

*The* Treacherous  
WATERS  
*of* Evangelicalism

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*Issues Facing the Churches*  
David Cloud



*The Treacherous Waters of Evangelicalism*

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PO Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061  
866-295-4143 (toll free) - [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org)  
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Canada: Bethel Baptist Church  
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519-652-2619

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# Introduction

There is a growing move by some fundamental Baptists to join hands with “conservative evangelicals” in the Southern Baptist Convention and beyond.

Some claim that the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) is “conservative” and theologically safe today and that the battle against theological liberalism has been won.

When Jerry Falwell led Thomas Road Baptist Church into the Southern Baptist Convention in 1996, he said, “... the national and Virginia Bible-believing conservatives ... have rescued the Southern Baptist Convention from theological liberalism” (Baptist Press, October 24, 1996)

When Highland Park Baptist Church of Chattanooga, Tennessee, went back into the Convention in 2008, a little over 50 years after leaving, Nat Phillips said that “he did not believe the separation from the SBC would even have happened--were it today [because] the SBC has turned its direction back toward its conservative theological roots” (James Wigton, *Lee Roberson--Always about His Father's Business*, p. 233).

These are misguided, ill-informed statements. Shockingly so.

In reality, the SBC is more filled with heresy today than it was in the 1960s and 1970s when John R. Rice and others were warning about its liberalism and so many churches left it.

In September 1989 Jerry Huffman, editor of the *Calvary Contender*, rightly said, “The SBC IS AN UNEQUALLY-

YOKED MIXED MULTITUDE.” That was after the “conservative renaissance.”

Consider the following testimony from a pastor who left the SBC in 1996:

“During my upbringing the compromise in the SBC began to creep in. It was subtle and almost imperceptible. The changes were hardly noticed. Yet, THE WAVES OF CONTINUED COMPROMISE CARRIED THE SBC INTO DEEP AND TREACHEROUS WATERS, FROM WHICH THEY NEVER RETURNED. It is sad to see many of the IB churches following the same course” (Marty Wynn, Lighthouse Baptist Church, Columbus, Georgia, e-mail to D. Cloud, May 21, 2011).

**TREACHEROUS WATERS** is a perfect description of evangelicalism in general, of which the Southern Baptist Convention is a part. These waters are permeated with ancient and end-times heresies (2 Timothy 3:13) and fables (2 Timothy 4:4).

I am not writing this report for Southern Baptists and evangelicals, because I don’t think there is any hope for them. They mock and malign and ignore reprovers. They hide behind the impressive size of their denominations and movements and the brilliance of their scholars and refuse to heed godly reproof. They are like the rich man whose wealth is his strong city (Proverbs 18:11). Like the Laodicean Church, they are “rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing,” so what possible need would they have of correction? So there is no hope.

No, this report is for the fundamental Baptists and Bible-believing fundamentalist churches that still have any sort of spiritual/doctrinal backbone but are in danger of the treacherous waters through an ineffective separatism. They

are in danger of the treacherous waters because they are “messaging around” with “conservative evangelicals.”

This report is for Bible-believing churches that still have the wisdom and spiritual strength to listen to Bible-based, well-documented warnings.

My challenge to these churches is this: The only way to be protected is to keep your boat *entirely* out of these waters. Education, reproof, and separation are the divinely-ordained means of spiritual protection.

My warning to these churches is this: Every fundamentalist and Independent Baptist church that does not take Biblical separation *seriously* today and does not make the effort to practice *EFFECTIVE* separation will be well down the emerging evangelical path within 15-20 years. And if the church itself is not emerging by then, many of the current and future members will be.

### **Asa and Jehoshaphat**

The Southern Baptist Convention and evangelicalism at large is a mixed multitude, and the best men in the Convention today, the “conservative evangelicals,” are like Asa and Jehoshaphat. They are good men as far as it goes, sound in their faith in the true God as known in Jesus Christ. They do not worship idols. But they are *not* known for tearing down idols and they don’t want to be known for tearing down idols. And even when they do tear down *some* idols, they leave the high places intact so that idolatry/heresy continues to increase and spread.

Some of the conservatives will lift a voice against a few errors, usually in a fairly vague manner, but large numbers of

them are like Billy Graham and his brother-in-law Leighton Ford, both of whom are universally acclaimed within the SBC and evangelicalism in general.

Graham warned about “false prophets” in generalities, but when asked by the *United Church Observer* of Canada whether he considered Paul Tillich a false prophet, Graham replied: “I have made it a practice not to pass judgment on other clergymen” (*United Church Observer*, July 1, 1966).

As for Leighton Ford, when I interviewed him at the National Pastors Conference in San Diego in 2009 and asked him whether he is satisfied with where the evangelical movement has come, he replied, “I am not here to criticize anyone!” I had reminded him that there are “evangelicals” at that very meeting who deny the substitutionary atonement, deny the infallible inspiration of Scripture, write novels depicting God as a woman, etc., and that was his very forceful reply to this important question.

If you look only at them (the “evangelical conservatives”) things seem fairly right (if you are willing to ignore their total capitulation to the heresy of modern textual criticism and, typically, to Reformed theology), but if you look farther afield within their own associations you see confusion and error abounding, while they stand in the midst of it all wearing the beguiling smile of spiritual pacifism and maligning any prophet who seeks to correct them.

Like Jehoshaphat, they affiliate with the idolaters and the enemies of God instead of plainly reproofing and separating from them.

Contrast Hezekiah, who “removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the

brasen serpent that Moses had made: for unto those days the children of Israel did burn incense to it: and he called it Nehushtan” (2 Kings 18:4).

And contrast Josiah, who went through the entire land himself and oversaw the destruction of the idols. “And he brake in pieces the images, and cut down the groves, and filled their places with the bones of men” (2 Kings 23:14).

But the last time the Southern Baptist Convention had a real rip-roaring idol-hater was probably in the days of J. Frank Norris, and they kicked him out as a dangerous extremist. Ever since, the real prophets and the thorough-going idol haters have found a home in the Independent Baptist movement (and such men have been few and far between even among IBaptists).

The “conservatives” we find today within the SBC in particular and evangelicalism at large are the Asas and the Jehoshaphats.

“And also Maachah his mother, even her he [ASA] removed from being queen, because she had made an idol in a grove; and Asa destroyed her idol, and burnt it by the brook Kidron. BUT THE HIGH PLACES WERE NOT REMOVED: nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the LORD all his days” (1 Kings 15:13-14).

“And Jehu the son of Hanani the seer went out to meet him, and said to king Jehoshaphat, SHOULDEST THOU HELP THE UNGODLY, AND LOVE THEM THAT HATE THE LORD? therefore is wrath upon thee from before the LORD. Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast taken away the groves out of the land, and hast prepared thine heart to seek God” (2 Chronicles 19:2-3).

Jehoshaphat tore down some idols, but he associated with idolaters and for that he was judged by God and forcefully

reproved by the Lord's prophet. Jehoshaphat said that he hated idols, but he yoked together with idolaters; he said that he loved God but he also loved God's enemies. It was very confusing. He was "Mr. Facing Two Ways."

It appears from 2 Chronicles 19:2-3 that God requires separation in no uncertain terms!

This is because the Asa-Jehoshaphat-type of compromise is not a light matter. The compromise with idols, the refusal to deal with them aggressively, the refusal to tear them down and to destroy the high places where they are worshipped and where they proliferate, eventually led to divine judgment on the nation and resulted in the quenching of Israel's light.

The leaven of idolatry spread even during the reigns of the good kings because the idols and high places were not decidedly cut off.

And "all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come" (1 Corinthians 10:11).

God's people, wake up!!!!!!!!!!!!

Shortsighted men see only the present blessings and focus only on the good. They look at Asa- and Jehoshaphat-type preachers and see no big problem, surely nothing to get upset about. Shortsighted men regard reproving prophets to be more of a problem than compromising preachers.

But two times the book of Proverbs repeats the truth that "a prudent man foreseeth the evil, and hideth himself: but the simple pass on, and are punished" (Proverbs 22:3; 27:12). Two times means emphasis. Two times means "listen up!"

Shortsighted men don't understand that if sin and error are not dealt with plainly, if they aren't nipped in the bud, they eventually corrupt everything and ruin all of the good and result in destruction.

Two times the New Testament repeats the truth that "a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." It is stated in relation to sin and again in relation to error (1 Corinthians 5:8; Galatians 5:9).

"A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump." What a profound truth. If leaven is not removed, entirely removed, cut out, cut off, it continues to spread. Even if a little bit of it is left, it spreads and it eventually leavens the whole lump.

Leaven is not stopped by preachers who focus on preaching positive truth and who avoid controversy and avoid "dealing with personalities" and refuse to deal with sin and error and idols plainly. It is not stopped by dealing with only some idols. It matters not how much those preachers might love God and His Word in their personal lives and how much positive truth they preach or how effectively they preach it or how zealously they deal with *some* of the idols. You can cut out 50%, 75%, even 95% of leaven, and it will still continue to spread. All the devil must do is bide his time.

## **Conservative Evangelicals Are Bridges to Every Sort of Heresy**

Conservative evangelicals like Ed Stetzer and John Piper, are enablers of heresies by their refusal to deal with error plainly enough and to cut off association with it decidedly, and they therefore allow and even facilitate its spread.

For example, **Ed Stetzer**, head of the SBC's LifeWay research department, holds to the "in non-essentials liberty" philosophy, despises separatism, and associates with pretty much anybody and everybody. He is a bridge to the "broader church" that is filled to the brim today with ancient and end-times heresies (such as baptismal regeneration, popery, Mariolatry, sacramentalism, anti-Trinitarianism, universalism, Catholic mysticism, kingdom now reconstructionism, Charismaticism, theistic evolution, fallible inspiration of Scripture, pantheism, the non-judgmental "Shack" god, and Christian homosexuality).

As far as I know, Stetzer, as a "conservative evangelical," doesn't hold to these heresies, but he is a bridge to the broader "evangelical church" where an individual can easily be influenced by any and all of these. He is a path to the treacherous waters.

Most of these heresies are represented by the authors featured in any LifeWay Bookstore and certainly by those with whom those authors are directly associated.

Consider some of Stetzer's associations. He is closely affiliated with Mark Driscoll, who is "culturally liberal" (e.g., ushering in the New Year through campaign dance parties), hates the doctrine of the Rapture, and promotes Catholic contemplative mysticism, among other things. Stetzer is affiliated with fellow Southern Baptist Rick Warren, who in turn is closely affiliated with New Agers and universalists (e.g., Tony Blair, Mehmet Oz, Daniel Amen, Mark Hyman, Leonard Sweet) and promotes Catholic contemplative mysticism, among many other things. Stetzer is non-critically affiliated with the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, which in turn is affiliated with the papacy and

has turned thousands of “converts” over to the Catholic Church. Stetzer is also affiliated with the most liberal of emergents, who deny the infallible inspiration of Scripture, the substitutionary atonement, a literal hell, and many other fundamentals of the faith. Though Stetzer criticizes their heresies, he does so in gentle, intellectual, dialoguing terms and refuses to disassociate from them. He won’t stand up on his hind legs and reprove them in no uncertain terms for the rank and wretched heretics they are! For example, Stetzer participates in Shapevine, an emerging church blog that features liberal emergents such as Brian McLaren, Tony Jones, Sally Morgenthaler, Alan Hirsch, and Leonard Sweet. Shapevine is called “a global community of collaborators.” “Conservative Southern Baptists” like Stetzer are right in the middle of this unscriptural collaboration (Romans 16:17; 2 Corinthians 6:14-18; 2 Timothy 3:5). (See our book *What Is the Emerging Church?* for documentation of the dangerous heresies of the aforementioned emergent leaders.)

Stetzer endorsed the 2010 book *Jesus Manifesto* authored by Frank Viola and Leonard Sweet. The book introduces its readers to a virtual who’s who of ancient and end-time heretics: Karl Barth, Thomas Aquinas, Origen, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, John Henry Newman, Sören Kierkegaard, G.K. Chesterton, Thomas à Kempis, E. Stanley Jones (a modernist who is called “the great Methodist missionary”), Roger Schutz (founder of Taizé), the “Cappadocian Fathers,” Pope John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, and Reinhold Niebuhr, to mention a few. All of these are quoted favorably without a hint of warning about their rank heresies.

It is not an accident that Viola and Sweet repeatedly and favorably quote Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Reinhold Niebuhr, since they hold to a heretical Neo-

Orthodox view of Scripture. Consider the following excerpts, which could be multiplied: “Chapters 1 and 2 [of Genesis] were never intended to be the battleground for the Creation-versus-evolution debate” (*Jesus Manifesto*, p. 9).

“The Christian religion teaches that the Bible answers virtually every question that’s brought to the sacred text. The problem with this line of thought is that the true God cannot fit into anyone’s box” (p. 130).

“Truth is not a book ... or a creed ... Truth is a person. And Jesus is His name. Christianity, therefore, is not fundamentally about following a book” (p. 137).

“[The Bible] speaks anew to every age. It should be read in the light of new information and fresh discoveries. It must also be understood in community, not as an individual. ... Each age draws new insights from the Scriptures based on what that age brings to it. This means that revelation is always veiled in mystery. We bring to it our culture, our history, our gaze, and our glasses. The fundamentalist idea that the text has only one meaning is of relatively recent invention” (pp. 139, 140).

Frank Viola, co-author of *Jesus Manifesto*, is the father of the so-called organic church movement which renounces the office of pastor-elder. Leonard Sweet is a New Age sympathizer at best. Sweet promotes a universalist-tinged doctrine that he calls New Light and “quantum spirituality” and “the Christ consciousness.” He describes it in terms of “the union of the human with the divine” which is the “center feature of all the world’s religions” (*Quantum Spirituality*, p. 235). He defines the New Light as “a structure of human becoming, a channeling of Christ energies through mindbody experience” (*Quantum Spirituality*, p. 70). He says that “New Light pastors” hold the doctrine of “embodiment of God in the very substance of creation” (p. 124). In *Carpe Mañana*, Sweet says that the earth is as much a part of the body of

Christ as humans and that humanity and the earth constitutes “a cosmic body of Christ” (p. 124). Sweet says that some of the “New Light leaders” that have influenced his thinking are Matthew Fox, M. Scott Peck, Willis Harman, and Ken Wilber. These are prominent New Agers who believe in the divinity of man, as we have documented in the book *The New Age Tower of Babel*.

Both Viola and Sweet have endorsed *The Shack* with its non-judgmental father-mother god. Both Viola and Sweet promote Roman Catholic contemplative mysticism and dangerous mystics such as the Catholic-Buddhist Thomas Merton.

To recommend a book like *Jesus Manifesto* and writers such as Frank Viola and Leonard Sweet, it is obvious that Ed Stetzer is not “conservative.” He is the blind leading the blind, and the ditch into which he has fallen is filled with end-time apostasy.

Consider **John Piper**. He is another bridge to the heresies in the “broader evangelical church.” In April 2011, Piper conducted a Desiring God conference at Rick Warren’s Saddleback Church, and in June he preached at the annual Southern Baptist pastors conference, again joining hands with Rick Warren.

When you get into Rick Warren’s sphere, you are within reach of all sorts of heresies and fables. These are treacherous waters, indeed. Warren preaches the heretical “judge not” philosophy; turns the church into a rock & roll entertainment center complete with pelvic thrusts; says God won’t ask about your doctrinal views; continually and approvingly quotes from heretics in his writings and preaching (such as Roman Catholic universalists Mother

Teresa, Henri Nouwen, and Thomas Merton); promotes Catholic contemplative mysticism; likens Christian fundamentalists to Islamic terrorists; calls for unity between Baptists, Roman Catholics, Pentecostals, Anglicans, etc.; promotes the exceedingly liberal Baptist World Alliance; yokes together with New Age practitioners; says that believers should work with unbelievers and pagan religionists to build the kingdom of God; and presents Roman Catholic one-worlder Tony Blair with a peace prize (March 2011). For documentation see <http://www.wayoflife.org/database/warrenheader.html>

In spite of the danger represented by John Piper's association with these treacherous waters, his popularity is growing among Independent Baptists. In a 2005 survey of roughly 1,100 "young fundamentalists," almost 50% agreed with the statement, "John Piper's ministry has been a help to me." Kevin Bauder of Central Baptist Seminary has recently used his blog to praise "conservative evangelicals" such as Piper. Northland University has also been "resonating" with Piper and other "conservative evangelicals."

# Heresies and High Places

The Southern Baptist Convention in specific, and evangelicalism at large, is not a safe place spiritually. Evangelicalism is filled to the brim with ancient and end-time heresies and idols and fables that can be found in the “high places” that have not been torn down.

Indeed, the Convention represents “treacherous waters.”

For 50 years men of God have warned that the principle of New Evangelicalism, which is to renounce “separatism” or to be soft on “separatism,” would result in spiritual destruction, because the Bible forcefully states, “Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Corinthians 15:33), and, “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Galatians 5:9).

In 1969, Dr. Charles Woodbridge, issued the following warning:

“The New Evangelicalism advocates TOLERATION of error. It is following the downward path of ACCOMMODATION to error, COOPERATION with error, CONTAMINATION by error, and ultimate CAPITULATION to error!” (Charles Woodbridge, *The New Evangelicalism*, 1969).

Dr. Woodbridge was a very knowledgeable man. He wrote the previous words as a fundamentalist, but he had spent many years as an evangelical insider. He was a professor at Fuller Theological Seminary in its early days, a founding member of the National Association of Evangelicals, and a personal friend of men such as Harold Ockenga and Carl Henry, but he rejected the New Evangelicalism as

unscriptural and spent the rest of his life warning of its dangers.

In that day Woodbridge and others who issued similar warnings were mocked and ignored. They were sidelined as irrelevant and cranky, even dangerous.

But today the truth of Dr. Woodbridge's passionate warning is clear for all to see. Evangelicalism has capitulated to the error from which it has refused to separate.

In 1985, Harold Lindsell, another evangelical insider, issued the following warning: "Evangelicalism today is in a sad state of disarray. ... Evangelicalism's children are in the process of forsaking the faith of their fathers" (*Christian News*, Dec. 2, 1985).

As we will see, not only have many evangelicals lost the faith of their fathers, they have also lost the God of their fathers.

Following are 21 examples of wretched heresies and fables that have found a home in this broad movement. Most of these heresies and fables are represented by authors distributed by LifeWay bookstores, which are owned by the Southern Baptist Convention.

- The Smorgasbord of Modern Bible Versions
- Process Salvation
- Ecumenism and Affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church
- Masonic Paganism
- Cultural Liberalism
- Rock & Roll Heathenism
- Salvation Apart from Faith in Christ
- Christian Homosexuality

- Downgrade of Hell
- Downgrade of Biblical Inspiration
- Theistic Evolution
- Catholic Contemplative Mysticism
- Charismatic Heresy and Weirdness
- Positive Thinking
- Schuller’s Self-Esteemism
- Dobson’s Self-Esteemism
- Unconditional Love
- Unconditional Forgiveness
- Denying the Substitutionary Blood Atonement
- New Age
- False Gods and Goddesses

Churches that do not take a strict and clear separatist stance put their members in danger of being captured by any of these false ways. If an individual starts dabbling with “the broader church,” there is no telling where he will end up. We will give some frightful examples of this at the end of the report.

Those who affiliate with “conservative Southern Baptists,” letting down the guard of biblical separation and buying into the softer, more tolerant stance, are only an arm’s length from any of these dangers.

## **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 Eareckson 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.

## **Process Salvation**

Influential author **Robert Webber** argued that salvation “can have a dramatic beginning or can come as a result of a process over time” (*The Divine Embrace*, p. 149).

**Dallas Willard** 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*).

**Tony Campolo** writes, “My mother hoped I would have one of those dramatic ‘born-again’ experiences ... but it never worked for me. ... In my case intimacy with Christ was developed gradually over the years. ... I have learned this way of having a born-again experience from reading the Catholic mystics, especially *The Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola” (*Letters to a Young Evangelical*, pp. 25, 26, 30).

**Elisabeth Elliot** 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” (*Taking Flight*, p. 12).

There are just a few examples of the heresy of process salvation that can be found in the writings of popular evangelical authors.

In contrast, Jesus described salvation as a “birth” and a “conversion” (John 3:3; Matthew 18:3). The salvations

described in the book of Acts were all of the born again/conversion type. Consider the 3,000 on the Day of Pentecost, the Apostle Paul, the Ethiopian eunuch, Lydia, and the Philippian jailer.

## **Ecumenism and Affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church**

**Billy Graham** has led the way in ecumenism and affiliation with the Roman Catholic Church since the 1950s. He has turned thousands of converts over to Roman Catholic and modernistic Protestant churches. His policy was stated plainly by the vice-chairman of the organizing committee of a Vancouver, British Columbia crusade, “If Catholics step forward THERE WILL BE NO ATTEMPT TO CONVERT THEM and their names will be given to the Catholic church nearest their homes” (David Cline of Brighthouse United Church, *Vancouver Sun*, Oct. 5, 1984). In 1989, Michael Seed, Ecumenical Advisor to (Catholic) Cardinal Hume, said of Graham’s London crusade: “Those who come forward for counseling during a Mission evening in June, if they are Roman Catholic, will be directed to a Roman Catholic ‘nurture-group’ under Roman Catholic counselors in their home area” (John Ashbrook, *New Neutralism II*, p. 35).

The Roman Catholic bishop of Sao Paulo, Brazil, stood beside Graham during his 1963 crusade in that city, and blessed those who came forward at the invitation. Graham said this illustrated that “something tremendous, an awakening of reform and revival within Christianity” was happening (*Daily Journal*, International Falls, Minnesota, Oct. 29, 1963, cited by the *New York Times*, Nov. 9, 1963). In reality, it was evidence of wretched end-time apostasy.

On his trip to Poland in 1979 Graham stood in front of the shrine of the Black Madonna of Jasna Gora in Czestochowa and greeted the Catholic worshippers who were there to venerate Rome's false Mary as Queen of Heaven. A photograph of this was published in the February 1979 issue of *Decision* magazine, a copy of which I obtained a few years ago from the Graham Center at Wheaton College. By preaching in the Catholic churches in Poland and by visiting that nation's major Mary shrine and not plainly telling the people that the Roman Catholic gospel is false and by pretending that the Catholic prelates and priests are fellow believers, Graham confused multitudes of people about the nature of the very gospel itself.

In his 1997 autobiography, Graham said his goal was not to lead people out of Roman Catholicism: "MY GOAL, I ALWAYS MADE CLEAR, WAS NOT TO PREACH AGAINST CATHOLIC BELIEFS OR TO PROSELYTIZE PEOPLE who were already committed to Christ within the Catholic Church. Rather, it was to proclaim the gospel to all those who had never truly committed their lives to Christ" (Graham, *Just As I Am*, p. 357).

In a January 1997 interview on *Larry King Live*, Graham said that he has wonderful fellowship with Rome, is comfortable with the Vatican, and agrees with the Pope on almost everything.

KING: What do you think of the other [churches] ... like Mormonism? Catholicism? Other faiths within the Christian concept?

GRAHAM: Oh, I think I have a wonderful fellowship with all of them.

KING: You're comfortable with Salt Lake City. You're comfortable with the Vatican?

GRAHAM: I am very comfortable with the Vatican. I have been to see the Pope several times. In fact, the night — the day that he was inaugurated, made Pope, I was preaching in his cathedral in Krakow. I was his guest ... [and] when he was over here ... in Columbia, South Carolina ... he invited me on the platform to speak with him. I would give one talk, and he would give the other ... but I was two-thirds of the way to China...

KING: You like this Pope?

GRAHAM: I like him very much. ... He and I agree on almost everything.

In a May 30, 1997, interview, Graham told David Frost: “I feel I belong to all the churches. I’M EQUALLY AT HOME IN AN ANGLICAN OR BAPTIST OR A BRETHREN ASSEMBLY OR A ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH. ... Today we have almost 100 percent Catholic support in this country. That was not true twenty years ago. And the bishops and archbishops and the Pope are our friends” (David Frost, *Billy Graham in Conversation*, pp. 68, 143).

**Franklin Graham** is walking in his father’s footsteps. He told the *Indianapolis Star* that his father’s ecumenical alliance with the Catholic Church and all other denominations “was one of the smartest things his father ever did” (“Keeping it simple, safe keeps Graham on high,” *The Indianapolis Star*, Thurs., June 3, 1999, p. H2). Franklin said: “In the early years, up in Boston, the Catholic church got behind my father’s crusade. That was a first. It took back many Protestants. They didn’t know how to handle it. But it set the example. ‘If Billy Graham is willing to work with everybody, then maybe we should too’” (*The Indianapolis Star*, June 3, 1999).

Many Roman Catholics were trained as counselors for the Franklin Graham Festival in Baltimore, Maryland, July 7-9,

2006. Catholic priest Erik Arnold of the Church of the Crucifixion in Glen Burnie, Maryland, led the team of 225 Catholics who participated as workers in the crusade. He said, “It was a great opportunity for the Christian churches to show their unity in leading people to Christ” (“Catholic Counselors Attend Billy Graham Festival,” *The Catholic Review*, July 12, 2006). The Graham organization delivered the names of 300 people to the Roman Catholics for “follow up,” and these received a letter from Cardinal William Keller “encouraging them in their faith and inviting them to get involved in the [Catholic] church.” They will be taught, among a multitude of other heresies, that it is acceptable to pray to Mary. In fact, some of the counselors are from the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen in Baltimore.

Roman Catholics also participated in the Franklin Graham Festival in Winnipeg, Canada, in October 2006. The previous year the Graham team approached the Catholic bishops in Winnipeg soliciting their support and involvement (“Central Canada 2006 Franklin Graham Festival Background and Pastoral Notes for Catholic Clergy and Workers,” by Luis Melo, Director of Ecumenical and Inter-Religious Affairs, Archdiocese of Saint Boniface, n.d.). In response, each archdiocese in central Canada had official representation on the Festival Executive Committee, and various parishes provided workers to be trained as counselors and to provide follow up. The Catholics were told: “Following in the footsteps of his father, Franklin Graham will present basic Christianity. The Catholic will hear no slighting of the Church's teaching on Mary or authority, nor of papal or Episcopal prerogative; no word against the Mass/Divine Liturgy or sacraments, nor of Catholic practices or customs” (*The Catholic Review*, July 12, 2006).

Even the most conservative Southern Baptist is a supporter of Billy and Franklin Graham and their heretical ecumenical evangelism. Consider **Al Mohler Jr.** On May 3, 2001, the Baptist Press ran an article entitled “Hundreds of Southern Students Prepare for Graham Crusade.” Mohler, president of Southern Seminary, served as the chairman of Graham’s crusade. Mohler told the Baptist Press, “Nothing else has brought together the kind of ethnic and racial and denominational inclusivity as is represented in this crusade; nothing in my experience and nothing in the recent history of Louisville has brought together such a group of committed Christians for one purpose” [emphasis added]. In fact, Southern Baptist Seminary proudly hosts the Billy Graham School of Missions, Evangelism and Church Growth.

Consider **Chuck Colson**. He is Southern Baptist and his wife is a Roman Catholic (who teaches Sunday School in a Southern Baptist church), and he attends Mass with her at times. More than 70 percent of Colson’s Prison Fellowship chaplains are Roman Catholic (*Calvary Contender*, Nov. 15, 1999). In his influential book *The Body*, Colson called on evangelicals to join forces with Catholics in the service of God. He said, “The body of Christ, in all its diversity, is created with Baptist feet, Charismatic hands, and Catholic ears--all with their eyes on Jesus.” In 1994, Colson joined Catholic priest Richard John Neuhaus and nine other Protestants and Roman Catholics as originators of “Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium.”

Consider **Max Lucado**, who is not Southern Baptist but whose books are sold in LifeWay bookstores and loved by Southern Baptists everywhere. In his book *In the Grip of Grace*, he praises God for the Church of Christ (which

teaches the heresy of baptismal regeneration), Pentecostals, Anglicans, Southern Baptists, Presbyterians, and Roman Catholics.

Consider **Elisabeth Elliot**. She is radically ecumenical in philosophy, speaking at the Roman Catholic Franciscan University in 1989 and at Notre Dame in 1998. At a meeting on Sept. 6, 1997, at the Waukesha Wisconsin Expo Center sponsored by WVCY radio of Milwaukee, she exposed just how radically unscriptural her thinking has become when she answered the following questions:

Question: Can a person be Catholic and Christian in union?

Mrs. Elliot: Yes, we can have unity in diversity; my brother [Thomas Howard] is a Catholic and a Christian.

Question: Then is it acceptable to celebrate the [Catholic] Eucharist?

Mrs. Elliot: Yes. (E-mail from Steve Straub Waukesha, Wisconsin to David Cloud, Sept. 8, 1997).

Consider **Robert Webber**, whose books are sold in LifeWay bookstores. He writes: “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).

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).

**James Dobson**, who has had a massive influence within the SBC and is not reproved even by the most conservative leaders, is an ecumenist. He 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.

We could also consider **John Maxwell and Philip Yancey**, popular writers featured in SBC bookstores. Maxwell promotes Catholic missions as a genuine form of Christianity in *Failing Forward*. Yancey claims that Roman Catholic missions are part of the "body of Christ" in *Where Is God When It Hurts?*

We could give countless more examples of the fact that the most radical ecumenism and a love for Rome are perfectly at home within the Southern Baptist Convention.

It is common within the Convention to hear Mother Teresa exalted as a great Christian, when the truth is that she was committed to a false gospel and served a false christ.

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have torn down the idol of Graham-style ecumenism and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

Rather, they are bridges to ecumenism and Rome.

## Masonic Paganism

Of the 3.5 million Masons in the U.S., 1.3 million are Southern Baptists. Fourteen percent of SBC pastors and 18 percent of SBC deacons are Masons (*Calvary Contender*, June 1, 1993).

An attempt was made by some in the early 1990s to root Freemasonry out of the Convention, but it was decidedly rejected and this high place was left standing. The *Indiana Baptist* for March 16, 1993, reported that “fearing the loss of three million members,” the just-released Home Mission Board report leaves it to individual Southern Baptists whether to join the secret society. This is in spite of the fact that the report documented Freemasonry’s anti-Christian doctrine, that many Grand Lodges do not declare Jesus as the unique Son of God; the offensive rituals and “bloody oaths”; “implications that salvation may be obtained by one’s good works”; the heresy of universalism; pagan religions are studied in higher degrees.

*Calvary Contender* editor Jerry Huffman summarized the spiritual abomination of the Masonic Lodge as follows: “Freemasonry is a secret society of six million members worldwide. It often claims it is not a religion, but its writings say it is. It teaches that Jesus is not God. It has worship and funeral services, and places the Koran and ‘holy books’ of other religions on the same level as the Bible (*Calvary Contender*, May 1, 1992).

The *Scottish Rite Journal* in February 1993 stated that “Masons believe in the Fatherhood of God and the Brotherhood of man.”

(An excellent publication that documents the heresies of Freemasonry is *The Masonic Lodge: What You Need to Know: Quick Reference Guide* by Ed Decker, published by Harvest House Publisher, Eugene, OR 97402.)

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have torn down the idol of Freemasonry and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

## **Cultural Liberalism**

The term “cultural liberalism” was coined by Mark Driscoll (as far as I know). Also called “relevant” and “missional,” it describes an emerging approach that seeks more to engage and redeem culture than separate from it. It considers the old paths of separation, such as taboos against drinking, smoking, rock & roll, rock style dancing, body piercing, tattoos, and immodest dress as “legalistic” and “Pharisaical.”

Driscoll criticizes “hardcore fundamentalism that throws rocks at culture” (“Pastor Provocateur,” *Christianity Today*, Sept. 21, 2007). He defines himself as “relevant,” “contextual,” and “cool” (“Conference examines the emerging church,” Baptist Press, Sept. 25, 2007).

Driscoll describes Jesus as a party guy who started his ministry “as a bartender” and told “knock-knock jokes to miscreants who loved his sense of humor” (*The Radical Reformation*, p. 30).

Mark Driscoll’s church sets up a “champagne bar” at its New Year’s Eve dance parties. The December 2007 party was called “Red Hot Bash2” and featured Bobby Medina and his Red Hot Band. The church auditorium was “transformed into a post club” and there was a dance contest. Can a woman be

biblically modest when she is “busting a move” in modern dance fashion?

Mars Hill has “beer-brewing lessons” for men and operates the Paradox Theater which has hosted hundreds of secular rock concerts for kids.

Driscoll says that some of his sermons on sex are R-rated and that visiting youth groups have been embarrassed and walked out half-way through the message (*Confessions of a Reformation Rev.*, p. 134).

Driscoll is not Southern Baptist, but many Southern Baptists have a close relationship with him and share his philosophy. Ed Stetzer, head of LifeWay’s research division and extremely influential in the Convention, joined Driscoll in a leadership position within the Acts 29 church planting network. Some of the Acts 29 missionaries are Southern Baptists.

Darrin Patrick is an example. Founding pastor of The Journey in St. Louis, Patrick is the vice president of Acts 29. The Journey hosts a “Theology at the Bottleworks” which is advertised as “grab a brew and give your view” (*Christianity Today*, June 29, 2007). The Journey also views and discusses R-rated movies at their “film night.”

Another Acts 29 church, Damascus Road Church in Marysville, Washington, has a “Men’s Poker Night” and invites men to play cards for money. They also have a “Men’s Bible and Brew” and a “Men’s Movie Night.”

Rick Warren’s Saddleback Church in California is not to be outdone in “cultural liberalism.” The following is from their website for 2005: “Our dances have become some of the

most anticipated of our social events with hundreds of people attending. This Summer's Night dance in our Worship Center promises to be the same. Professional lighting, effects and sound all blend together for a high-quality experience. Music will consist of a wide variety providing for specific dances and freestyle. And what's a summer night without some beach music and reggae?"

Saddleback Church features nine different "worship venues" on Sundays. There is a worship style to suit every worldly taste. The Overdrive venue is "for those who like guitar-driven rock band worship in a concert-like setting that you can FEEL." The Ohana venue comes "complete with hula and island-style music," and on the first Saturday of every month you can take hula lessons during the potluck following the service. The Country venue features line dancing.

On April 17, 2005, when Rick Warren announced his P.E.A.C.E. program to Saddleback Church, he sang Jimi Hendrix's drug-drenched song "Purple Haze" to the congregation, accompanied by his "praise and worship" band! He said he had wanted to do that for a long time.

A Saddleback Worship concert in December 2006 featured teenage girls doing immoral dance moves that included pelvic thrusts.

A video containing a slide show from an Argentina missionary trip by Saddleback Church members featured John Lennon's atheistic song "Imagine." The trip, made August 1-12, 2006, was part of Rick Warren's P.E.A.C.E. program, and the video was published on YouTube. The soundtrack uses several pieces of music, including John Lennon's original recording of *Imagine*. The lyrics say:

“Imagine there’s no heaven/ It’s easy if you try/ No hell below us/ Above us only sky.”

This is called “cultural liberalism” but it is really raunchy worldliness and it flies in the face of Romans 12:2; Ephesians 5:1; James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-16, and many other Scriptures. Such things would have been loudly condemned by most Baptists and Protestants in days gone by, and that is not because the old saints were “legalists.”

You will find many books promoting “cultural liberalism” in LifeWay bookstores. Consider these examples:

**Erwin McManus**, author of *The Barbarian Way*, says the new barbarian way of following Christ does not focus on “requirements” (p. 6), but the New Testament has many requirements in the path of righteousness. Those who follow the barbarian way “are not required or expected to keep in step” and “there is no forced conformity” (p. 71), but the apostle Paul wrote, “Now I praise you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances, as I delivered them to you” (1 Cor. 11:2). And the context refers to something as seemingly insignificant and “non-essential” as hair length!

**David Foster**, author of *A Renegade’s Guide to God*, says, “We won’t be ‘told’ what to do or ‘commanded’ how to behave.” That is indeed the renegade way; it is the way that I followed before I was saved; but it is not the way of the New Testament faith.

**Donald McCullough**, author of *If Grace Is So Amazing Why Don’t We Live Like It?*, says that he doesn’t like the type of preaching that says “... don’t do that, curb you appetites,

reign in desire, discipline and sacrifice yourself,” but this is exactly what the New Testament faith teaches us to do!

We have exposed the error of “cultural liberalism” in the book *What Is the Emerging Church?*

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have torn down the idol of cultural liberalism and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

## **Rock & Roll**

We have already mentioned rock & roll, but I want to deal with this in its own section, because I consider it one of the chief idols in the Southern Baptist Convention.

It is an idol that literally permeates SBC churches, and this has long been the case. When I was growing up in an SBC church in Florida, rock & roll was coming into full bloom (I was born in 1949), and there wasn't a young person in the church that wasn't captured by its sensual siren call, and the leaders said nothing. In fact, it was the son of one of the deacons who introduced me to rock & roll records which we spun on the player his dad had given him for that very purpose.

Rock & roll has been licentious from its inception.

“Rock music has always held seeds of the forbidden” (*Lord's Chaos*, p. x).

“Fifties rock urged people to do whatever they wanted to do even if it meant breaking the rules” (*Buddy Holly: A Biography*).

“Rock is the total celebration of the physical” (Ted Nugent).

Whatever little ineffectual protest against rock was still found in SBC congregations in the 1960s was pretty much gone by the 1970s, and ever since it has been “rock around the clock.” For a Southern Baptist preacher or youth leader today to speak out plainly about rock and to require the church workers to separate from it would probably go over like a lead balloon and lead to the man’s dismissal.

As we have seen, Rick Warren not only does not preach against rock, he promotes it with abandon, singing Jimi Hendrix’s drug-drenched song “Purple Haze” to the congregation, allowing teenage girls to do immoral dance moves that include pelvic thrusts, and a missionary slide show to feature John Lennon’s atheistic song “Imagine.”

This exemplifies the Southern Baptist love affair with the idol of rock & roll.

And this is in spite of the fact that rock & roll has been of the world, the flesh, and the devil ever since its inception in the 1950s and it has grown progressively evil every decade since then, which we have documented extensively in the book *Rock Music vs. the God of the Bible*.

I only need one Bible verse to tell me that rock & roll is to be rejected by the Lord’s people, though I could quote many dozens. In fact, the whole tenor of Scripture--with its exaltation of God’s holiness and its call for God’s people to be holy and to separate from the fallen world system--condemns rock & roll.

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them” (Ephesians 5:11).

It is impossible to take that command seriously and love rock & roll at the same time. If anything in modern society can be

defined as “the unfruitful works of darkness” it is rock & roll. You can’t even browse through something like WalMart’s music section or iTunes’ pop music offerings without being confronted repeatedly with vanity, immodesty, nudity, blasphemy, unisex, and the brazen flaunting of any and all of God’s holy laws.

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have torn down the idol of rock & roll and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

Rather, they have built extensive bridges to this evil and have even brought it into the church to spice up the worship service.

Christian rock is an illegitimate merging of Christ with the world, and it is a direct bridge to the world. It puts people into communication with secular rock and all of its spiritual dangers. There is no separation between “Christian” rock and secular rock.

Rock music has captured the heart and soul of multitudes of professing Christians and Christian rock is the “devil’s chum” toward this end.

The world’s rock & roll Christianity that has permeated Southern Baptist and evangelical churches is a major reason why two-thirds of the children in Sunday School leave by adolescence. This is the statistic given in Ken Ham’s 2010 book *Already Gone*, which is based on extensive research.

## Salvation Apart from Faith in Christ

The heresy that men can be saved apart from faith in Christ is growing rapidly within the Southern Baptist Convention because has been allowed to remain in the high places.

**Billy Graham** 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." Graham repeated this heresy in his 1993 interview with David Frost and his 1997 interview with Robert Schuller. In 1997 he said, "[God's] calling people out of the world for His name, 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" (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?

**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 to concentrate on those parts of their religion which are in agreement with Christianity, and who thus belong to Christ without knowing it” (C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, HarperSanFrancisco edition, 2001, p. 64). In the popular *Chronicles of Narnia* series, which has influenced countless children, Lewis taught that those who *sincerely* serve the devil (called Tash) are actually serving Christ (Aslan) and will eventually be accepted by God (*The Last Battle*, chapter 15, “Further Up and Further In”).

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.’”

**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).

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

**Tony Campolo** says: “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 had about judgment day. He saw 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 Shack* god says, “Those who love me come from every system that exists ... Buddhists ... Mormons ... Muslims ... I have no desire to make them Christian” (p. 182).

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have reproved all of these popular authors and torn down the idol of the inclusivism and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

## **Christian Homosexuality**

There is a rapidly growing heresy among popular Christian writers to accept unrepentant homosexuals as genuine Christians and to refuse to “judge” them, and this is spreading within the Southern Baptist Convention.

**Chris Seay**, author of *Faith of My Fathers*, a third generation Southern Baptist pastor, 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). We wonder how he reconciles this with Ephesians 5:11?

**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).

**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).

**Philip Yancey** says, “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” (“Straight But Not Narrow,” keynote address, Evangelicals Concerned, Western Region 1994). Peggy is a national leader of the Association of

Welcoming and Affirming Baptists, which urges Baptist congregations to be supportive of unrepentant homosexuals.

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

There is even a Bible for the pro-homosexual movement. *The Message* removes every clear warning against homosexuality. For example, 1 Timothy 1:10, which says in the KJV “them that defile themselves with mankind,” becomes “the irresponsible ... riding roughshod over sex.”

The Bible condemns homosexuality in no uncertain terms from the first to the last book. In the New Testament, homosexuality is called “vile affections,” “against nature,” “unseemly,” “error,” and “reprobate” (Romans 1:26-28). Any sin can be forgiven, but it must be confessed, which means that I must agree with God that it is sin. The members of the church at Corinth had participated in many forms of immorality before they came to Christ, including homosexuality, but they were converted by God’s grace and the Holy Spirit’s sanctifying power (1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

Homosexuality is also a rapidly growing trend within the CCM movement. In 1998, CCM star Kirk Franklin said that “homosexuality ... is a problem today in gospel music--a MAJOR CONCERN--and everybody knows it” (*Church Boy*, pp. 49, 50). Douglas Harrison, a homosexual who grew up Southern Baptist, said, “... you can’t swing a Dove Award without hitting upon evidence of the longstanding, deep-set presence of queer experience in, and its influence on, Christian music culture at all levels” (“Come Out from among Them,” *Religion Dispatches*, April 30, 2010).

Homosexual CCM artists include James Cleveland, Anthony Williams, Marsha Stevens (who wrote the popular song “For Those Tears I Died” and who has been called “the mother of Contemporary Christian Music”), Kirk Talley, Clay Aiken, Ray Boltz, Anthony Williams (known as Tonex or Ton3x), and Jennifer Knapp.

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have reproved the aforementioned popular authors and musicians and torn down the idol of the Christian homosexuality and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

### **Downgrade of Bible Inspiration**

The denial of the infallible inspiration of Scripture, which is a vile heresy that blatantly repudiates the teaching of Christ and the Apostles (e.g., Matthew 5:18; John 10:35; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21), is widespread within the Southern Baptist Convention in general and evangelicalism at large -- in spite of the fact that it is contrary to the denomination’s own statement of faith and it has been *somewhat* weeded out of the seminaries through the “conservative renaissance.”

Francis Schaeffer warned in his last book, “Within evangelicalism there are a growing number who are modifying their views on the inerrancy of the Bible so that the full authority of Scripture is completely undercut” (*The Great Evangelical Disaster, 1983*).

The heresy of partial inspiration can be found in the writings of the modern textual critics that are promoted even in the most conservative of seminaries, including Southern Baptist. Five of the editors of the United Bible Societies Greek New Testament are heretics who deny the infallible inspiration of

Scripture. These are Matthew Black, Bruce Metzger, Arthur Voobus, Kurt and Barbara Aland, Carlo Martini, and Johannes Karavidopoulos.

**Kurt Aland** denied “the idea of verbal inspiration” and claimed that even the canon of Scripture is not a settled issue (*The Problem of the New Testament Canon*, pp. 30-33).

**Bruce Metzger** says the Pentateuch is “a matrix of myth, legend, and history,” Noah’s flood was local, Job is an ancient folktale, Isaiah was written by three men, Jonah is a “popular legend,” and 2 Peter was not written by Peter (notes in the *New Oxford Annotated Bible RSV*, 1973).

The heresy of partial inspiration is held by many other authors whose writings are distributed by LifeWay.

**C.S. Lewis** denied that the Bible is infallibly inspired and called Jonah and Job fables (“Modern Theology and Biblical Criticism,” *Christian Reflections*, edited by Walter Hooper, Eerdmans).

**Rob Bell**, in *Velvet Elvis*, says the New Testament epistles “aren’t first and foremost timeless truths” (p. 62) and says the apostles didn’t “claim to have the absolute word from God” (p. 57).

**Donald Bloesch** wrote, “The Fundamentalist idea that inspiration entails inerrancy in history and science as well as doctrine is not claimed by the Bible” (*Holy Scripture: Revelation, Inspiration, and Interpretation*).

**Dallas Willard** says, “Jesus and his words have never belonged to the categories of dogma or law, and to read them

as if they did is simply to miss the point” (*The Divine Conspiracy*, p. xiii).

**Brennan Manning** says: “I am deeply distressed by what I only can call in our Christian culture the idolatry of the Scriptures. For many Christians, the Bible is not a pointer to God but God himself. In a word--bibliolatry ... I develop a nasty rash around people who speak as if mere scrutiny of its pages will reveal precisely how God thinks and precisely what God wants” (*The Signature of Jesus*).

**Dietrich Bonhoeffer**, who is widely praised within the Southern Baptist Convention and whose books and biographies are sold by LifeWay, denied the verbal-plenary inspiration of Scripture, believing that the Bible was only a “witness” to the Word of God and becomes the Word of God only when it “speaks” to an individual; otherwise, it was simply the word of man/men (*Testimony to Freedom*, pp. 9, 104; *Sanctorum Communio*, p. 161).

**Tony Campolo** praises the modernist Kierkegaard for “rejecting the bibliolatry of those fundamentalists who would make the Scriptures the ultimate authority for faith” (*Partly Right*, p. 99).

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have reprovved these men and torn down the idol of partial inspiration EVERYWHERE it has reared its ugly head and completely removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

## **Downgrade of Hell**

The downgrade of the biblical doctrine of hell has spread widely within evangelicalism.

**C.S. Lewis** said, “Hell is a state of mind ... every state of mind, left to itself, every shutting up of the creature within the dungeon of its own mind--is, in the end, Hell” (*The Great Divorce*).

**Billy Graham** has been questioning the literal fire of hell since 1951. In 1983 he said, “I think that hell essentially is separation from God forever. And that is the worst hell that I can think of. But I think people have a hard time believing God is going to allow people to burn in literal fire forever. I think the fire that is mentioned in the Bible is a burning thirst for God that can never be quenched” (*Orlando (Florida) Sentinel*, April 10, 1983). Graham repeated this heresy in his 1983 *A Biblical Standard for Evangelists* and in an interview with *Time* magazine, November 15, 1993.

**Robert Schuller** said, “And what is hell? It is the loss of pride that naturally follows separation from God. ... A person is in hell when he has lost his self-esteem” (*Self-Esteem: The New Reformation*, p. 14).

In 1987, Verdict Books published **Edward Fudge’s** *The Fire That Consumes*, a book that denies everlasting torment. The book was praised by leading evangelical leaders **Clark Pinnock** and **F.F. Bruce**. In *Christianity Today*, March 20, 1987, Pinnock said: “The fire of hell does not torment, but rather consumes the wicked.” Pinnock later called the traditional doctrine of eternal torment in Hell “an outrageous doctrine,” claiming that “a God who would do such a thing is more nearly like Satan than like God.”

In 1989, **Eerdmans** published *The True Image: The Origin and Destiny of Man in Christ* by **Philip Hughes**, which promotes the false doctrine of annihilation.

**John R.W. Stott**, prominent British Evangelical leader and widely respected and influential among Southern Baptists and whose books are distributed by LifeWay, stated in *A Liberal-Evangelical Dialogue* (published by InterVarsity Press) that the torment of hell is not eternal in duration.

In 1991, prominent evangelical leader **J.I. Packer**, former senior editor of *Christianity Today*, said that he does not believe that the essence of Hell is “grotesque bodily discomfort” but is rather “an inner misery of helpless remorse.”

That same year, **Kenneth Kantzer**, former editor of *Christianity Today* and head of Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, said that “when Jesus spoke of flames . . . these are most likely figurative warnings” (*U.S. News & World Report*, March 25, 1991).

In 1992, **Baker Books** published *Universalism and the Doctrine of Hell*, in which John Wenham defended the doctrine of “conditional immortality.” This is the false idea that unsaved men will not exist eternally in Hell. It confuses immortality and eternal life with eternal existence.

In 1993, when drawing up a resolution on hell, the Council of Eighteen of the **General Association of Regular Baptist Churches** (GARBC) refused to state in their resolution on hell that there was “literal fire.” “Dr. Clay Nuttall was present as a witness. In his written report, he mentioned that when a man suggested ‘literal fire’ be inserted in the GARBC resolution on hell, a Council of Eighteen member said they couldn’t do that because many of the Pastors and people of the GARBC fellowship do not believe there is ‘literal fire’ in hell” (D.A. Waite, *Four Reasons for Defending the King James Bible*, 1993, pp. 20, 21).

In 1996, **Zondervan** published *More Than One Way?* which presented four “evangelical” views on “salvation in a pluralistic world.” Three of the views deny that salvation is exclusively through personal faith in Christ and that those who die without this faith will spend eternity in Hell. The book is edited by Dennis Okholm and Timothy Phillips, associate professors of theology at Wheaton College.

The editors of this book observed that a large percentage of students in evangelical colleges no longer believe that those outside of Jesus Christ are lost.

"The new willingness to subject revelation to contemporary sensibilities has eroded the theological underpinnings for a missionary faith. Hunter's questionnaire found that only two-thirds of the students in evangelical colleges believe that the sole hope for heaven is through a personal faith in Jesus Christ. Increasingly students in Christian colleges are affronted when hearing the traditional claim that salvation is found in Jesus Christ alone" (editors, p. 11).

One of the authors of this book, the aforementioned Clark Pinnock, credits C.S. Lewis as a major influence.

In April 2000, a commission of the **Evangelical Alliance of Britain** published a report titled *The Nature of Hell*, which states that Evangelicals have agreed to disagree about the doctrine of Hell. It admits that “conditional immortality is a significant minority evangelical view” claiming that “the debate on hell should be regarded as a secondary rather than a primary issue for evangelical theology.”

This reminds us that modern evangelicalism is filled with heresies and fables because it has wrongly put unity above doctrine and has renounced “separatism.” It is that simple.

In his 2011 book *Love Wins*, **Rob Bell** redefines hell as a present reality on earth. He says the statements in the Bible about hell being a place of fire and torment are mere poetry.

Of course, this is not the hell described so frequently by the Lord Jesus Christ: “And if thy hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into life maimed, than having two hands to go into hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched” (Mark 9:43).

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have reproved these men and torn down the idol of the downgrade of hell and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

## **Theistic Evolution**

The rank heresy of Theistic Evolution has permeated evangelicalism.

**C.S. Lewis**, one of evangelicalism’s greatest heroes, held to this heresy. He called the Genesis creation account a “Hebrew folk tale.” In *The Problem of Pain* Lewis said that man began as an animal that “may have existed for ages in this state before it became man.” Then God “caused to descend upon this organism a new kind of consciousness.”

**Billy Graham** also allowed for this heresy. He told the *United Church Observer*: “Either at a certain moment in evolution God breathed into one particular ape-man who was Adam, or God could have taken a handful of dust and created a man just like that” (“Cooperative Evangelism at Harringay,” *United Church Observer*, July 1966).

Answers in Genesis recently surveyed 200 Christian schools, including the prominent evangelical ones, and found that only 50% believe in a six-day creation. The survey results were published in Ken Ham's 2011 book *Already Compromised*.

At **Wheaton College**, **John Walton**, professor of Old Testament, teaches heresy in his book *The Lost World of Genesis One*. He believes that Adam is the "archetypal" representative of mankind in general and the Garden of Eden is "archetypal" of "a place where God dwells." He believes life on earth evolved over millions of years.

At **Calvin College**, **Davis Young**, emeritus professor of geology, believes "the earth has undergone a long and complex history spanning 4.5 billion years" (*Portraits of Creation*, p. 6).

**Howard Van Till**, emeritus professor of physics at Calvin, "the beginning of the universe took place about fifteen billion years ago" (*Portraits of Creation*, p. 105).

**Daniel Harlow**, associate professor of religion at Calvin College, says "Recent research in molecular biology, primatology, sociobiology and phylogenetics indicates that the species *Homo sapiens* cannot be traced back to a single pair of individuals, and that the earliest human beings did not come on the scene in anything like paradisaical physical or moral conditions. It is therefore difficult to read Genesis 1-3 as a factual account of human origins" ("After Adam: Reading Genesis in an Age of Evolutionary Science," *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*, Sept. 2010, p. 179).

**Bruce Waltke, Knox Theological Seminary**, says “The best harmonious synthesis of the special revelation of the Bible ... and of science is the theory of theistic evolution” (*An Old Testament Theology*, 2007, pp. 202-203).

**Darrell Falk of Point Loma Nazarene University** is president of BioLogos Foundation and thus agrees with this organization’s statement as follows: “Perhaps God used the evolutionary process to equip humankind with language, free will and culture, and then revealed God’s will to individuals or a community so that they might then enter into meaningful relationship with God” (<http://biologos.org>, cited from *Already Compromised*, p. 180).

**William Dembski** is a Southern Baptist who has taught at Baylor University and Southern Baptist Seminary and since 2006, at **Southwestern Baptist Seminary**. He believes that Adam and Eve were “human-like beings from outside the Garden” and that God transformed “their consciousness so that they” became “rational moral agents”; after this they “experienced an amnesia of their former animal life” (Dembski, *The End of Christianity*, 2009, pp. 154, 155). He says, “Dating methods, in my view, provide strong evidence for rejecting this face-value chronological reading of Genesis 4-11” (“Christian Theodicy in Light of Genesis and Modern Science,” p. 49).

**Karl Giberson of Eastern Nazarene College** says, “We believe in evolution --- and God. ... The ‘science’ undergirding this ‘young earth creationism’ comes from a narrow, literalistic and relatively recent interpretation of Genesis” (*USA Today*, Op-Ed, Aug. 10, 2009).

**William Lane Craig, Talbot School of Theology**, says that the earth is “around 13.7 billion years” and a young earth

position “is not plausible” and that he is “going with the flow of what contemporary cosmology and astrophysics supports” (Interview by Michael Coren on the *Michael Coren Show*, Feb. 6, 2009, Canadian TV).

**Nancy Murphy** Professor of Philosophy at **Fuller Theological Seminary**, says, “Theology does sometimes need to be revised in light of science. For example, cosmology, astronomy, geology and evolutionary biology have together called for rejecting the ancient idea of a Golden Age following by a historic fall that changed the processes of nature” (“Nature’s God: An Interview with Nancy Murphy,” *The Christian Century*, Dec. 27, 2005).

**Alister McGrath** of **Regent College** in British Columbia commends Nancy Murphy’s approach to this issue. He wants to find ways to “allow evangelicals to affirm naturalist scientific explanations without implying the non-existence of God” (“Science and Faith at Odds?” <http://www.qideas.org/essays/science-and-faith-at-odds.aspx?page=5>, accessed May 29, 2011).

Theistic evolutionists believe that it is possible to reconcile the Bible with evolution, but in reality this is nonsense. The first 11 chapters of Genesis are clearly presented as history rather than poetry or allegory. Further, Genesis 1-11 is cited repeatedly as history by Jesus and the Apostles. In Luke 17:26-32, for example, Jesus mentions Noah, the Ark, the Flood, Lot, the destruction of Sodom by fire, and Lot’s wife. Elsewhere Jesus mentions the Creation (Mk. 13:19), Adam and Eve (Mat. 19:4-6; Mk. 10:6-7), Cain and Abel (Mat. 23:35; Lk. 11:50-51). In Matthew 19:4-5, Christ mentions both “accounts” of creation in Genesis 1 and 2 and treats them as history. It is impossible to honor Jesus Christ as Lord

and disregard His teaching. Many theistic evolutionists, such as Francis Collins, head of the Human Genome Project, claim to be “evangelical” and to honor Jesus as Lord and Saviour, but this is not consistent with the rejection of His teaching about Genesis and human origins.

Genesis 1-3 forms the historical foundation of the gospel of Jesus Christ. If Adam was not a real man and there was no literal Fall, the gospel becomes some sort of empty metaphysical thing. Jesus’ genealogy is traced from Adam (Luke 3:23-38), and there is no room here for millions of years of time. Adam is compared to Christ (Romans 5:12-19; 1 Cor. 15:45). It is obvious that the apostle Paul considered Adam an historical figure and Genesis as literal history.

Theistic evolution is not a small heresy.

## **Catholic Contemplative Mysticism**

The contemplative movement has spread within evangelicalism in general and the Southern Baptist Convention in particular 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, with its roots deeply planted in pagan philosophy.

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 (co-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, John Main, John Michael

Talbot, Thomas Keating, Basil Pennington, Thomas Keating, and Thomas Merton.

Regardless of any biblical-sounding statements that can be pulled from the writings of these people, the fact remains that they are laden down with heresies: baptismal regeneration, works gospel, Mariolatry, papal infallibility, transubstantiation, priestcraft, purgatory, monasticism, asceticism, celibacy, veneration of relics, allegoricalism, to name a few.

The mystical “spirituality” that is so popular in evangelical and charismatic circles today is a yearning for an experiential relationship with God that downplays the role of faith and Scripture (at least in practice) and that exalts “transcendental” experiences. Biblical prayer is talking with God; contemplative prayer is silent meditation “beyond thought” and “centering” and other such things. Biblical Bible study is analyzing and meditating upon the literal truth of the Scripture; contemplative spirituality focuses on a “deeper meaning”; it is more allegorical and “transcendental” than literal.

Popular contemplative practices include Centering Prayer which involves emptying the mind of conscious thoughts about God with the objective of entering into a non-verbal experiential union with God in the center of one’s being. Chanting is often used to drive away thoughts.

Visualization Prayer is trying to imagine oneself in a Biblical scene, such as talking to baby Jesus in the manger.

The Jesus Prayer consists of repeating the phrase “Lord Jesus Christ, have mercy upon me.”

The most influential promoter of contemplative mysticism is Richard Foster, author of *Celebration of Discipline*. He promotes the aforementioned Catholic mystics. He claims that through 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 says that the contemplative practitioner can enter “into a deep inner communion with the Father where you look at Him and He looks at you” (p. 27). In the first edition of his book, Foster promoted 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).

Contemplative mysticism is spreading everywhere in the Southern Baptist Convention and within evangelicalism in general.

It is promoted in “spirituality” courses at **Southern Baptist schools**. On a visit to Golden Gate Theological Seminary in February 2000, I noticed that most of the required reading for the course on “Classics of Church Devotion” are books by Roman Catholic mystics, including Ignatius of Loyola, Thomas Merton, Bernard of Clairvaux, and Teresa of Avila.

Contemplative mysticism is promoted by influential Southern Baptist pastors, such as **Rick Warren** of Saddleback Church.

Contemplative mysticism is promoted by **state associations** affiliated with the Southern Baptist Convention, including the Grand Valley Baptist Association of Grand Junction, Colorado, and the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina, as documented by Lighthouse Trails ministry.

**Evangelical authors** who promote contemplative mysticism include Bill Hybels of Willow Creek, Chuck Swindoll, David Jeremiah, Beth Moore, Mark Driscoll, Max Lucado, Philip Yancey, Eugene Peterson, Lee Strobel and his son Kyle.

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have torn down the idol of contemplative mysticism and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

## **Charismatic Heresy**

Though a few churches and individual missionaries have been put out of the Southern Baptist Convention for charismatic doctrine and practice, many others remain, and the number is increasing.

The growing acceptance of charismaticism within the SBC reflects what is happening in evangelicalism at large. Prior to the 1970s, the Pentecostal movement was largely rejected. Arno Gaebelin said he was convinced the movement “is not of God” (*Our Hope*, July 1907). G. Campbell Morgan called Azusa Street Pentecostalism “the last vomit of Satan.” R.A. Torrey said the movement is “emphatically not of God.” Merrill Unger represented the predominant view in the 1960s when he called the charismatic movement “widespread confusion.” He said: “When the Word of God is given preeminence and when sound Bible doctrine, especially in the sphere of the theology of the Holy Spirit is stressed and made the test of experience, the claims of charismatic Christianity will be rejected.”

The stance toward the charismatic movement has changed dramatically since the 1970s, because of the leaven of spiritual compromise within evangelicalism.

In March 1972, *Christianity Today* observed: “A new era of the Spirit has begun. The charismatic experience moves Christians far beyond *glossalalia* [tongues speaking]. ... There is light on the horizon. An evangelical renaissance is becoming visible along the Christian highway, from the frontiers of the sects to the high places of the Roman Catholic communion. This appears to be one of the most strategic moments in the church’s history.”

By the 1970s, “the majority of younger evangelicals in the Church of England were charismatic” (Iain Murray, *Evangelicalism Divided*, p. 135). By 1987, the *Evangelical Times* in England observed “that a large--some would say the greater--part of the evangelical world is in some measure influenced by the various branches of the charismatic scene.” By 1999, the Evangelical Alliance in England included Pentecostals at every level of leadership, and “no group on the council is opposed to the Pentecostal position” (*Renewal*, March 1999). The same was true in the United States. By 1992, 80% of the membership of the National Association of Evangelicals was Pentecostal, up from 62% in 1987, and the president of the NAE, Don Argue, belonged to the Assemblies of God. Roughly half of the attendees at Billy Graham’s 1983 Conference for Itinerant Evangelists in Amsterdam were Pentecostal or Charismatic.

In 1989 J.I. Packer, a professor at Regent College and a senior editor of *Christianity Today*, said the Charismatic movement “must be adjudged a work of God” (*Calvary Contender*, July 15, 1989). He said, “Sharing charismatic experience ... is often declared ... to unify Protestants and Roman Catholics at a deeper level than that at which their doctrine divides them. This, if so, gives charismaticism great ecumenical significance.”

Many of the evangelicals that have adopted a positive view of charismatic phenomena do not call themselves charismatic. The term “third wave” was coined in the 1980s by Fuller Seminary professor Peter Wagner.

We document the spread of the charismatic movement within the SBC in the report “Why I Am Not Southern Baptist.” Influential men in this move include Jack Taylor, Ron Phillips, Gary Folds, all of whom accepted the unscriptural nonsense at the Toronto Airport Church in Ontario and/or at Brownsville Assembly of God in Pensacola, Florida. This “revival” took the form of barking like a dog and roaring like a lion, electric shocks, weird shaking, and other bizarre experiences. Ron Phillips, pastor of Abba’s House in Tennessee, counts more than 500 Southern Baptist churches in his charismatic network.

The charismatic movement features **gibberish tongues**. Even Jack Hayford, who has been called “the gold standard of Pentecostalism” by *Christianity Today*, promotes this. Biblical tongues were miraculous and were real languages and were given as a sign to the unbelieving Jewish nation, but charismatic tongues are gibberish words that can be learned. When I heard Hayford speak at the ecumenical St. Louis 2000 conference, which I attended with press credentials, he said his daughter came to him one day concerned that her “tongues” were real. He told her, “Don’t worry. You didn’t learn to speak all at once when you were little, and you likewise have to start out with baby tongues.”

The charismatic movement accepts **visions and voices** that lead contrary to God’s Word. Hayford claims that one day he was driving by a Roman Catholic Church and God spoke to

him and said, “Don’t judge my church.” That was not God; it was a demon!

The charismatic movement practices the foolishness of “**spirit slaying**,” which is also called Holy Spirit glue or carpet time. This is a wide spread practice today.

The charismatic movement practices “**holy laughter**.” Rodney Howard-Browne calls himself the “Holy Ghost Bartender,” and people who attend his meetings laugh hysterically, believing that God is giving them this gift. The “holy laughter” has been practiced at the aforementioned Toronto Airport Church and many other places.

The charismatic movement is more **experience-oriented** than Bible-oriented. People are taught not to test everything carefully with Scripture. That is criticized as “putting God in a box.” For example, at John Wimber’s Anaheim Vineyard church in 1994, the speaker said, “In a moment I’m going to call down the Spirit ... above all, don’t try to rationally evaluate the things you see.”

The charismatic movement is permeated with **Word-Faith heresy** promoted by prominent names such as Kenneth Hagin, Kenneth and Gloria Copeland, Benny Hinn, David Yonggi Cho, Paul Crouch, Rod Parsley, Fred Price, Joel Osteen, Creflo Dollar, Marilyn Hickey, and Morris Cerullo. At the heart of the Word-Faith heresy is the doctrine that our words have creating power. “Your confession of faith in God’s Word will bring healing or whatever it is you need from God into the present tense and make it a reality in your life” (Kenneth Hagin, *The Word of Faith*).

We document the heresies of the movement in the book *The Pentecostal-Charismatic Movements: The History and Error*.

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have torn down the idol of the charismatic heresies and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

## Positive Thinking

The positive thinking doctrine, which was launched in the 1950s by **Norman Vincent Peale** and is based on the New Thought doctrines that preceded him, is rife with New Age principles.

And Peale was immensely influential within the Southern Baptist Convention. I recall seeing Peale's *Guideposts* magazine everywhere when I was growing up in the Convention, and I never heard a warning about Peale's doctrine.

Peale's positive-thinking gospel was an unholy mixture of humanistic psychology, eastern religion, and Bible.

The first paragraph of *The Power of Positive Thinking* begins with the words, "Believe in yourself! ... this book will help you believe in yourself and release your inner powers."

Peale was a promoter of the heresy of "**positive imaging.**" He claimed that mental imaging worked for anyone, regardless of religious faith. A group of Merrill Lynch real estate associates gave Peale a standing ovation after he made the following statement at a motivational seminar:

"I believe, and I've tested it out in so many cases that I'm sure of its validity, that if a person has a business and images that business at a certain level and fights off his doubts ... it will come out that way--all because of the power of the positive image" (Jeanne Pugh, "The Eternal

Optimist," *St. Petersburg Times*, St. Petersburg, Florida, Religion Section, June 8, 1985).

This doctrine has been a part of the New Age from its inception. Man has the power to accomplish whatever he desires by learning how to visualize it into reality.

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. ... I've been to the Shinto shrines, and God is everywhere" (*Sword of the Lord*, Dec. 14, 1984).

In an interview with *USA Today* he said, "I don't believe God spends his time revenging himself on people. These things [AIDS, herpes] come about because of scientific methodology. God is too big to spend his time in revenge" (July 22, 1983).

Peale said, "People 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" (*Modern Maturity* magazine, December-January 1975-76).

Peale denied that Jesus is God. He told *Modern Maturity* magazine, "I like to describe him as ... the nearest thing to God."

Peale even promoted the false christ that Jane Palzere and Anna Brown encountered through occultic automatic writing. He endorsed their book *The Jesus Letters*, which professes to be messages from Jesus. Yet this "Jesus" said such things as,

“God does not see evil; He sees only souls at different levels of awareness.”

Of this “Jesus,” Peale wrote the following amazing endorsement: “You will bless many by this truly inspired book. ... It little matters if these writings come from Jesus of Nazareth or Jesus of Jane [Jane Palzere] they are all the same consciousness and that consciousness is God. I am a part of God, and Jane and Anna are part of that same God” (advertisement for *The Jesus Letters and Your Healing Spirit*)

### **Schuller’s Self-esteemism**

**Robert Schuller**, pastor of the Crystal Cathedral in southern California, has been called “the Norman Vincent Peale of the West.”

Schuller reinterprets the doctrines of God’s Word to conform to his heretical self-esteem philosophy. To Schuller, sin is the lack of self-esteem. His christ is “self-esteem incarnate.” His gospel is to replace negative self-concepts with positive ones. To Schuller, man is not a sinner. Schuller is universalist, believing that all men are the children of God.

Consider some excerpts from Schuller’s popular book *Self-Esteem: The New Reformation*:

“Positive Christianity does not hold to human depravity, but to human inability” (p. 67).

“To be born again means that we must be changed from a negative to a positive self-image” (p. 68).

“Essentially, if Christianity is to succeed in the next millennium, it must cease to be a negative religion and must become positive” (p. 104).

“Christ is the Ideal One, for he was self-esteem incarnate” (p. 135).

Schuller has featured prominent New Agers on his television program, such as Gerald Jampolsky, who says “there is no sin” and “the recognition of God is the recognition of yourself” (Warren Smith, “Rethinking Robert Schuller” *WorldNetDaily*, October 30, 2007).

In spite of the wretched heresies of Peale and Schuller, the Southern Baptist Billy Graham had a non-critical relationship with them and helped raise their status in the evangelical world.

Graham invited Peale to give the benediction at a crusade in New York in 1956, and at a National Council of Churches luncheon on December 6, 1966, Graham said, “I don’t know anyone who has done more for the kingdom of God than Norman and Ruth Peale, or have meant any more in my life--the encouragement they have given me” (Hayes Minnick, Bible for Today publication #565, p. 28).

Graham has frequently appeared with and praised Schuller. In 1983, Schuller sat in the front row of distinguished guests invited to honor Graham's 65th birthday. In 1986, Schuller was invited by Graham to speak at the International Conference for Itinerant Evangelists in Amsterdam. Other featured speakers included some of today's most prominent evangelical leaders, including Bill Bright, Leighton Ford, and Luis Palau. Schuller was also featured on the platform of Graham's Atlanta Crusade in 1994.

Billy Graham has constantly acted as a bridge to heresies and high places, yet if any prophet Jehu lifts a voice against this

wretched compromise (2 Chron. 19:2), he is immediately maligned.

Conservative Southern Baptist leader W.A. Criswell, considered a “conservative of the conservatives,” endorsed Schuller’s ministry in 1981 in an ad in Christianity Today’s *Leadership* magazine. He said, “I know Dr. Schuller personally. He’s my good friend. I’ve spoken on his platform. I’m well acquainted with his ministry. If you want to develop fruitful evangelism in your church; if you want your laity to experience positive motivation and ministry fulfilling training, then I know, without a doubt, that you will greatly benefit from the Robert Schuller Film Workshop.” Criswell endorsed Schuller’s 1996 autobiography, *My Soul’s Adventure with God*.

A year prior to that, Criswell endorsed a book by Norman Vincent Peale.

Southern Baptist pastor Rick Warren has spoken at Schuller’s conferences and has never issued a word of warning about the man.

Because of the failure to warn on the part of the men who should be spiritual and doctrinal watch dogs, multitudes have been deceived by Peale and Schuller’s winsomeness, their use of Bible terminology, the seeming innocence of their message, and its attractive positive slant. None of the popular evangelical or Southern Baptist publications are willing to lift a voice of clear warning about the Peales and Schullers of our time.

As a result, end-time deception continues to spread across the land.

## Dobson's Self-esteemism

Robert Schuller didn't invent self-esteemism. It originated in humanistic psychology, and it has been spread through the Southern Baptist Convention by the Christian counseling movement, with **James Dobson** at the forefront.

According to the psychology doctrine of self-esteem, man must pursue his own self-love or self-confidence for the sake of psychological wholeness, and anything that damages self-esteem is wrong. The path to the development of self-esteem is psychological counseling.

This doctrine is derived from humanistic/atheistic psychologists.

Atheist Abraham Maslow emphasized the need for self-esteem in his popular books. Rejecting the doctrine of the Fall, he believed that man is basically good and there is "a positive, self-actualising force within each person that is struggling to assert itself" (Williams, *The Dark Side*, p. 114). If it is "permitted to guide our life, we grow healthy, fruitful, and happy" (*Motivation and Personality*, 1970, p. 122).

The self-esteem doctrine was borrowed from humanistic God haters like Maslow and Carl Rogers and has been promoted far and wide in Christian circles by a slew of Christian psychologists, with James Dobson leading the way.

Dobson's book *Hide or 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*, p. 24). Dobson even believes that lack of self-esteem is the cause of every social ill (*Dr. Dobson Answers Your Questions about Confident, Healthy Families*, p. 67).

To the contrary, the Bible lays the ills of society at the feet of fallen man and his rebellion against God. Jesus taught that murder, adultery, fornication, covetousness, deceit, theft, and such come from man’s wicked heart (Mark 7:21-23).

The self-esteem doctrine downplays and redefines sin. We have seen that the very popular and influential Robert Schuller, who was a pioneer in the “Christian” self-esteem movement, defines sin as “any act or thought that robs myself or another human being of his or her self-esteem” (*Self-Esteem: The New Reformation*, p. 14).

Dr. E.S. Williams warns: “In all that has been written and taught about self-esteem, both Christian and secular, there is never any suggestion that the root cause of man’s low self-esteem is God’s moral law which condemns sinful behaviour” (*The Dark Side of Christian Counselling*, p. 140).

The self-esteem movement twists Scripture out of context. A major proof-text is Matthew 22:39, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” This is interpreted to mean that man needs to love himself just as he needs to love his neighbor, but Christ was not saying there is a need for self-love and He was not encouraging any sort of self-esteem program. He was saying that *men already love themselves!* Paul said the same thing in Ephesians 5:29, “For no man ever yet hated his own flesh...” The fallen man’s problem is not a lack of self-esteem but far too much of it and a gross lack of God-esteem! Fallen man is an idolater who worships himself in

the place of the Almighty Creator. The very essence of sin is that we've "turned every one to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6).

The modern self-esteem doctrine is heresy and apostasy. The very first characteristic of end-time apostasy is that "men shall be lovers of their own selves" (2 Timothy 3:1-2).

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have torn down the idol of the psychology self-esteemism and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

## **Unconditional Love**

The heresy of self-esteem is intimately associated with that of unconditional love. Supposedly, to have the highest self-esteem we must see God as a merciful Father who "accepts us totally, exactly as we are" (Chris Leger and Wendy Bray, *Insight into Self-Esteem*, 2006, p. 12).

Larry Crabb says, "I am completely acceptable to him regardless of my behavior" (*Effective Biblical Counseling*, 1977, p. 70).

Unconditional love is promoted by Rick Warren, James Dobson, Philip Yancy, Joyce Meyer, Larry Crabb, Gary Smalley, Selwyn Hughes, David Seamands, Gary Chapman, Charles Stanley, and a host of other popular Christian leaders and authors.

Like the doctrine of self-esteem, the doctrine of unconditional love was developed by the atheistic fathers of the psychological counseling movement and New Agers. Erik Fromm was the first to use the phrase "unconditional love," while Carl Rogers coined the term "unconditional

positive regard,” by which “he meant the granting of love and approval regardless of an individual’s behaviour” (E.S. Williams, *Christ or Therapy?* pp. 65, 66).

The doctrine of unconditional love is a major theme of New Age thought. The god of unconditional love puts no obligations on people and does not punish sin. Roy Klienwachter says, “Unconditional love means unconditional freedom. ... Retribution is a lie. ... Anyone who tells you different, is not coming from unconditional love” (*Unconditional Love*, 2008). Deepak Choprah says, “A God capable of being pleased and displeased isn’t a God of grace, since the essence of grace is unconditional love” (*The Third Jesus*, p. 54).

Unconditional love is a theme of the occult. Consider Aleister Crowley, who has had a massive influence on the rock & roll culture and whose photo appeared on the cover of the Beatles’ *Sargent Pepper’s* album. Crowley’s “love” was unconditional love with no obligations.

Unconditional love is also a fundamental principle of the emerging church. In *An Emerging Church Primer* Justin Taylor says we must proclaim “God’s message of unconditional love.”

The God of unconditional love is not the God of Scripture. The love of the sovereign Creator God is unfathomable and unmerited, but not unconditional. God’s love is demonstrated in Christ and the Cross and to benefit from God’s love one must repent and receive Christ as Lord and Saviour (Matthew 7:21-23; Luke 13:3; John 3:36; 14:21). Repent or perish is *not* the message of unconditional love!

The doctrine of unconditional love as typically defined denies the absolute holiness of God, the fall of man, the necessity of the atonement of Christ, the requirement of the new birth, God's call to repentance and faith, the existence of eternal hell for those outside of Christ, and God's call to holy living in the Christian life (e.g., Titus 2:11-12; 1 Peter 1:15-16). Though the born again believer is accepted in Christ and eternally safe because of the perfect Atonement, he is subject to discipline in this present life and loss at the judgment seat of Christ if he walks in unrepentant carnality and disobedience. There is even a sin unto death (1 Corinthians 11:30; 1 John 5:17).

There are some who preach unconditional love that say that they believe the aforementioned Bible doctrines, but the message of unconditional love is contradictory to these truths and those who try to reconcile them are living in a fantasy world.

The god of self-esteem and unconditional love is not the God of Scripture; he is the god of end-time apostasy. As Dr. E.S. Williams observes:

"The concept of unconditional love only exists in a mythological world in which there is no sin, no evil and no law, in which people are free to live as they like without fear of judgment and punishment. In the real world, unconditional love is no more and no less than licentiousness -- an attitude that denies the accepted rules and morals that govern human behaviour. It is an attitude that allows us to do what we want without sanction or control. It is the essential message of pagan morality and New Age salvation" (Williams, *Christ or Therapy?* p. 69).

"The permissive god of 'Christian' self-esteem dogma longs to satisfy the needs and desires of the human heart. He delights in meeting our needs and likes to make us feel good about ourselves, no matter what. He

is careful not to set standards too high or too difficult for us to meet. He is satisfied with our behaviour so long as we do our best. He is a god who is 'mighty to save' mankind from a lifetime cycle of low self-esteem. And if the truth were known, he does not really hate evil and sin all that much, for he accepts us totally, exactly as we are. He has commanded us to love ourselves and he loves everybody unconditionally no matter how they behave" (Williams, *The Dark Side of Christian Counselling*, p. 141).

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have torn down the idol of unconditional love and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

## **Unconditional Forgiveness**

Closely associated with the heresy of unconditional love is that of unconditional forgiveness. Over the past two decades it has become a major element of the psychological counseling movement, which has permeated the Southern Baptist Convention in particular and evangelicalism in general. A form of therapy, it is not so much about reconciliation between people as it is about personal inner healing and self-esteem.

A major force behind the spread of therapeutic forgiveness is the Templeton Foundation, which is New Age to the core. Though a committed Presbyterian, John Templeton was an evolutionist, pantheist, and universalist. He said, "God is all of you and you are a little part of him," and, "No one should say that God can be reached by only one path" (*The Humble Approach*, pp. 38, 55).

Templeton has been recommended by Norman Vincent Peale, Robert Schuller, and Rick Warren.

Since the 1990s, the Templeton Foundation has funded “scientific studies” on the power of forgiveness, and there has been an associated explosion of teaching on this subject, such as Colin Tipping’s *Radical Forgiveness* (1997); Robert Enright’s *Forgiveness Is a Choice* (2001); Fred Luskin’s *Forgive for Good* (2002); and Martin Seligman’s *Authentic Happiness* (2002). Many of these are New Age in perspective. Tipping’s mission is “to raise the consciousness of the planet through forgiveness.”

In light of the wholesale “repudiation of separatism” that characterizes modern evangelicalism, it is not surprising that Christian counselors have been quick to jump on the unconditional forgiveness bandwagon. Among others there is *The Choosing to Forgive Workbook* by Frank Minirth and Les Carter, *The New Freedom of Forgiveness* (2000) by David Augsburger, *Total Forgiveness* (2002) by R.T. Kendall, and *Choosing Forgiveness* (2006) by Nancy Leigh DeMoss.

The movement of therapeutic forgiveness is all about self. It is unconditional forgiveness for *my* sake, to help *me* feel good about *myself*, to have personal peace of mind, to have personal self-esteem and psychological wholeness.

Like unconditional love, unconditional forgiveness is unscriptural. Biblical forgiveness is predicated on confession and repentance.

This is true vertically, between man and God. God’s forgiveness is not unconditional; it required the payment of a great price on God’s part (the giving of His Son on the Cross) and obtaining God’s forgiveness requires repentance. Jesus twice said, “except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (Luke 13:3, 5).

This is also true with forgiveness at the horizontal level, forgiveness between men. We are to be quick to forgive and we are to love our enemies, but this does not mean that we are to forgive unconditionally. As Jesus said: “Take heed to yourselves: If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and IF HE REPENT, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I REPENT; thou shalt forgive him” (Luke 17:3-4).

The apostle Paul did not unconditionally forgive Alexander the Coppersmith (2 Tim. 4:14) or the heretics at Galatia (Gal. 5:7-10). He did not teach the unconditional forgiveness for those who sin against the testimony of Christ in the church (1 Corinthians 5).

Not only is unconditional forgiveness wrong, it is hurtful. As Dr. E.S. Williams writes:

“Nowhere in Scripture is the Christian told to unconditionally forgive an unbeliever who sins against him. To do so is only a meaningless gesture; for by what authority does a Christian forgive sin? This only leads to a false view of forgiveness, and the world will gain the idea that Christians practise cheap forgiveness, like New Age adherents. For Christians to offer unconditional forgiveness to all and sundry is to make a mockery of the Cross of Christ. ... The moral wrongness of unconditional forgiveness is that it condones sin and wrongdoing. The wrongdoer is not held accountable for his sin, but actually encouraged to believe that it is a light matter” (*Christ or Therapy?* pp. 99, 100).

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have torn down the idol of unconditional forgiveness and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

## Denying the Substitutionary Blood Atonement

The Bible plainly states that that Christ shed His blood and died to satisfy the penalty of God’s holy Law, but many within evangelicalism today question, reinterpret, and outright deny this.

**C.S. Lewis** called the doctrine of the atonement a non-essential matter and said you can believe “any formula that appeals” (*Mere Christianity*, HarperSanFrancisco edition, 2001, p. 182).

**Brennan Manning**, “[T]he god whose moods alternate between graciousness and fierce anger ... the god who exacts the last drop of blood from his Son so that his just anger, evoked by sin, may be appeased, is not the God revealed by and in Jesus Christ. And if he is not the God of Jesus, he does not exist” (*Above All*, p. 58-59; the foreword to this book is written by popular CCM artist Michael W. Smith).

**Dallas Willard** calls the doctrine of substitutionary atonement a “theory” (*The Divine Conspiracy*, p. 42). This is one reason why **Brian McLaren** likes Willard. Addressing the issue of the atonement, McLaren says:

“I think the gospel is a many faceted diamond, and atonement is only one facet, and legal models of atonement (which predominate in western Christianity) are only one small portion of that one facet. Dallas Willard also addresses this issue in ‘The Divine Conspiracy.’ Atonement-centered understandings of the gospel, he says, create vampire Christians who want Jesus for his blood and little else. He calls us to move beyond a ‘gospel of sin management’--to the gospel of the kingdom of God. So, rather than focusing on an alternative theory of atonement, I’d suggest we ponder the meaning and mission of the kingdom of God” (<http://www.brianmclaren.net/archives/000149.html>).

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have torn down the idol of the rejection of the substitutionary atonement and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

## New Age

We could point to many ways that New Age philosophy and techniques are spreading through the Southern Baptist Convention.

One is through the popularity of “**holistic health care.**”

Prominent Southern Baptist pastor Rick Warren has recently promoted three out-and-out New Age practitioners: Mehmet Oz, Daniel Amen, and Mark Hyman. They designed Warren’s program called “The Daniel Plan.”

Daniel Amen teaches Eastern meditation and deals in pop psychology and self-help. Both Oz and Amen promote Reiki, which is an occultic practice that allegedly channels “universal healing energy.” Amen told Rick Warren that he intends to help Saddleback church members to have good “brain health.” He has written several books on this subject. *The Brain in Love* promotes Hindu tantra, which is the pagan concept of combining yogic medication with sex. *Making a Good Brain Great* promotes Hindu-style meditation through the vain repetition of the alleged primal sounds saa, taa, naa, maa, aa. Mark Hyman also promotes meditation based on Buddhist principles.

After Billy Graham, Rick Warren is the most influential Southern Baptist preacher alive. His unqualified recommendation of these New Age practitioners will doubtless result in spiritual shipwreck for many people.

Warren and other Southern Baptists also associate with the New Age through their relationship with **Leonard Sweet**, who promotes a New Age universalist spirituality that he calls New Light and “the Christ consciousness.” He describes it in terms of “the union of the human with the divine” which is the “center feature of all the world’s religions” (*Quantum Spirituality*, p. 235). He says it was experienced by Mohammed, Moses, and Krishna. He says that some of the “New Light leaders” that have led him into this new thinking are Matthew Fox, M. Scott Peck, Willis Harman, and Ken Wilber, all of whom believe in the divinity of man, plus the Catholic-Buddhist monk Thomas Merton. Warren recommends Sweet’s book *Soul Tsunami* (his recommendation is printed on the cover).

Warren and Sweet collaborated on an audio set entitled *Tides of Change*, and Sweet spoke at Saddleback Church in January 2008 for a small groups training conference.

In October 2001, Sweet spoke for the Southern Baptist Convention’s LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville.

**Brennan Manning**, a popular LifeWay author, also promotes New Age writings. In *Abba’s Child*, Manning recommends the writings of Beatrice Bruteau, who believes that God is within every human being. She says that each person can say, “I AM,” which is a name for Almighty God.

Manning quotes David Steindl-Rast approvingly in *The Signature of Jesus* (pp. 210, 213-214). Steindl-Rast, a contemplative interfaith Roman Catholic priest, said: “Envision the great religious traditions arranged on the circumference of a circle. At their mystical core they all say the same thing, but with different emphasis” (“Heroic Virtue,” *Gnosis*, Summer 1992).

Manning quotes Matthew Fox approvingly in at least two of his books, *Lion and Lamb* (p. 135) and *A Stranger to Self-Hatred* (pp. 113, 124). Fox says: “God is a great underground river, and there are many wells into that river. There’s a Taoist well, a Buddhist well, a Jewish well, a Muslim well, a Christian well, a Goddess well, the Native wells--many wells that humans have dug to get into that river, but friends, there’s only one river; the living waters of wisdom” (quoted from John Caddock, “What Is Contemplative Spirituality,” *Journal of the Grace Evangelical Society*, Autumn 1997).

Popular writer **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.” This is nonsense. 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 in 1973.

How many conservative evangelicals and conservative Southern Baptists have reproved these men and others like them and torn down every New Age idol and removed the high places where this heresy has spread?

## False Gods and Goddesses

Not only is the Southern Baptist Convention and evangelicalism at large filled with heresies and fables, there is a rapid move toward acceptance of false gods and even goddess worship.

Consider *THE SHACK*.

William Paul Young's novel *The Shack* has resonated widely among Southern Baptists, even though it presents God as a male/female non-judgmental being.

Though fictional, the book's objective is the redefinition of 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 depicts God the Father as a black woman who loves rock & roll, as well as a man with gray hair and a pony tail. Young's male/female god/goddess 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. (For documentation see "The Shack's Cool God" at the Way of Life web site, [www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org).)

I don't know if this is still the case, but I do know that in the past LifeWay bookstores sold *The Shack* with only a mild, vague, meaningless warning.

The message and god/goddess of *The Shack* has resonated far and wide within evangelicalism. William Paul Young was promoted at the National Pastors Conference in San Diego in

2009, which was sponsored by Zondervan and InterVarsity Fellowship. A large percentage of the preachers in attendance had read the book, and its author was enthusiastically received. He was interviewed in a general session by Andy Crouch of *Christianity Today*. There was not a hint of concern about his theology or goddess worship.

Many Southern Baptists love *The Shack*, which is irrefutable evidence of the deep spiritual apostasy that exists in that Convention. I received the following frightful testimony from a pastor who came out of the Convention in 1996:

“Concerning the question about ‘The Shack,’ I have been shocked at the willingness of many of my former SBC friends and acquaintances to receive it as a ‘great’ book. As you know, and have taught, the book presents a picture of ‘God’ that is not biblical. The ready acceptance of this book by the vast majority of those I know, is indicative of a serious lack of discernment. It seems that spiritual discernment is a rapidly dissipating quality today. I have questioned several folk on their acceptance of ‘The Shack’ and its false teaching. Their response has been, ‘But it teaches a good truth about how God loves us.’ This is characteristic of the modern church-growth movement that focuses solely on the ‘love of God,’ and relegates His holiness, righteousness and judgments to the ‘unimportant” (Marty Wynn, Lighthouse Baptist Church, Columbus, Georgia, e-mail to D. Cloud, May 21, 2011).

William Paul Young and his novel is not the only example of the promotion of false gods within the SBC and evangelicalism today. In fact, many of the practitioners of contemplative spirituality are led to a pagan concept of God.

**Norman Vincent Peale** described God as a New Age god of energy: “Who is God? ... God is energy. As you breathe God in, as you visualize His energy, you will be reenergized” (*You Can If You Think You Can*).

In his 2011 book *Love Wins*, **Rob Bell** says that the traditional view of hell presents a “cheap view of God” (Kindle location 47-60, 2154-2180). He says there is something wrong with this God and calls Him “terrifying and traumatizing and unbearable” (location 1273-1287, 2098-2113). He even says that if an earthly father acted like the God who sends people to hell “we could contact child protection services immediately” (location 2085-2098). Bell’s god is more akin to New Age panentheism than the God of the Bible. He describes God as “a force, an energy, a being calling out to us in many languages, using a variety of methods and events” (*Love Wins*, location 1710-1724). Bell also worships a false christ. His Jesus is “supracultural ... present within all cultures ... refuses to be co-opted or owned by any one culture ... He doesn’t even state that those coming to the Father through him will even know that they are coming exclusively through him ... there is only one mountain, but many paths. ... People come to Jesus in all sorts of ways ... Sometimes people use his name; other times they don’t” (*Love Wins*, location 1827-1840, 1865-1878, 1918-1933).

The last I checked, LifeWay wasn’t selling Bell’s book *Love Wins*, but they have long distributed his other books such as *Velvet Elvis* and his *Nooma* video series.

John Michael Talbot says God is “the Ultimate Reality” who is known by “pure spiritual intuition ... beyond all thought” (“The Many Paths of Religion and the One God of Faith,” Part 2).

**Brennan Manning** has exchanged the holy God of Scripture for an idol: “[T]he god whose moods alternate between graciousness and fierce anger ... the god who exacts the last

drop of blood from his Son so that his just anger, evoked by sin, may be appeased, is not the God revealed by and in Jesus Christ. And if he is not the God of Jesus, he does not exist” (Brennan Manning, *Above All*, p. 58-59; the foreword to this book is written by CCM artist Michael W. Smith).

**Thomas Merton**, who is acclaimed widely within evangelicalism, said that to unite with the inner ground of reality “is the will of God, of Krishna, of Providence, of Tao” (*Asian Journal of Thomas Merton*). Merton worshipped Buddhist idols in Sri Lanka.

**Sue Monk Kidd** took the path of contemplative mysticism from a Southern Baptist church all the way to goddess worship. She writes, “Over the altar in my study I hung a lovely mirror sculpted in the shape of a crescent moon. It reminded me to honor the Divine Feminine presence in myself” (*The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*).

**Alan “Bede” Griffiths** was a contemplative Catholic priest who adopted Hinduism. He wrote, “I saw God in the earth, in trees, in mountains. It led me to the conviction that there is no absolute good or evil in this world” (1991, <http://www.bedegriffiths.com/bio.htm>).

Many contemplative practitioners have come to believe in the pagan panentheism concept, that God is in everything.

**Ken Blanchard** is a board member of the Hoffman Institute which holds to the Hindu principle that the universe is one and man is God. “I am you and you are me. We are all parts of the whole. ... When you are open to life, you start noticing the divine in everything” (Tim Laurence, *The Hoffman Process*, pp. 206, 209).

**Anthony De Mello**, Catholic contemplative, says: “Think of the air as of an immense ocean that surrounds you ... an ocean heavily colored with God’s presence and God’s being. ... While you draw the air into your lungs you are drawing God in” (*Sadhana: A Way to God*, p. 36).

**John of the Cross** said, “My beloved [God] is the high mountains, and the lovely valley forests, unexplored islands, rushing rivers” (Timothy Freke, *The Spiritual Canticle: The Wisdom of the Christian Mystics*, p. 60).

**Julian of Norwich** said, “I saw that God is in all things” (quoted by Matthew Fox, *The Coming of the Cosmic Christ*, 1988, p. 123), and, “And I saw no difference between God and our Substance: but as it were all God” (“Julian of Norwich,” Lighthouse Trails Research).

**Meister Eckhart** said: “Therefore God is free of all things and therefore he is all things.”

**Henri Nouwen** said: “It is in the heart of God that we can come to the full realization of THE UNITY OF ALL THAT IS” (*Bread for the Journey*, 1997, Jan. 15 and Nov. 16).

**Willigis Jager**, Catholic contemplative, says, “The physical world, human beings, and everything that is are all forms of the Ultimate Reality, all expressions of God, all ‘one with the Father’” (*Contemplation: A Christian Path*, p. 93).

**Wayne Teasdale**, Catholic contemplative, said, “You are God; I am God; they are God; it is God” (“The Mystic Heart: The Supreme Identity,” <http://video.google.com/videoplay?docid=-7652038071112490301&q=ken+Wilber>).

# The Path of Protection: Full-Orbed Biblical Separation

There are indeed treacherous waters within the Southern Baptist Convention and within evangelicalism at large. We have documented eight ancient and end-times heresies that can be found in these waters, and there are many others.

How can a Bible-believing church protect its people from these dangerous waters?

The only real protection is to obey the biblical practice of separation, which is summarized in Romans 16:17:

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.”

We see, first, the basis or standard of separation and that is the doctrine we have learned from the apostles. This is the New Testament faith for which we are to earnestly contend (Jude 3).

The next question is which part of the faith are we to contend for and separate over? The answer is all of it, because Paul does not say to mark and avoid those who cause divisions and offences contrary to *some of* the doctrine which we have learned.

It is true that this principle is the path of “fragmentation,” and the more widely apostasy spreads the more fragmentation it creates, but it is also true that this is what the Bible plainly teaches and it is the path of spiritual protection.

Those who hold the “in essentials unity; in non-essentials liberty” doctrine cannot show us where this principle was taught by Christ or Paul or any of the apostles. They cannot show from the clear teaching of Scripture how to identify a “non-essential” doctrine, nor can they show how a list of “non-essentials” can keep from growing larger with each generation as it has everywhere this principle has been accepted. At first only things like “music” or “dress” or “Bible versions” are considered “non-essential,” but after awhile the list includes things like a woman’s call to preach and the interpretation of prophecy and the definition of God’s sovereignty in election and ecumenical evangelism and definitions of the atonement -- and the list just keeps growing.

The biblical way is to reject the “essentials/non-essentials” philosophy and to respect the whole counsel of the New Testament faith.

This does not mean that we consider all doctrine of equal importance. There are damnable heresies, which only the unregenerate hold, and lesser heresies, which even born again believers hold. But every clearly-taught doctrine of the New Testament faith should be honored and none despised. And we should be willing to defend whatever doctrine happens to be under attack at any given time.

That is the basis of separation.

What, then, is the method of separation? There are two essential parts of biblical separatism. The first is marking and warning, and the second is avoiding.

“... mark them ... and avoid them.”

Both are necessary. Marking is just as important as avoiding.

**To MARK** someone who is committed to error means to identify him. How do we do this? We do it by plain exposure, reproof and warning. If a man is prominent in teaching a certain error, he should be marked and reproved so that God's people can know exactly who to avoid. This is why I use the names of men like Jack Hyles and Curtis Hutson when warning about Quick Prayerism. They were at the forefront of promoting that great error and redefining biblical repentance, and they were in a position to influence multitudes. I use names such as Billy and Franklin Graham and Luis Palau to illustrate the heresy of ecumenical evangelism. I use the names of Mark Driscoll and Ed Stetzer in warning of the heresy of "cultural liberalism," and the names of Rick Warren and Bill Hybels in warning about the church growth movement.

To mark means to warn plainly about many of the popular authors who are distributed through evangelical bookstores such as LifeWay. This report ("The Path from Independent Baptist to The Shack, Rome, and Beyond"), which we are publishing freely in book form at the Way of Life site, provides a lot of information like this. (Make sure to get the full-length book from the web site, as this abbreviated edition which we are publishing in *O Timothy* and via the Fundamental Baptist Information Service e-mail list doesn't contain the full 20 heresies and fables that populate the treacherous waters.)

It means to warn plainly about most of the syndicated Christian radio personalities, (See "Dangers on Christian Radio" at the Way of Life web site.)

It means to have Bible conferences that provide solid education and warning. I thank the Lord that there are still Independent Baptist churches that host such conferences, and I preach in about 10 of these annually.

It means to provide sound literature that can educate and warn the people about the spiritual dangers that they must face today. I urge Bible-believing churches to set up their own bookstores to provide such literature, because typically it will not be found in the commercial Christian bookstores. (The report “Recommended Materials for Church Bookstores” at the Way of Life web site offers suggestions along this line.)

To look upon this type of thing as “negativity” is not wise. Godly warning is the way of spiritual protection in the midst of end-times apostasy. There is no shortcut. Thinking positively will not make the treacherous waters any safer!

Without such plain warning and education, the Lord’s people are left to drift without a solid anchor and they can easily drift into treacherous waters.

If a church doesn’t want to make “a major issue” of this type of thing and considers it perhaps distasteful or or distracting from “more important things,” or even wrong, and wants to keep the message more on a positive keel, and therefore doesn’t plainly identify and reprove popular heresies and fables and doesn’t name the names of popular but erring Christian leaders, it *will gradually be leavened by error*.

But marking and reproofing is not enough. We must also **AVOID**. That is a very simple and powerfully descriptive term.

To avoid those who are committed to error means to stay away from their churches, the Bible studies, their books, their Sunday School materials, their conferences, their schools, their radio and television ministries, and their Internet blogs.

It doesn't mean to hate them; it means to disassociate from them so as not to be affected by the leaven of their error. It means to disassociate from them so as to be the right example to your people.

This practice is very dramatic and “radical” and “extreme” in our day, but it is exactly what the Bible requires and it is the way of spiritual protection.

This is the way to cut off the leaven of compromise and heresy so that it does not spread through a church.

“Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us” (2 Thessalonians 3:6).

# Examples of Spiritual Shipwreck

The following are two examples of spiritual shipwreck which is caused by the rejection of biblical separatism. We give two more examples in the full-length book edition of *THE PATH FROM INDEPENDENT BAPTIST TO THE SHACK, ROME, AND BEYOND*, which is available as a free eBook from Way of Life Literature.

## Sue Monk Kidd

Consider the case of Sue Monk Kidd.

Her story is loud warning of the treacherous waters that exist in the Southern Baptist Convention today.

Kidd is a very popular writer. Her first two novels, *The Secret Life of Bees* (2002) and *The Mermaid Chair* (2005), have sold more than 6 million copies.

She was raised in a Southern Baptist congregation in southwest Georgia. Her grandfather and father were Baptist deacons. Her grandmother gave devotionals at the Women's Missionary Union, and her mother was a Sunday School teacher. Her husband was a minister who taught religion and a chaplain at a Baptist college. She was very involved in church, teaching Sunday School and attending services Sunday morning and evening and Wednesday. She was even inducted into a group of women called the Gracious Ladies, the criterion for which was that "one needed to portray certain ideals of womanhood, which included being gracious and giving of oneself unselfishly."

When Kidd was 30, a Sunday School co-worker gave her a book by Thomas Merton. Feeling “spiritually empty” she decided to read the book.

She should have known better and should have been warned by her brethren, but the New Evangelical philosophy has created an atmosphere in which the reading of a Catholic monk’s book by a Southern Baptist Sunday School teacher is acceptable in a large number of churches.

Thomas Merton was deeply affected by Mary veneration, Buddhism and Hinduism, so it is not surprising that his writings would create an appetite that could lead to Kidd all the way to goddess worship. In *The New Seeds of Contemplation*, Merton made the following frightening statement that shows the great danger of Catholic mysticism:

“In the end the contemplative suffers the anguish of realizing that HE NO LONGER KNOWS WHAT GOD IS. He may or may not mercifully realize that, after all, this is a great gain, because ‘God is not a what,’ not a ‘thing.’ This is precisely one of the essential characteristics of contemplative experience. It sees that there is no ‘what’ that can be called God” (p. 13).

What Catholic mysticism does is reject the Bible as the sole and sufficient and perfect revelation of God and tries to delve beyond the Bible, even beyond conscious thought, to find God through mystical “intuition” or “love.” It says that God cannot be known perfectly by doctrine and cannot be described in words. He must be *experienced* through mysticism.

And this opens the practitioner to demonic delusion.

Kidd began to practice Catholic forms of contemplative spirituality, read the “church fathers,” and visit Catholic

retreat centers and monasteries. She accepted the mass and other sacramental practices. There is an occultic power in the mass that has influenced many who have approached it in a non-critical manner.

She learned dream analysis and believed that her dreams are revelations. One recurring dream featured an old woman. Kidd concluded that this is “the Feminine Self or the voice of the feminine soul” and she was encouraged in her feminist studies by these visitations.

She determined to stop testing things and follow her heart (*The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*, p. 140), rejecting the Bible’s admonition to “prove all things” (1 Thessalonians 5:21). In church one day the pastor proclaimed that the Bible is the sole authority for truth, and she describes the frightful thing that happened in her heart at that moment:

“I remember a feeling rising up from a place about two inches below my navel. ... It was the purest inner knowing I had experienced, and it was shouting in me no, no, no! The ultimate authority of my life is not the Bible; it is not confined between the covers of a book. It is not something written by men and frozen in time. It is not from a source outside myself. My ultimate authority is the divine voice in my own soul. Period. ... That day sitting in church, I believed the voice in my belly. ... The voice in my belly was the voice of the wise old woman. It was my female soul talking. And it had challenged the assumption that the Baptist Church would get me where I needed to go” (*The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*, pp. 76, 77, 78).

Kidd’s “pure form of knowing” was a demonic lie.

She traveled with a group of women to Crete where they met in a cave and sang prayers to “the Goddess Skoteini, Goddess of the Dark.” She came to the place where she believed that she is a goddess. “To embrace Goddess is

simply to discover the Divine in yourself as powerfully and vividly feminine” (p. 141).

She built an altar in her study and populated it with statues of goddesses, an image of Jesus, a Black Madonna -- and a mirror to reflect her own image so she could “honor the Divine Feminine presence in myself, the wisdom in my own soul” (*The Dance of the Dissident Daughter*, p. 181).

Kidd’s daughter, too, has accepted goddess worship through her mother’s influence.

In spite of her complete apostasy, Sue Monk Kidd is quoted by evangelicals such as David Jeremiah (*Life Wide Open*), Beth Moore (*When Godly People Do Ungodly Things*), and Richard Foster (*Prayer: Finding the Heart’s True Home*). Kidd’s endorsement is printed on the back of Dallas Willard’s book *The Spirit of the Disciplines*. She wrote the foreword to the 2006 edition of Henri Nouwen’s *With Open Hands* and the introduction to Thomas Merton’s *New Seeds of Contemplation*.

## **Robert Webber**

Consider Robert Webber (d. 2007).

Webber grew up a fundamental Baptist, but by rejecting biblical separation he entered the treacherous waters of modern evangelicalism and became shipwreck.

Step by misguided step he was led away from a solid biblical faith into the broader Christian world with all of its heresies and fables.

Webber's father, who was born in 1900, was involved in the fundamentalist-modernist controversy and was a separatist. He left the liberal American Baptist Convention and joined the Conservative Baptists. Webber's parents were missionaries in Africa for the first seven years of his life. The family moved back to the States when one of the children became seriously ill, and the father pastored Montgomeryville Baptist Church, located about 25 miles west of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. After high school Webber attended Bob Jones University.

One thing that is missing in the autobiographical account of his youth is a biblical testimony of salvation. Webber admitted that he didn't have a dramatic conversion experience, and he eventually came to see salvation as a sacramental process that begins at baptism.

While at Bob Jones University, he rejected the doctrine of separation. This was the dramatic event that launched him into the broad and treacherous waters of modern evangelicalism. He describes how that at BJU he heard the statement that "Billy Graham is the greatest tool of the devil in the twentieth century" (*Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail*, p. 70). Webber rejected this and mischaracterized separation from Billy Graham as "second degree separation."

Leaving Bob Jones, Webber launched his boat directly into midst of the broad and treacherous waters.

There he encountered the "church fathers," and this was a major step in his journey toward the adoption of ancient and end-times heresies. In reality, most of the so-called church fathers of the early centuries were tainted with heresies such as sacramentalism, sanctification through asceticism, infant baptism, sacerdotalism (priestcraft), hierarchicalism,

inquisitionism, and Mariolatry. They represent a gradual falling away from the apostolic faith and a preparation for the formation of the Roman Catholic Church. (See the article “Who Are the Church Fathers” at the Way of Life web site.)

Another turning point in Webber’s life occurred in 1965 when he attended an ecumenical prayer community, invited by one of his seminary professors. Benedictine monks, laden down with ancient heresies, formed half of the group. Instead of obeying Romans 16:17 and 1 Corinthians 15:33 and many other Scriptures, Webber agreed to attend and he was dramatically impacted.

By 1972, Webber was preaching a sermon at Wheaton College entitled “The Tragedy of the Reformation.”

Webber developed a love for the Catholic mass and a craving for sacramentalism. He says: “I felt a need for visible and tangible symbols that I could touch, feel, and experience with my senses. This need is met in the reality of Christ presented to me through the sacraments” (*Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail*, p. 15).

Instead of being satisfied with faith in God’s Word, Webber wanted signs and symbols. He wanted a physical experience, which the error that is at the heart of the contemporary worship movement. The Bible says, “*For we walk by faith, not by sight*” (2 Corinthians 5:7). Faith is the “*evidence of things not seen*” (Hebrews 11:1), and comes by God’s Word by through experiences and sight (Romans 10:17).

Another thing that Webber encountered in the treacherous waters of modern evangelicalism was contemplative mysticism, and this proved to be a great change agent in his life. He recommended resting the chin on the chest and

gazing at the area of the heart and repeating the Jesus Prayer (“Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me a sinner”) “again and again.” He says, “I feel the presence of Christ through this prayer” (*Evangelicals on the Canterbury Trail*, p. 83). Mysticism is an attempt to experience God, and it is never satisfied with a faith walk based on God’s Word. Christ forbade repetitious prayers (Matthew 6:7-8). When we go beyond the Bible and adopt practices that are contrary to Scripture, the devil is always ready to meet us in his guise as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14).

In *Ancient-Future Faith* (1999), Webber recommended the contemplative writings of the Catholic mystics, including Bernard of Clairvaux, Meister Eckhart, Teresa of Avila, John of the Cross, Thomas Aquinas, and the Catholic-Buddhist Thomas Merton.

By rejecting Biblical separation Robert Webber’s boat was set adrift in the treacherous waters of modern evangelicalism and he was spiritually shipwreck.

# Conclusion

These frightful testimonies could be multiplied almost endlessly. Countless people have become shipwrecked in the treacherous waters of the “broader evangelical church.”

Those who refuse to draw strict lines and raise up high walls and who are soft in reproving and warning and careless in associations are forming bridges to these treacherous waters and will answer to God for those souls who cross the bridges and become shipwrecked.

God forbids His people to associate with heretical and pagan things such as Catholic meditation practices and labyrinths and monks and monasteries and Mary worship and the Mass. To fail to tear down the idols and high places is an exceedingly serious matter.

“Thus saith the LORD, Learn not the way of the heathen...” (Jeremiah 10:2).

“Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them” (Romans 16:17).

“Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Corinthians 15:33).

“And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you” (2 Cor. 6:15-17).

“Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ” (Colossians 2:8).

“Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away” (2 Timothy 3:5).

“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 3:3-4).

I wish the things described in this report were a problem found only within the Southern Baptist Convention or evangelicalism at large. I wish the heresies and fables and high places were *not* an Independent Baptist problem, but an ever-increasing number of bridges are being built between Independent Baptists and evangelicalism and the influence of evangelicalism’s heresies and high places is bleeding over on many fronts.

This is very sad to me because I was glad to find a haven from the SBC’s treacherous waters 39 years ago. I grew up in the Convention and made a typically empty profession of faith as a kid (I’m probably still on the membership rolls at that church), but when I was born again at age 23, I looked for a church that took the Bible more seriously, and I found one in a storefront Independent Baptist church in central Florida that was only a year or two old.

They were separatists! They believed in modest dressing and hated rock & roll and exposed the liberalism and compromise of the SBC and even criticized the Today’s English Version that the SBC was distributing in those days. They were “radical extremists.” And I loved it. They were also gracious, compassionate Christian people who loved me and helped me even though I was still a “long hair” and was really messed up by the druggie lifestyle I had lived.

I turned my back on the deeply compromised Southern Baptist Convention and its theological liberalism and ecumenical Billy Graham evangelism and rock & roll youth groups and unqualified deacons and Smorgasbord Bible philosophy and Freemason pastors and women teachers of mixed adult SS classes and refusal to practice church discipline.....

Some of my Southern Baptist relatives thought I had fallen in with a cult, but to hold the Bible as one's sole authority for faith and practice and to have a zeal to "hate every false way" is not a cultic principle (Psalm 119:128).

Let's stay in the Book and stay out of the treacherous waters!

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***CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN MUSIC: SOME QUESTIONS ANSWERED AND SOME WARNINGS GIVEN,*** ISBN 1-58318-094-x. This book expounds on five

reasons why we are opposed to CCM: It is worldly; it is ecumenical; it is charismatic; it is experience-oriented; and it weakens the fundamentalist stance of churches. We give examples of how changes are occurring in formerly fundamentalist churches through the instrumentality of contemporary music. The rest of the book deals with questions that are commonly asked on this subject, such as the following: What is the difference between using contemporary worship music and using old hymns that were interdenominational? Didn't Luther and the Wesleys use tavern music? Isn't the issue of music just a matter of taste? Doesn't the Bible encourage us to use cymbals and stringed and loud sounding instruments? What is wrong with soft rock? Didn't God create all music? Love is more important than doctrine and standards of living, isn't it? Since God looks on the heart, why are you concerned about appearance? Isn't Christianity all about grace? What about all of the young people who are being saved through CCM? 190 pages

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Fourth edition April 2006, 385 pages

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### ***Way of Life Literature***

P.O. Box 610368, Port Huron, MI 48061  
866-295-4143, [fbns@wayoflife.org](mailto:fbns@wayoflife.org)  
[www.wayoflife.org](http://www.wayoflife.org)

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