Two Contemplative Leaders Die: Eugene Peterson and Thomas Keating

LTRP Note: Eugene Peterson (d. 10/22/18) and Catholic priest Thomas Keating (d. 10/25/18) have died. The article below (which is promoting Peterson and Keating) is written by Carl McColman (author of *The Big Book of Contemplative Mysticism*) and is posted for informational and research purposes and not as an endorsement of the content. Both Peterson and Keating have been addressed here, See a sample issue here.

Thomas Keating

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INFORMATION ABOUT LIGHTHOUSE TRAILS

Of the content. Both Peterson and Keating have been addressed many times over the years at Lighthouse Trails because of their deep roots in the contemplative prayer movement. Keating, especially, played a huge role in leading many down the contemplative path, and millions of people have been influenced by Eugene Peterson’s “Bible,” The Message (see links below to two articles from Lighthouse Trails). While they may be gone from this Earth, their influence, unfortunately, will live on for many years to come.

Eugene Peterson – Photo: Creative Commons

“Farewell to Two Contemplative Authors”
By Carl McColman | Patheos

This week was a rough one for the Christian contemplative community. We lost two major authors: Eugene Peterson and Thomas Keating, . . . . Keating was among a number of monks learning about Zen practice . . . . Inspired by Merton but also historical figures like the Desert Fathers and Mothers, John Cassian, and the anonymous author of The Cloud of Unknowing, centering prayer borrows techniques of meditation from eastern sources (including zazen and transcendental meditation) but anchors these techniques in a Christian understanding of prayer as relationship with God.

Although centering prayer has its critics (usually people who are uncomfortable with its similarity to non-Christian practices), it has become one of the most widely-practiced forms of Christian silent prayer, especially among Catholics and mainline Protestants. Click here to continue reading.

Related Articles from Lighthouse Trails:

The Message “Bible”— A Breach of Truth by John Lanagan

The Spirituality of Thomas Keating by LT Editors

Letter to the Editor on Proclaim 19: Lighthouse Trails Not Being Accurate About Speakers . . . Facts Prove Otherwise

To Lighthouse Trails:

I looked up speakers for the Proclaim 19 and did not find Charles Stanley on their list – nor did I find John MacArthur as a speaker. He is only listed as holding the worship service. From the Proclaim 19 web site: “Join us in worshiping our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. John MacArthur will be presenting the message and we will be blessed to have an opportunity to join Joni Eareckson Tada in singing hymns.” There are MANY MANY speakers – including the Vice President of United States – Mike Pence. I really enjoy reading your informative articles and blogs. I believe we need to be discerning in these last days. However, one thing that I believe is very important is to provide your readers with more complete and accurate information in your blogs. Thank you. R _____

LTRP Comment: Actually, our report was and remains accurate. Both John MacArthur and Charles Stanley are on the list of speakers as we earlier stated. As for semantics, Proclaim 19 calls MacArthur and Stanley “speakers”; thus, we have called them speakers. Below are two links and a photo for those who would like the documentation. As we reported earlier, Roma Downey and her husband Mark Burnett have been removed from the Speakers list, but we cannot confirm with NRB if they have just been removed from the speaking schedule or if they have been actually removed from the speaking schedule altogether.

Please understand the point in all this. It’s really very simple: Christian leaders are showing no discernment or wisdom in such matters as these (and haven’t for a long time). They will share platforms with anyone if it helps “get their own message out” (as if God cannot accomplish His purposes unless these leaders compromise). Rather than exposing the works of the Adversary, they are giving them a pat on the back. For nearly 17 years, Lighthouse Trails has shown example after example of this happening, and now today, the modern-day church is so convoluted and saturated with serious false teachings, no one knows up from down and right from left. While damage control efforts are already underway regarding Roma Downey speaking at Proclaim 19 (and perhaps she truly won’t be speaking at the event anymore – we don’t know because there’s been no announcement), you can almost be sure that there won’t be any Christian leaders who are attending Proclaim 19 who will be speaking up about Roma Downey’s promotion of dangerous New Age spirituality or about Rick Warren’s long-time emergent views on contemplative prayer, Bible prophecy, and cooperating with the Roman Catholic Church.
Lighthouse Trails is a Christian publishing company and research project ministry. We work with a group of Christian journalists and authors, all who understand the times in which we live from a biblical perspective. While we hope you will buy and read the books and booklets we have published, watch the DVDs we have produced, and support our ministry, we also provide extensive free research, documentation, and news on our Research site, blog, e-newsletter, and now our subscription based print journal. We pray that the products as well as the online research will be a blessing to the body of Christ and a witness to those who have not yet accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord, trusting in Him for the salvation of their souls.

Proclaim 19 Speakers List (photo used in accordance with the US Fair Use Act for the purpose of critique, review, and education)

Related Articles:

Rick Warren’s Dangerous Ecumenical Pathway to Rome And How One Interview Revealed So Much by Roger Oakland

Rick Warren Says Those Who Focus on Bible Prophecy “Not fit for the kingdom of God”

Calvary Chapel Pastor Greg Laurie Posts Photo Standing with New Age Advocate Roma Downey

Brian Brodersen and Greg Laurie’s “Bigger Picture of Christianity”

Comments From Our Readers
The following are some of the comments that came in this past two weeks from our readers regarding articles posted on our blog. Some of these comments were made on our blog; others were made on the LT Facebook page. If you would like to post a comment to one of our articles, you may do so at the blog. You only need to give your first name. We would be grateful to hear from you, and such feedback is helpful for others:

Roma Downey and Christian Leaders: When evangelicals and Catholics together came out 20 years ago main Christian leaders Across America endorsed Roman Catholicism. The same thing continues to happen today where the main Christian leadership across America will not confront false Doctrine. We continue to slide into apostasy. I believe these Christian leaders know but also know that it will cost them to speak out. Steve

Roma Downey and Christian Leaders: Have these endorsers read Box of Butterflies? There is no way that a true believer in Jesus Christ should approve of a book that favorably quotes idol-worshippers and New-agers and other authors who are not even born-again. Maybe the purpose is fame and fortune? Mystery!! Elizabeth

Roma Downey and Christian Leaders: Also, I have noticed a big 'amping up' of this heresy all over lately, the 'oneness' and the 'god in all' pantheistic heresies, as well as the 'unity' heresy. I truly believe this is the big LIE that people will believe in the end over the truth of the cross, and you can't have it both ways. The same lie coming full circle from the beginning from satan. But we ARE separate, God is separate from His creation, not only are we not 'god,' but the church is separate from the sinful world. Yet only we have been reconciled to God through the cross, the only way. Yet so many verses get twisted by satan for this deception. Thank you for this timely post! (: Anna Rosa

They Hate Christianity But Love (Another) Jesus: The churches are being inundated with this sort of thing. Sadly, the reason why many leave church, as I did, was because of spiritual abuse and legalism within supposed fundamentalist churches. I grew up in Independent Fundamental Baptist churches, and after the Jack Hyles / Jack Schaap scandal in the mid to late 1980's, we got out of there and began attending Southern Baptist churches. But now, the SBC is being overrun with the sort of heresies we read about here. There's really no where I can attend now. I won't set foot inside a Pentecostal church., ever. Willie

Roma Downey and Christian Leaders: Birds of a feather...Amos 3:3. If your favorite Bible teacher is...
growth and big numbers. This certainly doesn't bode well for pastors whose primary agenda is church growth and big numbers. The way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13-14). This certainly doesn’t bode well for pastors whose primary agenda is church growth and big numbers.

You see the Bible is full of godly men who stood alone and died fighting the heresy of the herd mentality, including Jesus Himself. Being “at odds with everyone else” is exactly what got Him nailed to a cross! He said: “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13-14). This certainly doesn’t bode well for pastors whose primary agenda is church growth and big numbers.

Regarding “The People’s Church: It happened to our church, only at a faster rate. Before we left 2.5 years ago, I found out that the church had joined the Willow Creek Association, amongst other disturbing things. I thought that was something the congregation would need to vote on....one of the last sermons I heard at our church was a video of Bill Hybels stating that, “The local church is the hope of the world.” No, Bill, Jesus Christ is the hope of the world. Rebecca

Regarding “The People’s Church: It is a very well planned, strategic takeover of the church. The goal is to eliminate Biblical Christianity, and the true hope of the Gospel, and replace but with a false hope, false peace, ultimately leading to a false Christ. - Bob

Regarding “The People’s Church: THE BIBLE: “ But as it is written, Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor our minds imagined WHAT WE CAN BUILD.” (from his speech ‘ I Still Believe In A Place Called Hope ’ on July 16, 1992) - Bill

The People’s Church

By Paul Proctor

I walked through the doors of the First Baptist Church in the spring of 1995 after having been somewhat of a prodigal son for roughly 10 years. I had recently rededicated my life to Christ and wanted to once again be a part of a loving church family. As I entered and sat down to the joyful noise of a magnificent choir and orchestra praising God in song, my heart and soul were filled with wonder, excitement and great expectation. I was truly being prepared for worship.

When the preacher finished his sermon, I was spiritually refreshed and energized for the week ahead. His message had been clear, powerful, convicting, biblical and full of the Holy Spirit. Over time I grew to love this brother in Christ because of his faithfulness and passion for the gospel. After visiting the church for some months, I knew I had found a church home.

A couple years later, the pastor invited me to lunch at a nearby country club he frequented where he mentioned in passing his desire to eventually do away with the First Baptist Church name and simply call it “The People’s Church,” claiming “that’s what everyone called it anyway.” Still taken by the man’s persona, I smiled and nodded in approval as he told me of wanting to take the church in “a new direction,” away from the Southern Baptist stigma that he felt had somehow hindered us in the past and move on greater things. Unfortunately, he didn’t elaborate on what that “new direction” was, and I mistakenly assumed he meant toward a non-denominational identity.

In the coming weeks and months a new message began emanating from his pulpit not unlike what had been coming from, of all places, the presidential podium of Bill Clinton during the height of his scandals. A re-occurring theme of “tolerance, diversity and unity” seemed to permeate almost every sermon. It became increasingly clear to me that the pastor’s “new direction” was worldly and that he was now being guided by someone or something other than God. Friction grew between the two of us over the course of time as his sermons turned away from the Gospel that leads to repentance and faith in Christ to the social psychology of get-alongism. Sure, the Bible calls us to live in peace with one another, to keep and maintain healthy relationships with our brothers and sisters in Christ, but not at the expense of God. The pastor I once held in such high regard began reciting “group-think” platitudes like: “You can’t be right with God and at odds with everyone else,” meaning it was now time for us all to compromise our conscience and convictions for the collective. This is the “Consensus Process” at work, a 200 year-old socialist brainwashing technique known by social psychologists the world over as the “Hegelian Dialectic,” developed by Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel in the late 1700s that involves the practice of compromise to achieve social harmony between opposing groups and/or belief systems. The Hegelian Dialectic is especially damaging to those of the faith who are compelled by the process to accept the unacceptable in order to gain the approval of the group. It is the herd mentality of humanist thinking and an abomination before God.

You see the Bible is full of godly men who stood alone and died fighting the heresy of the herd mentality, including Jesus Himself. Being “at odds with everyone else” is exactly what got Him nailed to a cross! He said: “Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it” (Matthew 7:13-14). This certainly doesn’t bode well for pastors whose primary agenda is church growth and big numbers.
It was not a tolerant Jesus who cleared the temple in Jerusalem of moneychangers with a whip or a tolerant John the Baptist who publicly railed against King Herod for marrying his brother’s wife or a tolerant Paul that stood up against Peter for alienating uncircumcised believers or tolerance that got most of the disciples beheaded or crucified in the early days of the church. Yet, here we are today as a re-invented church of tolerance, diversity, and unity. As the doors are all thrown open to anyone and anything, I ask you, is the church affecting the culture or is the culture infecting the church? Who is proselytizing whom here? Look around and tell me what you see.

It wasn’t long before a vulgar campaign for cash began at The People’s Church as if someone was running for political office, complete with banquets, dinners, awards, lots of flattering speech, testimonials, presentations, private meetings and special attention given to the church’s “big givers,” (their term, not mine) all to benefit a massive new building program that would put us in a high-tech “worship center” and twelve million dollars in debt.

When I walked into that entertainment complex where a sanctuary used to be, I saw a lot of cushioned movie theater seats where pews used to be; a big multi-media projection screen where a wooden cross used to be; a half dozen choreographed entertainers performing to applause where a choir used to be; a jazz/rock band playing solos where an orchestra used to be; a young female singer leading simplistic chants before a confused audience where a music minister used to lead great hymns of worship and praise to God and where a charming “facilitator” in a golf shirt preaches that we should all “go along to get along” where a once humble man of God used to courageously proclaim the Word of God.

I was once listening to a radio program on the Internet where a former teacher and expert on European history and philosophy by the name of Dean Gotcher was being interviewed about the Hegelian Dialectic or “Consensus Process” and how it has successfully been integrated into the government, the media, the military, law enforcement, public education, colleges, seminaries and even the church to centralize everything and unify us all into the socialist mindset of global governance. The global-socialist goal is and always has been a one-world government and a one-world religion. They have used the Hegelian Dialectic for centuries to control large populations around the world and steer them toward a “New World Order.” Near the end of the hour-long program, the man casually mentioned a couple of Christian organizations that were known for seducing churches into this Consensus Process with “progressive” church-growth programs where compromising brings in big numbers. The temptation of such worldly fruit is obviously hard to resist, even among the most faithful of pastors. Nonetheless, doing unholy things in the name of Christ does not make them holy.

When Dean Gotcher mentioned one of those organizations as being The Willow Creek Association, bells began ringing, lights began flashing, and all of a sudden five years of confusion, contention, and controversy between my pastor and me were instantly brought into complete clarity. Of course! The People’s Church belonged to the Willow Creek Association! Once my eyes were opened to their carnal ways through additional research, combined with all I had learned over the years about global-socialism, I became convinced that we, (the church) had been brought into the Consensus Process by way of a socialistic humanist organization posing as a Christian ministry, complete with “change-agents” and “facilitators” (wolves in sheep’s clothing) that I myself had encountered personally from Sunday School to Sunday worship. Apparently, this was the pastor’s “new direction” for The First Baptist Church. It came as no surprise to later discover that Willow Creek’s founder Bill Hybels was a dear friend and personal minister to the nation’s most renown socialist and “facilitator” at the time, Bill Clinton. Now I knew why my pastor began sounding so “Clintonesque” in his Sunday morning sermons.

As I went on to research The Willow Creek Association, I discovered that thousands upon thousands of established churches around the country were being transformed into sensory driven “seeker churches” exactly like ours under the guidance and direction of this organization, all with the same tolerance, diversity, and unity theme, liberal worship format, scripturally shallow teaching, heavy on the comfort and light on the conscience, equipped with huge multi-media projection screens, large sound systems, exotic music, no choir, female ministers, feelings-motivated skits, dance interpretations, and heavily burdened with millions of dollars of debt from building state-of-the-art entertainment venues they call “worship centers.” The revolving disco ball sparkling overhead at the dedication service was a real poignant moment for me personally.

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. (1st John 2:15-17)

(Paul Proctor is a former free-lance writer. This article is used with his permission)

Other articles by Paul Proctor:

Three Vital Questions on Navigating Discernment

Are You Prepared? Something to Think About

Roma Downey Promotes New Age Doctrine (God “In” Everyone & Everything)—Christian Leaders Say Nothing

Proclaim 19

First she’s there; now she’s gone, or is she? New Age sympathizer Roma Downey was scheduled to speak at the National Religious Broadcasters’ 2019 convention, Proclaim 19. Sharing the dais with her are highly popular evangelical names like John MacArthur, Rick Warren, Greg Laurie, and Kirk Cameron. Lighthouse Trails reported on the story with the release of Greg Reid’s book, Butterfly Illusions (which unveils the strong New Age messages in Roma Downey’s new book, Box of Butterflies).
Shortly after the release of the booklet, Lighthouse Trails learned that Roma Downey’s name (along with her husband Mark Burnett) had been removed from the speakers list for Proclaim 19. Calls to the NRB office in Washington, DC by Lighthouse Trails editors provided no answers as to why Downey’s name was gone other than being told “it has not yet been decided” if she will be speaking there. As has been the “normal” protocol for Christian leaders when they get challenged, there is just dead silence from NRB as well as from the evangelical figures who are involved. But new information about Roma Downey’s beliefs will hopefully prompt NRB and Christian leaders to be responsible and do the right thing.

**God “In” Everyone and Everything?**

The crux of the New Age is not Ouija boards and Tarot cards but rather is the foundational belief that God is “in” everyone and “in” everything. It is the prevailing doctrine throughout all New Age teachings as well as the root of mystical meditation. To believe that God is in everyone and in everything is to ultimately reject the Cross (whether one realizes that or not). If God is in everyone, then there would have been no reason for Jesus Christ to go to the Cross as a substitute for humanity’s sins because we would already be divine and not need a Savior. That is why one prominent New Age leader quoted his “God” as saying, “the era of the Single Savior is over”1 (because we are all Saviors). It would stand to reason that Christian teachers and pastors who profess to know God’s Word and His ways would easily recognize the contrast between New Age spirituality and biblical Christianity. But in the case of Roma Downey and today’s Christian leaders, this is not so.

For many years now, Roma Downey has consistently and publicly shown herself to be strongly aligned with the New Age. Her long-time spiritual mentor was New Age/New Thought pastor and teacher Della Reese whom Downey considered to be a mother figure. Downey then attended and, in 2010, graduated from the University of Santa Monica (one of the most popular New Age schools in the world). And she favorably quotes the school’s New Age leader and founder, the late John-Roger2 (who claimed he was inhabited by the “mystical traveler consciousness”). Shortly after her graduation from USM, Downey came on the evangelical Christian scene (calling herself a devout Catholic), producing Bible-story movies and being wholeheartedly welcomed by numerous Christian celebrities (see some photo examples below) including Rick Warren, David Jeremiah, Greg Laurie, Samuel Rodriguez (she wrote the foreword to his 2017 book, Be Light), and Joel Osteen. And now, most recently, her open-armed welcome to speak at Proclaim 19 with John MacArthur, Rick Warren, Greg Laurie, and Kirk Cameron.

Christian Leaders Say Nothing

Until concern was issued by Lighthouse Trails and others, none of the men listed above had any apparent problem with being associated with Roma Downey. But do they even know or care about what she believes? Or have they just benefited from their association with her and ignored what she really stands for? (After all, she has gained the affection and following of millions and millions of people since her Touch by an Angel days—those associating with her would clearly glean from her substantial popularity.) On this point (i.e., the motives of the leaders), we can only speculate. But on the issue of Roma Downey’s New Age beliefs, we can know this for sure. For example, on two different interviews, one in 2012 (during the making of The Bible series) and one in April 2018, Downey stated that she believes God is “in” everyone and everything. (See videos below.) And as Greg Reid shows in his booklet Butterfly Illusions, Downey’s new book Box of Butterflies echoes this same message that God is in everyone by stating that separation is an illusion.3 Reid confronts Christian leaders (many of whom gave their hearty endorsements for Box of Butterflies) for not being more discerning and also for not correcting Roma Downey and her husband about their New Age beliefs and showing them that such beliefs are the antithesis of the message of the Bible and the Gospel, and the two absolutely cannot mix or be joined together. (We must interject here that recently Greg Reid had the opportunity to hand Roma Downey a copy of Warren B. Smith’s biography The Light That Was Dark: From the New Age to Amazing Grace—can Christian leaders say they have done even half that much to point Roma Downey in the right direction?)

In Warren Smith’s own booklet, Be Still and Know That You Are Not God (God is NOT in Everyone and Everything), Smith states:

> Our Spiritual Adversary would have everyone believe that we are all “one” because God is “in” everyone and everything. Using every promotional means possible—including a creative and ingenious perversion of quantum physics—he is attempting to convince the world and the church that while Jesus was Christ, so is everyone. And while Jesus was God, so is everyone else. To underscore this heretical New Age doctrine of God and Christ “in” everyone, he would have us further believe that nothing of any significance happened on the Cross of Calvary. However, the Bible makes it very clear that something extremely wonderful and overwhelmingly significant did happen on the Cross of Calvary. For it was on that Cross that Jesus Christ died to save the world as He defeated sin (1 John 2:2), death (2 Timothy 1:10), and the Devil himself (Hebrews 2:14). As the one and only Christ, He is our Rock (1 Corinthians 10:1:4), He is our Foundation (1 Corinthians 3:11), and in every sense of the word He is the Saviour of the world (1 John 4:14).

The tragedy about this situation between Roma Downey and Christian leaders is that the leaders are using Roma Downey, Roma Downey is using the leaders, and our Adversary is using them both—and countless naive and undiscerning Christians are buying into the whole thing.

Is Roma Downey going to be speaking at Proclaim 19? We don’t know. NRB is saying nothing about the removal of her name except the unofficial comment to Lighthouse Trails that “it has not yet been decided.” We urge NRB as well as John MacArthur, Greg Laurie, Kirk Cameron, and the other leaders to do the right thing—to speak the truth in love to Roma Downey about the dangers of her New Age beliefs that directly contradict the teachings of Jesus Christ.

**Washington Post Interview – 2012** (If you cannot see the two videos below, please [click here](https://example.com).)
100 Huntley Street Interview – April 2018 (start at 1:30 min. mark) (100 Huntley Street is Canada’s equivalent to the 700 Club in the U.S.)

PHOTOS THAT SAY A THOUSAND WORDS:

Roma Downey with Mark Burnett and Mr. and Mrs. David Jeremiah (2015) (photo from David Jeremiah’s Twitter account; used in accordance with the US Fair Use Act for the purpose of education, critique, and review)
LOS ANGELES, CA. August 11, 2016: Della Reese & Mark Burnett & Roma Downey & Rick Warren at Hollywood Walk of Fame Star ceremony for actress Roma Downey. (photo from shutterstock, used with permission for editorial purposes only)

Note and Photos to the Editor: Roma Downey Says Oprah Winfrey on Fire With the Holy Spirit

Note from LT reader: [Contemplative proponent] Priscilla Shirer [see photo below] with Roma Downey at a [spring 2018] charity event where Roma said Oprah was full of the Holy Spirit. As screen captured below:
About last night! Mark and I had fun hanging out with Oprah (you would too cuz she is fun and incredibly generous) we were all there helping raise money to feed the hungry. Congrats to Minnie's food pantry, we salute you and your volunteers. May God continue to Bless your mission.

What an extraordinary night. Miss Oprah Winfrey was spectacular, truly she was on fire with the holy spirit and light helping raise over one million dollars to feed the hungry. I have never seen anything like it! She was amazing! She encouraged the room to be the hands of God and do it for Jesus 🙏, she is such a powerful speaker, she was on fire and she moved all of us, she touched me and moved me and she raised my spirit high with her passion and her heart and her love for humanity. We laughed, we cried, we danced, we sang, we danced, we sang.

Bumped into the beautiful and talented @priscillashirer at Minnie's Food pantry event tonight. #MinniesPantry raising money to feed the hungry. God bless all the volunteers.

#iamwithminnie #priscillashirer #romadowney
In May of 2013, Lighthouse Trails released a report titled, “They Hate Christianity But Love (Another) Jesus – How Conservative Christians Are Being Manipulated and Ridiculed, Especially During Election Years.” In view of the upcoming elections and some of the things going on around the country in the “background,” it seems diligent to repost the report at this time. While some of the documentation in the report is a few years old, there are similar efforts going on today as are described in the report. For instance, the “Vote Common Good” (a website created on June 2018, just in time for the elections) bus tours taking place right now around the country are intending on “flipping Congress.” The line up of those speaking on the tour are largely extreme liberal emergent figures such as Brian McLaren, Shane Claiborne, Frank Schaeffer, John Pavlovitz (recently featured in a LT article), Mark Scandrette, Doug Pagitt, Samir Selmanović, Diana Butler Bass, and Nadia Bolz-Weber. Folks, these people mean business, and they won’t let up until they’ve accomplished their Marxist/Socialist-leaning, anti-biblical goals. This next election will come and go, but they will still be here, telling the world that they represent “true” relevant Christianity.
may find it quite disturbing when you read what the agenda behind the scenes really is. Wallis' Revolutionary Anti-Christian "Gospel" (and Will Christian Leaders Stand with Wallis?)” we highly recommend it.2 But be warned—you

Incidentally, if you’ve never read the article we posted in the summer of 2010 regarding Jim Wallis and Sojourners, “Sojourners Founder Jim Wallis' Revolutionary Anti-Christian "Gospel" (and Will Christian Leaders Stand with Wallis?)” we highly recommend it.2 But be warned—you

Several of the names we have listed above have said similar type things about biblical Christianity over the years as you can read about on our site and in our published materials. Some of you may remember our 2009 article “Brian McLaren Wants End Time Believing Christians Robustly Confronted.” As far as these highly influential emergents are concerned the “old-time religion” of being washed in the blood of the Lamb is over. And you can be sure their target is your children and grandchildren, especially ones who’ve grown up in Christian homes. When you consider how Rick Warren, Bob Buford (Leadership Network), and Bill Hybels all had a part in launching the emergent church back in the 1990s, and then never retracted a single promotion of it, it’s difficult to witness the “fruit” of their labors these 25 years later and listen to the silence of Christian leaders who seem to care more about building their own empires than defending that old time religion.

And now the 2013 Lighthouse Trails report:

“They Hate Christianity But Love (Another) Jesus – How Conservative Christians Are Being Manipulated and Ridiculed, Especially During Election Years”

In 2008, which was an election year, books, videos, broadcasts, and news articles were pouring into mainstream America with a guilt-ridden message that basically manipulated conservative Christians into thinking that either they shouldn’t vote because “Jesus wouldn’t vote,” or they shouldn’t vote on morality issues such as abortion or homosexuality. Suddenly, all over the place, there was talk about “destroying Christianity,” or “liking Jesus but not the church,” or “Jesus for president” (suggesting that maybe we could get Him on the ballot but certainly we shouldn’t vote for anyone already on the ballot). It all sounded very noble to many. After all, everybody knows there is so much political corruption in high government and certainly as much hypocrisy within the walls of many proclaiming Christian leaders and celebrities.

This special report by Lighthouse Trails is not going to attempt to answer the question, “Should a Christian vote?” But we hope to at least show that things are not always as they seem, and what may appear noble and good may not be so at all.

In January of 2012, another election year, a young man, Jefferson (Jeff) Bethke, who attends contemplative advocate Mark Driscoll’s church, Mars Hill in Washington state, posted a video on YouTube called “Why I Hate Religion, But Love Jesus.” Within hours, the video had over 100,000 hits. Soon it reached over 14 million hits, according to the Washington Post, one of the major media that has spotlighted the Bethke video (hits as of May 2013 are over 25 million).

The Bethke video is a poem Bethke wrote and recites in a rap-like fashion his thoughts and beliefs about the pitfalls of what he calls “religion” but what is indicated to be Christianity. While we are not saying at this time that Bethke is an emerging figure, and while some of the lyrics in his poem are true statements, it is interesting that emerging spirituality figures seem to be resonating with Bethke’s message. They are looking for anything that will give them ammunition against traditional biblical Christianity. They have found some in Bethke’s poem. Like so many in the emerging camp say, Bethke’s poem suggests that Christians don’t take care of the poor and needy. While believers in Christ have been caring for the needy for centuries, emerging figures use this ploy to win conservative Christians (through guilt) over to a liberal social justice “gospel.” Emerging church journalist Jim Wallis (founder of Sojourners) is one who picked up on Bethke’s video. In an article on Wallis’ blog, it states:

Bethke’s work challenges his listeners to second guess their preconceived notions about what it means to be a Christian. He challenges us to turn away from the superficial trappings of “religion,” and instead lead a missional life in Christ.

What the article is talking about when it says “preconceived notions” is Christianity according to the Bible. Emerging figures accept some of it but find to accept all of it is too restricting. Many of them call themselves “red letter Christians,” su\pposing to mean they adhere to all the red letters that Jesus said; but they have actually chosen which red letters they adhere to—they don’t accept them all. For instance, they dismiss red letters that refer to there being a hell for those who reject Jesus Christ as Lord, God, and Savior. When the word missional is used, this doesn’t mean traditional missionary efforts to evangelize the world. It means to realize that all of humanity is saved and being saved along with all of creation and that the means of salvation didn’t take place in a one-time event (the Cross) but is an ongoing procedure that occurs as people begin to realize they are all connected to one another and can bring about a Utopian society through this interconnectedness. Such emerging buzz words like missional fool a lot of people though.

Incidentally, if you’ve never read the article we posted in the summer of 2010 regarding Jim Wallis and Sojourners, “Sojourners Founder Jim Wallis’ Revolutionary Anti-Christian “Gospel” (and Will Christian Leaders Stand with Wallis?)” we highly recommend it.2 But be warned—you may find it quite disturbing when you read what the agenda behind the scenes really is.
The rally call to throw out Christianity but keep “Jesus” isn’t a new one—we’ve heard it many times before from various emerging contemplatives. Futurist Erwin McManus once said in an interview:

My goal is to destroy Christianity as a world religion and be a recatalyst for the movement of Jesus Christ . . . Some people are upset with me because it sounds like I’m anti-Christian. I think they might be right.3

And, of course, there is Dan Kimball’s book, They Like Jesus But Not the Church. In a book review of Kimball’s book, Lighthouse Trails stated that the book should really be called They Like (Another) Jesus But Not the Church, the Bible, Morality, or the Truthk Kimball interviews several young people (one is a lesbian) who tell him they “like and respect Jesus” but they don’t want anything to do with going to church or with those Christians who take the Bible literally. Kimball says these are “exciting times” we live in “when Jesus is becoming more and more respected in our culture by non-churchgoing people.”5 He says we should “be out listening to what non-Christians, especially those in their late teens to thirties, are saying and thinking about the church and Christianity.”6

According to Kimball, it is vitally important that we as Christians be accepted by non-Christians and not thought of as abnormal or strange. But in order to do that, he says we must change the way we live and behave. Kimball insists that “those who are rejecting faith in Jesus” do so because of their views of Christians and the church.7 But he makes it clear throughout the book that these distorted views are not the fault of the unbeliever but are the fault of Christians, but not all Christians, just those fundamentalist ones who take the Bible literally, believe that homosexuality is a sin, and think certain things are wrong and harmful to society . . . and actually speak up about these things.

Perhaps what is most damaging about Dan Kimball’s book is his black and white, either or reasoning (the very thing he accuses Christians of). He makes it very clear that you cannot be a Christian who takes the Bible literally and also be a humble, loving, thoughtful person. They are two different things, according to Kimball. There is no such thing as a loving, humble Christian who takes the Bible literally. His book further alienates believers in a world that is already hostile to those who say Jesus is the only way to salvation, the Bible should be taken literally, homosexuality is a sin, and we are called out of this world to live righteously by the grace of God.

Brian McLaren, the emerging church’s early pioneer, resonates with these ill feelings toward the Christian faith when he states:

I must add, though, that I don’t believe making disciples must equal making adherents to the Christian religion. It may be advisable in many (not all!) circumstances to help people become followers of Jesus and remain within their Buddhist, Hindu, or Jewish contexts.8

Roger Oakland deals with this “we love Jesus but hate Christianity” mentality in his book Faith Undone. Listen to a few quotes Oakland includes in that book:

For me, the beginning of sharing my faith with people began by throwing out Christianity and embracing Christian spirituality, a nonpolitical mysterious system that can be experienced but not explained.9—Don Miller, Blue Like Jazz

They [Barbarians] see Christianity as a world religion, in many ways no different from any other religious system. Whether Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, or Christianity, they’re not about religion; they’re about advancing the revolution Jesus started two thousand years ago.10—Erwin McManus, The Barbarian Way

New Light embodiment means to be “in connection” and “information” with other faiths . . . . One can be a faithful disciple of Jesus Christ without denying the flickers of the sacred in followers of Yahweh, or Kali, or Krishna.”11—Leonard Sweet

I happen to know people who are followers of Christ in other religions.12 Rick Warren

I see no contradiction between Buddhism and Christianity. . . . I intend to become as good a Buddhist as I can.13 Thomas Merton

Allah is not another God . . . we worship the same God . . . . The same God! The very same God we worship in Christ is the God . . . the Muslims—worship.14—Peter Kreeft

Roger Oakland relates a story from the Book of Acts:

“[T]he apostle Paul had been arrested for preaching the Gospel. He was brought before King Agrippa and given the opportunity to share his testimony of how he became a Christian. He told Agrippa that the Lord had commissioned him to preach the Gospel and:

To open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. (Acts 26:18)

‘Agrippa continued listening and then said to Paul, ‘Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian (vs. 28).’ Paul answered him:

I would to God, that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost, and altogether such as I am, except these bonds. (vs. 29)

“If Paul had been following the emerging mentality, he would have told Agrippa, “No need to become a Christian. You can remain just as you are; keep all your rituals and practices, just say you like Jesus.” In actually, if Paul had been practicing emerging spirituality, he wouldn’t have been arrested in the first place. He would not have stood out, would not have preached boldly and without reservation, and he would not have called himself a Christian, which eventually became a death sentence for Paul and countless others.”15

It’s hard to believe there was not at least some political agenda in this storm of “we love Jesus but not the church or Christianity” especially witnessed in election years. And we believe this agenda was aimed particularly toward young people from evangelical conservative upbringings who had joined the emerging church movement. In a CBS Broadcast, anchorman Antonio Mora suggests there may have been over twenty million participants in the emerging church movement in the United States alone by 2006.16 Even half that number would be enough to change the results of a presidential election.

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“What if I told you getting you to vote Republican, really wasn’t his [Jesus’] mission? Because Republican doesn’t automatically mean Christian.”

Could there be some message here that Bethke is trying to relay? Is it just to tell people that just because they are Republican doesn’t mean they are Christian? Surely not. A fourth grader could reason that out. It’s difficult not to believe there is some other message here that just happens to be taking place on an election year.

Just consider some of the things that were said by evangelical and emerging figures during the 2008 presidential election year. And think about what you are hearing today. A lot of people love the messages being sent out by people like Dan Kimball, Erwin McManus, and let’s not forget Frank Viola and George Barna’s book, *Pagan Christianity*, where they condemn church practices like pastors, sermons, Sunday School, and pews, but say nothing about spiritual deception that has come into the church through the contemplative prayer movement. These latter two figures (Viola and Barna) give readers a feeling that they should hate Christianity but just love Jesus. But what Jesus are these voices writing, singing, and rapping about? It may be “another Jesus” and “another gospel” (2 Corinthians 11:4).

As the world is gradually (but not too slowly anymore) heading toward a global government and global religion, it is becoming more and more apparent that this global society will be one where “tolerance” is the byword for everything other than biblical Christianity. And what better way to breed hatred toward biblical Christians than to say “we love Jesus but hate the church” (i.e., Christians and Christianity)? Perhaps they have forgotten what Jesus said:

> If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. (John 15: 18-19)

> I have given them thy word; and the world hath hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world. (John 17:14)

This report we have written may produce more questions than answers regarding things like politics, voting, the role of Christians in the world, the view the world has of Christians, and so forth. But while we have not answered such questions, we hope we have shown that indeed things are not always as they seem and that often what seems right may actually be from a deceiving angel of light and those who appear good may actually be only false ministers of righteousness.

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. (2 Corinthians 11: 14-15)

To order copies of *They Hate Christianity But Love (Another) Jesus in booklet format* click here.

Endnotes:

4. “They Like Jesus, But Not the Church (or They Like (Another) Jesus But Not the Church, the Bible, Morality, or the Truth)” (http://www.lighthousetrailresearch.com/blog/?p=3292).
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid., p. 19.

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Thank you in advance,

The Editors at Lighthouse Trails

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