a daring prayer that God ALWAYS answers. It is brief--only one sentence with four parts--and tucked away in the Bible, but I believe it contains the key to a life of extraordinary favor with God. Thousands of believers who are applying its truths are seeing MIRACLES happen on a regular basis” (Preface).

Consider **G.K. CHESTERTON** (1874-1936). This Roman Catholic writer continues to have a large influence. Not only did he promote Rome’s ancient sacramental heresies, he accepted theistic evolution (Orthodoxy, p. 30). A 2001 edition of Orthodoxy has an introduction by Philip Yancy that explains Chesterton’s attraction for this generation. Yancy says, “Chesterton seemed to sense instinctively that a stern prophet will rarely break through to a society full of religion’s ‘cultured despisers’; he preferred the role of jester. ... In a time when culture and faith have drifted even further apart, we could use his brilliance, his entertaining style, and above all his generous and joyful spirit. When society becomes polarized, as ours has, it is as if the two sides stand across a great divide and shout at each other. Chesterton had another approach: He walked to the center of a swinging bridge, roared a challenge to any single combat warrior, and then made both sides laugh aloud” (Orthodoxy, Image Books, 2001, p. xix). The fact that this is not the type of “prophet” or the type of defense of the faith that we see in Scripture doesn’t bother the emerging church one iota.

Consider **LESSLIE NEWBIGIN** (1909-1998). He was a bishop in the very liberal Church of South India and was Associate General Secretary in the radically heretical World Council of Churches. In *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society* Newbigin denied that the Bible is the verbally-plenarily inspired Word of God and said the 18th century defenders of the faith were in error when they taught that the Bible is a set of timeless truths. Newbigin falsely claimed that Jesus did not leave behind “a book, nor a creed, nor a system of thought, nor a rule of life” (p. 20). Newbigin wrote, “All so-called facts are interpreted facts. . . What we see as facts depends on the theory we bring to the observation” (*The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, p. 21). Newbigin called the split between liberals and fundamentalists “tragic” (p. 24). He taught that there is the possibility of salvation apart from faith in Christ.

Consider **PAUL WILLIAM YOUNG**, author of *The Shack*, which is about redefining God. It is about a man who becomes bitter at God after his daughter is murdered and has a life-changing experience in the very shack where the murder occurred; but the God he encounters is most definitely not the God of the Bible. Young’s depicts God the Father as a black woman who loves rock & roll. Young’s god is the god of the emerging church. He is cool, loves rock & roll, is non-judgmental, does not exercise wrath toward sin, does not send unbelievers to an eternal fiery hell, does not require repentance and the new birth, and puts no obligations on people. (See “The Shack’s Cool God” at the Way of Life web site, www.wayoflife.org.)

CONCLUSION

We could give many more examples of dangers in Christian bookstores, but this should be sufficient for the wise. We must remember that the last days are characterized by apostasy, not revival, that God warns His people to test everything by the Scriptures, and that spiritual error is clothed in the appearance of truth and righteousness.

“These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so” (Acts 17:11).

“Prove all things; hold fast that which is good” (1 Thess. 5:21).

“But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving, and being deceived” (2 Timothy 3:13).

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

“Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 John 4:1).
