

The Discerner

the voice of... **Religion Analysis Service**

A QUARTERLY EXPOSING
UNBIBLICAL TEACHING & MOVEMENTS

Volume 32, Number 2

April • May • June 2012

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Hare Krishna
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Exposed!

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*"Hereby know we the spirit of truth
and the spirit of error" 1 John 4:6*

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OFFICE NOTES

RAS welcomes two new men to our Board of Reference:

Don Veinot is president of Midwest Christian Outreach, Inc. (MCOI), He is a regular conference speaker on issues related to the Christian worldview, un-biblical beliefs, cults, and false religions. Midwest Christian Outreach publishes a free quarterly, the Midwest Christian Journal. Don is also the co-author of the book: A Matter of Basic Principles: Bill Gothard and the Christian Life.

James K. Walker is the President of Watchman Fellowship Inc. Watchman Fellowship is an independent Christian research and apologetics ministry focusing on new religious movements, cults, the occult and the New Age. Walker is also the author (with help from the Watchman Fellowship staff) of the book: The Concise Guide to Today's Religions and Spirituality.

May the Lord bless them and us together as we serve together.

RAS Team

DEAR READER / WITH THIS ISSUE

Coaches might quibble whether defense is the best offense or vice versa. As a Sportlehrer (German for coach) in a Christian training school in Germany, I emphasized both. Sure, the “slam dunk” or the “Hail Mary pass” (if successful) make the fans howl and chant, but the “blocked shot” or the “recovered fumble” might well save the victory. The truth is, we need both defense and offense in sports.

This is elementary in the Gospel ministry as well. We need Proclamation of biblical verities as never before. Let us not allow the Devil to silence the wonderful message of Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection. There is no salvation apart from Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen! But we need to Defend the Scriptures and our biblical and social values with tenacity and passion as well. This one-two punch will defeat the purveyors of evil and destructive unbelief. God bless you as you read and apply this edition.

With This Issue...

The political atmosphere is heating up in this election year. There are crucial matters to be decided. Of course, the biggest is that of the next president – presumably the incumbent Barack Obama or the Republican leader, Mitt Romney, who is unabashedly a Mormon. RAS has run dozens of articles about the false teachings of Mormonism over the years (see RAS Archive). In all fairness we should know something about the religious roots of Obama as well. Dave Barton supplies voluminous data to define Obama’s religious background.

The inroads of Yoga and Tai Chi into the recreational, educational and economic strata of American society are ominous as they portend increasing replacement of biblical truth with Eastern religious values. Craig Branch updates these latest developments. ...Relatively unknown, Reiki Therapy combines occultism and alternative healing according to Steve Lagoon’s research. ...Lagoon refutes Arnold Murray and his Shepherd’s Chapel with a cogent Q and A exposition on Trinitarianism....What’s up with Rick Warren? The book report seeks to unlock some of the latest queries about him.

Do you know American history as it relates to politics and wars and the birth of freedom? The 10-question quiz might prod you to reexamine our American heritage.

Laurence J. Sutherland

AMERICA'S MOST BIBLICALLY-HOSTILE U.S. PRESIDENT

By David Barton, Director, Wall Builders

When one observes President Obama's unwillingness to accommodate America's four-century long religious conscience protection through his attempts to require Catholics to go against their own doctrines and beliefs, one is tempted to say that he is anti-Catholic. But that characterization would not be correct. Although he has recently singled out Catholics, he has equally targeted traditional Protestant beliefs over the past four years. So since he has attacked Catholics and Protestants, one is tempted to say that he is anti-Christian. But that, too, would be inaccurate. He has been equally disrespectful in his appalling treatment of religious Jews in general and Israel in particular. So perhaps the most accurate description of his antipathy toward Catholics, Protestants, religious Jews, and the Jewish nation would be to characterize him as anti-Biblical. And then when his hostility toward Biblical people of faith is contrasted with his preferential treatment of Muslims and Muslim nations, it further strengthens the accuracy of the anti-Biblical descriptor. In fact, there have been numerous clearly documented times when his pro-Islam positions have been the cause of his anti-Biblical actions.

Listed below in chronological order are (1) numerous records of his attacks on Biblical persons or organizations; (2) examples of the hostility toward Biblical faith that have become evident in the past three years in the Obama-led military; (3) a listing of his open attacks on Biblical values; and finally (4) a listing of numerous incidents of his preferential deference for Islam's activities and positions, including letting his Islamic advisors guide and influence his hostility toward people of Biblical faith.

1. Acts of Hostility Toward People of Biblical Faith

April 2008 – Obama speaks disrespectfully of Christians, saying they “cling to guns or religion” and have an “antipathy to people who aren't like them.”¹

February 2009 – Obama announces plans to revoke conscience protection for health workers who refuse to participate in medical activities that go against their beliefs, and fully

¹ Sarah Pulliam Bailey, “Obama: ‘They cling to guns or religion,’” *Christianity Today*, April 13, 2008.

implements the plan in February 2011.²

April 2009 – When speaking at Georgetown University, Obama orders that a monogram symbolizing Jesus' name be covered when he is making his speech.

May 2009 – Obama declines to host services for the National Prayer Day (a day established by federal law) at the White House.⁴

April 2009 – In a deliberate act of disrespect, Obama nominated three pro-abortion ambassadors to the Vatican; of course, the pro-life Vatican rejected all three.⁵

October 19, 2010 – Obama begins deliberately omitting the phrase about “the Creator” when quoting the Declaration of Independence – an omission he has made on no less than seven occasions.⁶

November 2010 – Obama misquotes the National Motto, saying it is “E pluribus unum”⁷ rather than “In God We Trust” as established by federal law.

January 2011 – After a federal law was passed to transfer a WWI Memorial in the Mojave Desert to private ownership, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the cross in the memorial could continue to stand, but the Obama administration refused to allow the land to be transferred as required by law, and refused to allow the cross to be re-erected as ordered by the Court.⁸

February 2011 – Although he filled posts in the State Department, for more than two years Obama did not fill the post of religious freedom ambassador, an official that works against religious persecution across the world; he filled it only⁹ after heavy pressure from the public and from Congress.

April 2011 – For the first time in American history, Obama urges passage of a non-discrimination law that does not contain hiring

2 Aliza Marcus, “Obama to Lift ‘Conscience’ Rule for Health Workers,” *Bloomberg*, February 27, 2009; Sarah Pulliam Bailey, “Obama Admin. Changes Bush ‘Conscience’ Rule for Health Workers,” *Christianity Today*, February 18, 2011.

3 Jim Lovino, “Jesus Missing From Obama’s Georgetown Speech,” *NBC Washington*, April 17, 2009.

4 Johanna Neuman, “Obama end Bush-era National Prayer Day Service at White House,” *Los Angeles Times*, May 7, 2009.

5 Chris McGreal, “Vatican vetoes Barack Obama’s nominees for U.S. Ambassador,” *The Guardian*, April 14, 2009.

6 Meredith Jessup, “Obama Continues to Omit ‘Creator’ From Declaration of Independence,” *The Blaze*, October 19, 2010.

7 “Remarks by the President at the University of Indonesia in Jakarta, Indonesia,” *The White House*, November 10, 2010.

8 *LadyImpactOhio*, “Feds sued by Veterans to allow stolen Mojave Desert Cross to be rebuilt,” *Red State*, January 14, 2011.

9 Marrianna Medlin, “Amid criticism, President Obama moves to fill vacant religious ambassador post,” *Catholic News Agency*, February 9, 2011; Thomas F. Farr, “Undefender of the Faith,” *Foreign Policy*, April 5, 2012.

protections for religious groups, forcing religious organizations to hire according to federal mandates without regard to the dictates of their own faith, thus eliminating conscience protection in hiring.¹⁰

August 2011 – The Obama administration releases its new health care rules that override religious conscience protections for medical workers in the areas of abortion and contraception.¹¹

November 2011 – Obama opposes inclusion of President Franklin Roosevelt’s famous D-Day Prayer in the WWII Memorial.¹²

November 2011 – Unlike previous presidents, Obama studiously avoids any religious references in his Thanksgiving speech.¹³

December 2011 – The Obama administration denigrates other countries’ religious beliefs as an obstacle to radical homosexual rights.¹⁴

January 2012 – The Obama administration argues that the First Amendment provides no protection for churches and synagogues in hiring their pastors and rabbis.¹⁵

February 2012 – The Obama administration forgives student loans in exchange for public service, but announces it will no longer forgive student loans if the public service is related to religion.¹⁶

2. Acts of Hostility from the Obama-led Military toward People of Biblical Faith

June 2011 – The Department of Veterans Affairs forbids references to God and Jesus during burial ceremonies at Houston National Cemetery.¹⁷

August 2011 – The Air Force stops teaching the Just War theory to officers in California because the course is taught by chaplains and is based on a philosophy introduced by St. Augustine in the third century AD – a theory long taught by civilized nations across the world (except America).¹⁸

10 Chris Johnson, “ENDA passage effort renewed with Senate introduction,” *Washington Blade*, April 15, 2011.

11 Chuck Donovan, “HHS’s New Health Guidelines Trample on Conscience,” *Heritage Foundation*, August 2, 2011.

12 Todd Starns, “Obama Administration Opposes FDR Prayer at WWII Memorial,” *Fox News*, November 4, 2011.

13 Joel Siegel, “Obama Omits God From Thanksgiving Speech, Riles Critics,” *ABC News*, November 25, 2011.

14 Hillary Rodham Clinton, “Remarks in Recognition of International Human Rights Day,” *U.S. Department of State*, December 6, 2011.

15 Ted Olson, “Church Wins Firing Case at Supreme Court,” *Christianity Today*, January 11, 2012.

16 Audrey Hudson, “Obama administration religious service for student loan forgiveness,” *Human Events*, February 15, 2012.

17 “Houston Veterans Claim Censorship of Prayers, Including Ban of ‘God’ and ‘Jesus,’” *Fox News*, June 29, 2011.

18 Jason Ukman, “Air Force suspends ethics course that used Bible passages that train missile launch officers,” *Washington Post*, August 2, 2011.

September 2011 – Air Force Chief of Staff prohibits commanders from notifying airmen¹⁹ of programs and services available to them from chaplains.

September 2011 – The Army issues guidelines for Walter Reed Medical Center stipulating that “No religious items (i.e., Bibles, reading materials and/or facts) are allowed to be given away or used during a visit.”²⁰

November 2011 – The Air Force Academy rescinds support for Operation Christmas Child, a program to send holiday gifts to impoverished children across the world, because the program is run by a Christian charity.²¹

November 2011 – The Air Force Academy pays \$80,000 to add a Stonehenge-like worship center for pagans, druids, witches and Wiccans.²²

February 2012 – The U. S. Military Academy at West Point disinvents three star Army general and decorated war hero Lieutenant General William G. (“Jerry”) Boykin (retired) from speaking at an event because he is an outspoken Christian.²³

February 2012 – The Air Force removes “God” from the patch of Rapid Capabilities Office (the word on the patch was in Latin: Dei).²⁴

February 2012 – The Army orders Catholic chaplains not to read a letter to parishioners that their archbishop asked them to read.²⁵

3. Acts of Hostility Toward Biblical Values

January 2009 – Obama lifts restrictions on U.S. government funding for groups that provide abortion services or counseling abroad, forcing taxpayers to fund pro-abortion groups that either promote or perform abortions in other nations.²⁶

January 2009 – President Obama’s nominee for deputy secretary of state asserts that American taxpayers are required to pay for abortions and that limits on abortion funding are

19 “Maintaining Government Neutrality Regarding Religion,” Department of the Air Force, September 1, 2011.

20 “Wounded, Ill, and Injured Partners in Care Guidelines,” Department of the Navy (accessed on February 29, 2012).

21 “Air Force Academy Backs Away from Christmas Charity,” Fox News Radio, November 4, 2011.

22 Jenny Dean, “Air Force Academy adapts to pagans, druids, witches and Wiccans,” Los Angeles Times, November 26, 2011.

23 Ken Blackwell, “Gen. Boykin Blocked At West Point,” cnsnews.com, February 1, 2012.

24 Geoff Herbert, “Air Force unit removes ‘God’ from logo; lawmakers warn of ‘dangerous precedent,’” syracuse.com, February 9, 2012.

25 Todd Starnes, “Army Silences Catholic Chaplains,” Fox News Radio, February 6, 2012.

26 Jeff Mason and Deborah Charles, “Obama lifts restrictions on abortion funding,” Reuters, January 23, 2009.

unconstitutional.²⁷

March 2009 – The Obama administration shut out pro-life groups from attending a White House-sponsored health care summit.²⁸

March 2009 – Obama orders taxpayer funding of embryonic stem cell research.²⁹

March 2009 – Obama gave \$50 million for the UNFPA, the UN population agency that promotes abortion and works closely with Chinese population control officials who use forced abortions and involuntary sterilizations.³⁰

May 2009 – The White House budget eliminates all funding for abstinence-only education and replaces it with “comprehensive” sexual education,³¹ repeatedly proven to increase teen pregnancies and abortions.³¹ He continues the deletion in subsequent budgets.³²

May 2009 – Obama officials assemble a terrorism dictionary calling pro-life advocates violent and charging that they use racism in their “criminal” activities.³³

July 2009 – The Obama administration illegally extends federal benefits to same-sex partners of Foreign Service and Executive Branch employees,³⁴ in direct violation of the federal Defense of Marriage Act.

September 16, 2009 – The Obama administration appoints as EEOC Commissioner Chai Feldblum, who asserts that society should “not tolerate” any “private beliefs,” including religious beliefs, if they may negatively affect homosexual “equality.”³⁵

July 2010 – The Obama administration uses federal funds in violation of federal law³⁶ to get Kenya to change its constitution to include abortion.

27 “Obama pick: Taxpayers must fund abortions,” *World Net Daily*, January 27, 2009.

28 Steven Ertelt, “Pro-Life Groups Left Off Obama’s Health Care Summit List, Abortion Advocates OK,” *LifeNews*, March 5, 2009.

29 “Obama Signs Order Lifting Restrictions on Stem Cell Research Funding,” *Fox News*, March 9, 2009.

30 Steven Ertelt, “President Barack Obama’s Pro-Abortion Record: A Pro-Life Compilation,” *LifeNews*, February 11, 2012.

31 Steven Ertelt, “Barack Obama’s Federal Budget Eliminates Funding for Abstinence-Only Education,” *LifeNews*, May 8, 2009.

32 Steven Ertelt, “Obama Budget Funds Sex Ed Over Abstinence on 16-1 Margin,” *LifeNews*, February 14, 2011.

33 Steven Ertelt, “Obama Admin Terrorism Dictionary Calls Pro-Life Advocates Violent, Racist,” *LifeNews*, May 5, 2009.

34 “Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies,” *The White House*, June 17, 2009.

35 Matt Cover, “Obama’s EEOC Nominee: Society Should ‘Not Tolerate Private Beliefs’ That ‘Adversely Affect’ Homosexuals,” *cnsnews.com*, January 18, 2010.

36 Tess Civantos, “White House Spent \$23M of Taxpayer Money to Back Kenyan Constitution That Legalizes Abortion, GOP Reps Say,” *Fox News*, July 22, 2010.

August 2010 – The Obama administration cuts funding for 176 abstinence education programs.³⁷

September 2010 – The Obama administration tells researchers to ignore a judge's decision striking³⁸ down federal funding for embryonic stem cell research.

February 2011 – Obama directs the Justice Department to stop defending the federal Defense of Marriage Act.³⁹

March 2011 – The Obama administration refuses to investigate videos showing Planned Parenthood helping alleged sex traffickers get abortions for victimized underage girls.⁴⁰

July 2011 – Obama allows homosexuals to serve openly in the military, reversing a policy originally instituted by George Washington in March 1778.⁴¹

September 2011 – The Pentagon directs that military chaplains may perform same-sex marriages at military facilities in violation of the federal Defense of Marriage Act.⁴²

October 2011 – The Obama administration eliminates federal grants to the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops for their extensive programs that aid victims of human trafficking because the Catholic Church is anti-abortion.⁴³

4. Acts of Preferentialism for Islam

May 2009 – While Obama does not host any National Day of Prayer event at the White House, he does host White House Iftar dinners in honor of Ramadan.⁴⁴

April 2010 – Christian leader Franklin Graham is disinvited from the Pentagon's National Day of Prayer Event because of complaints from the Muslim community.⁴⁵

April 2010 – The Obama administration requires rewriting of government documents and a change in administration

37 Steven Ertelt, "Obama, Congress Cut Funding for 176 Abstinence Programs Despite New Study," *LifeNews*, August 26, 2010.

38 Steven Ertelt, "President Barack Obama's Pro-Abortion Record: A Pro-Life Compilation," *LifeNews*, February 11, 2012.

39 Brian Montopoli, "Obama administration will no longer defend DOMA," *CBSNews*, February 23, 2011.

40 Steven Ertelt, "Obama Admin Ignores Planned Parenthood Sex Trafficking Videos," *LifeNews*, March 2, 2011.

41 Elisabeth Bumiller, "Obama Ends 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' Policy," *New York Times*, July 22, 2011.

42 Luis Martinez, "Will Same Sex Marriages Pose a Dilemma for Military Chaplains?," *ABC News*, October 12, 2011.

43 Jerry Markon, "Health, abortion issues split Obama administration and Catholic groups," *Washington Post*, October 31, 2011.

44 Alexander Mooney, "President Obama marks Ramadan," *CNN*, August 1, 2011.

45 "Franklin Graham Regrets Army's Decision to Rescind Invite to Pentagon Prayer Service," *Fox News*, April 22, 2010.

vocabulary to remove terms that are deemed offensive to Muslims, including jihad, jihadists, terrorists, radical Islamic, etc.⁴⁶

August 2010 – Obama speaks with great praise of Islam and condescendingly of Christianity.⁴⁷

August 2010 – Obama went to great lengths to speak out on multiple occasions on behalf of building an Islamic mosque at Ground Zero, while at the same time he was silent about a Christian church being denied permission to rebuild at that location.⁴⁸

2010 – While every White House traditionally issues hundreds of official proclamations and statements on numerous occasions, this White House avoids traditional Biblical holidays and events but regularly recognizes major Muslim holidays, as evidenced by its 2010 statements on Ramadan, Eid-ul-Fitr, Hajj, and Eid-ul-Adha.⁴⁹

October 2011 – Obama’s Muslim advisers block Middle Eastern Christians’ access to the White House.⁵⁰

February 2012 – The Obama administration makes effulgent apologies for Korans being burned by the U.S. military,⁵¹ but when Bibles were burned by the military, numerous reasons⁵² were offered why it was the right thing to do.

Many of these actions are literally unprecedented – this is the first time they have happened in four centuries of American history. The hostility of President Obama toward Biblical faith and values is without equal from any previous American president.

46 “Obama Bans Islam, Jihad From National Security Strategy Document,” Fox News, April 7, 2010; “Counterterror Adviser Defends Jihad as ‘Legitimate Tenet of Islam’,” Fox News, May 27, 2010; “Islamic Radicalism’ Nixed From Obama Document,” CBSNews, April 7, 2010.

47 Chuck Norris, “President Obama: Muslim Missionary?,” Townhall.com, August 17, 2010.

48 “Obama Comes Out in Favor of Allowing Mosque Near Ground Zero,” Fox News, August 13, 2010; Pamela Geller, “Islamic Supremacism Trumps Christianity at Ground Zero,” American Thinker, July 21, 2011.

49 “WH Fails to Release Easter Proclamation,” Fox Nation, April 25, 2011; “President Obama ignores most holy Christian holiday; AFA calls act intentional,” American Family Association (accessed on February 29, 2012).

50 “Report: Obama’s Muslim Advisers Block Middle Eastern Christians’ Access to the White House,” Big Peace (accessed on February 29, 2012).

51 “USA/Afghanistan-Islamophobia: Pentagon official apologizes for Quran burning,” International Islamic News Agency (accessed on February 29, 2012).

52 “Military burns unsolicited Bibles sent to Afghanistan,” CNN, May 22, 2009.

YOGA AND T'AI CHI

By Craig Branch

Many Christians bemoan the many decisions of the judicial system concerning the separation of church and state. But actually these decisions may prove to be important for Christians in using the government to respond to certain forces that are opposed to Christ (Romans 13:1-3). Christians do not appreciate decisions which diminish the preserving influence of God's truth from schools, but we certainly do not want the promotion of ideology and practice of religions foreign to Christianity either.

We now live in a secular/New Age dominated culture and feel that the enforced separation of church and state should be utilized to everyone's advantage. For instance, most colleges and universities are offering many New Age/eastern mysticism courses and they need to be challenged and removed. At the top of the list are yoga and T'ai Chi.

These courses are sometimes described in their true religious orientation but are often not. For instance in the University of Alabama-Birmingham Special Studies Catalogue, is listed under T'ai Chi Ch'uan, "an ancient system of movement-meditation practiced by Buddhist monks" (Winter 1990, p. 35). Yet on the preceding page Yoga is listed and described as "exercises (to) improve flexibility, muscle tone, coordination, poise and self-confidence."

The issue is that any school which receives funds from the federal government cannot promote the ideology or practice of a religion per the separation and establishment clauses of Constitution.

What do we find when we take a look at Yoga? An examination of the yoga instruction books reveals the problem. "Yoga in its pure form embodies and teaches timeless truths. It is a universal philosophy. Yoga teachings based on Eastern philosophies can only have operative validity if ALL human minds are conditioned to function in similar patterns," (**The Road Beyond Yoga**, George Randolph, pp. 9-11).

The author goes on to say that our minds must be changed into an Eastern process as opposed to Western rationality. "Yoga is a mental as well as a physical practice. Gradually you will perceive that it is not 'you' performing routine movements, but that the movements are flowing through 'you.' This is a point at which the ego is transcended and Yoga is no longer physical or mental but rather a spiritual

practice,” (**Yoga For Total Fitness**, Richard Hittleman, p. 11).

Yoga is an inherent and inextricable part of the belief and practice of Hinduism. “The purpose of yogic disciplines has been described in a great variety of ways: as the discovery of Truth, as the realization of Self, as the realization of the identity of Brahman and Atman, as the unification of man and God. These descriptions all point to the underlying concepts of yoga - yoga is a means of achieving union with the inner True Self, the God within.

“The Sanskrit word `yoga’ has two meanings. The first of these `union’ implies harmony, unity and stability. The second meaning, `yoke’ signifies the unification of the individual self with the divine,” (**Theories of the Chakras: Bridge to Higher Consciousness**, Hiroshi Motoyama, p. 30).

“It is true that yoga has several branches or divisions, but the goal, the aim of all of them is the same - the achievement of a union with the Supreme Consciousness,” (?Yoga for Americans, Indra Devi, p. xxiii).

“Various are the ways Karma yoga, bhakti yoga, jnan yoga, raja yoga, laya yoga, Kundalini yoga. Included in the discussion of Kundalini yoga is hatha yoga. All the paths lead to the same height. A person might disagree with someone’s path, but he can never disagree with the goal, for the goal is one and the same,” (**Choosing a Path**, Sri Swami Rama, p. 25).

Many times when a program is confronted, whether it is being taught in a school YMCA, YWCA, or even a church, the argument given is that “this is only a fitness class” or “that Hatha Yoga is only a physical technique.” Again, we let the experts speak for themselves.

“Hatha Yoga, which is best known in the United States and Europe. The literal translation of the name - `Forced union,’ the individual has to be forced into understanding that once the physical body was completely conditioned, there could then begin a training and disciplining of the mind the heart and soul and operative dynamic of Yoga is meditation,” (Randolph, p. 42-44).

“Many people associate asanas (yoga positions) with physical exercise and vigorous movement. This is a misunderstanding for the actual meaning of asana is `posture’, a stationary pose in which the mind and body are relaxed and composed while the purpose of yoga asanas is to foster mental and spiritual, as well as physical health,” (Motoyama, p. 39).

“Hatha Yoga consists of several steps. The fourth is Dharana or mind control; the fifth is Dhyiana, or meditation; and finally there is Samadhi, the state of ultimate bliss and spiritual enlightenment. The last four stages of Hatha Yoga already merge into Raja Yoga,” (Devi, Ibid)

For those who claim that Hatha Yoga has only to do with physical fitness, read what are the underlying principles: “You cannot experience the joy of good health nor develop your full potential when your life force (ana) is continually depleted. Hatha Yoga increases the supply of life force,” (Hittleman, p. 9).

“Dangers exist even in those disciplines that move the novice along deliberately and slowly, such as yoga. It is well known in India, for example, that some Hatha Yoga practices are dangerous and can lead to insanity. An initiate or disciple who, while learning to meditate, succumbs to the unexpected powers he encounters,” (**Total Meditation**, Raymond Van Over, p. 153).

Concerning the practice of T'ai Chi, the name in Sanskrit means Supreme ultimate or transcendent absolute in Chinese philosophy (**A Dictionary of Non-Christian Religions**, Geoffrey Parrinder, p. 271). The underlying philosophy is that of Taoism. The movements coordinated in T'ai Chi represent the balancing of the Universal Energy (Chi) through the complementary actions of Yin and Yang (Ibid). Its purpose is to produce physical, mental and spiritual health, by your harmonious movements with the Universal Energy flow.

Now is the time for Christians to challenge the promotion of these courses where appropriate. If they are offered at a publicly funded school, YMCA, or church, you have ample grounds to see them removed. Contact Watchman Fellowship for help.

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Visit the Watchman Fellowship Website at: <http://www.watchman.org/>

REIKI: THE DANGERS OF ENERGY BASED HEALING THERAPIES

By Steve Lagoon

My wife was recently in the hospital recovering from surgery. She received an unexpected visitor—a practitioner of what she was told was called “Healing Touch Therapy.” She assumed this would be a well-deserved massage that would help her feel better.

In fact, the practitioner of the healing touch therapy did not actually touch her. Instead she was moving her hands over various parts of her body in the belief that such was bringing her healing. Reisser describes the process:

Step two is assessment, the scanning of the patient’s energy fields with the hands. The healer places his or her hands two or three inches from the patient’s body and slowly moves over both front and back surfaces. The object is to perceive . . . variations in the energy field . . . Step three involves unruffling the field, the process of decongesting the energy flow . . . The cure is to sweep the energy downward with the hands, thus paving the way for [step four] the transfer of energy.¹

Welcome to the world of modern medicine in which eastern religious practices are invading western science-based medical care. Indeed, the book *New Age Medicine* states: “The practice of Therapeutic Touch is a prime example of an ancient concept—prana—dressed in contemporary garb so as to gain acceptability.”² The Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity adds: “Mikao Usui, a Zen Buddhist monk, rediscovered Reiki in the mid-1800s during a psychic experience . . . in Japan.”³

Searching for Answers

After learning of the Healing Touch practitioner’s visit, I began to ask the hospital staff questions about this Healing Touch Therapy.⁴ I was given a brochure entitled “Discover Healing Arts Therapies” which outlined the following therapies to hospital patients: “Guided

1 Paul C. Reisser, Teri K. Reisser & John Weldon, *New Age Medicine: A Christian Perspective on Holistic Health*, Downers Grove IL (InterVarsity Press, 1987) p. 46.

2 Paul C. Reisser, Teri K. Reisser & John Weldon, *New Age Medicine: A Christian Perspective on Holistic Health*, Downers Grove IL (InterVarsity Press, 1987) p. 44

3 Gary P. Stewart & William R. Cutrer et al, *Basic Questions on Alternative Medicine: What is Good and What is Not?*, Grand Rapids MI (Kregel Publications, 1998)

4 *Discover Healing Arts Therapies, HealthEast Care System: A collaboration between HealthEast Care System and Children’s Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota*

Imagery, Healing Music, Essential Oils, Energy Based Healing, Acupressure, Certified Massage Therapy, [and] Acupuncture.”⁵

The brochure explained each of the categories including the Healing Touch therapy. Under the subheading of “Energy Based Healing Modalities” it states that “There are several schools of energy healing modalities. Three of the more common schools are: Healing Touch, Reiki, and Therapeutic Touch.”⁶

The hospital also provided a second handout entitled: “Energy Based Healing at Woodwinds Health Campus” which states: “What is energy based healing? Energy based healing such as Healing Touch, Reiki, or Therapeutic Touch are . . . non-invasive techniques that use the hands to clear, energize, and balance the human and environmental energy fields thus affecting physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual health and healing.”⁸

Reiki a Doorway to the Occult, New Age, and Eastern Religions

The hospital handout further elaborates: “For more information: WWW.healingtouch.net; WWW.healingtouchinternational.org; WWW.reiki.org” These internet sites indeed provide more information about this expanding practice and leads one into a world of New Age medicine and deceptive spirituality. For instance, one of the suggested websites, in discussing how Healing Touch works says:

Energy therapies focus on removing energy congestion that form in our energy fields (aura) and energy centers (chakras). Once these imbalances and disturbances are cleared, the energy channels resume their task of integrating the body, mind and soul to restore health and promote healing. It may also help to prevent future issues by restoring balance to energy field disturbances, which could later result in illness if left unbalanced.⁹

The Reiki.org site also explains the basis for these energy based healing modalities:

Reiki energy is a subtle energy. It is different than electricity or chemical energy or other kinds of physical energy. Reiki energy comes from the Higher Power, which exists on a higher dimension than the physical world we are familiar with. When viewed clairvoyantly, Reiki energy appears to come down from above and to enter the top

5 *Ibid*

6 *Ibid*

7 *Energy Based Healing at Woodwinds Health Campus, A collaboration between Healtheast Care System and Children's Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota*

8 *Ibid*

9 <http://www.healingtouchprogram.com/about-healing-touch-program/what-is-healing-touch>

of the practitioner's head after which it flows through the body and out the hands. It appears to flow this way because of our perspective. However, the true source of Reiki energy is within ourselves. This does not mean that we use our personal energy when we do Reiki, but that the energy is coming from a transcendental part¹⁰ of ourselves that is connected to an infinite supply of healing energy.

Please note in the above quote that the healing energy in Reiki practices comes “from the Higher Power.”

Reiki a Pathway to Demonic Spirit Guides

We learn something else about this Higher Power when we are told about the process of attunement (the training one receives to provide Reiki treatments):

A Reiki attunement is the process by which a person receives the ability to give Reiki treatments. The attunement is administered by the Reiki Master during the Reiki class. During the attunement, the Reiki Master will touch the student's head, shoulders, and hands and use one or more special breathing techniques. The attunement energies will flow through the Reiki Master and into the student. These special energies are guided by the Higher Power and make adjustments in the student's energy pathways and connect the student to the source of Reiki. Because the energetic aspect of the attunement is guided by the Higher Power, it adjusts itself to be exactly right for each student. During the attunement, some students feel warmth in the hands, others may see colors or have visions of spiritual beings.¹¹

Please notice that “Higher Power” guides the process that connects the “student to the source of Reiki” and that during this attunement process some students have “visions of spiritual beings.”

In an article (again on the website suggested by the hospital handout) entitled “Solutions to Improve Your Reiki Practice”, William Lee Rand discusses how to enhance one's Reiki healing abilities by gaining help from spirits: “Also, you will not be using any of your personal energy in this process; an enlightened being will be doing the spirit release process for you and that is why it is safe.”¹² William Lee Rand then describes how to connect to these spirits:

Before beginning a spirit release session, it's necessary for you to develop a relationship with an enlightened being if you don't already

¹⁰ <http://www.reiki.org/FAQ/Questions&Answers.html>

¹¹ <http://www.reiki.org/FAQ/Questions&Answers.html>

¹² <http://www.reiki.org/reikinews/improvepractice.html>

have a relationship with one.. The reason this is important is that enlightened beings are free of ego and able to use the full power of the Source, (also called God, Holy Spirit, Higher Power, etc.) This allows them to easily heal and release spirits. This includes spirits of any type no matter how powerful they may seem to be. To develop a relationship with an enlightened being, first decide on an enlightened being you'd like to work with. You can do this by reading literature on enlightened beings and choosing one you seem attracted to.

Once you have one you'd like to work with, meditate each day by using the distant symbol and sending Reiki to the enlightened being. As you send Reiki say a prayer asking the enlightened being to strengthen your connection to them so they can help you with your work as a healer and especially with spirit release work. Do this at least 15 minutes a day for 2 weeks or ¹³more or until you feel a strong connection with the enlightened being.

This can be nothing else than a description of how to make contact with demonic forces and an open door to demon possession. The Center for Bioethics Alternative Medicine booklet states:

Practitioners of Reiki advance through three levels of training. To become a first degree Reiki practitioner, the student must go through four 'attunements' . . . Reiki masters call on the help of spirit guides during attunements . . . In becoming a second degree Reiki . . . the practitioner learns about spirit guides and how to contact them in healing sessions . . . During this phase [third degree Reiki] . . . practitioners ¹⁴ . . . give completer control of healing sessions to their spirit guides.

Reiki Antithetical to Christianity

The Center for Bioethics and Human Dignity concludes: "Reiki is antithetical to biblical Christianity. Channeling is a way of communicating with spirits to obtain information not otherwise accessible. It is denounced in the Bible as sorcery, mediumship, and spiritism (Lev. 19:26, 31; 2:6; Deut. 18:9-14; Acts 19:19; Galatians 5:20; Rev. 21:8). Contacting spirit guides is dangerous spiritually, physically, and emotionally."¹⁵

I know that many, even among some who take the name Christian, have assumed that these energy based healing therapies (Reiki, Healing Touch, Therapeutic Touch) must be good because of the help

¹³ <http://www.reiki.org/reikinews/improvepractice.html>

¹⁴ Gary P. Stewart & William R. Cutrer et al, *Basic Questions on Alternative Medicine: What is Good and What is Not?*, Grand Rapids MI (Kregel Publications, 1998) 62.

¹⁵ Gary P. Stewart & William R. Cutrer et al, *Basic Questions on Alternative Medicine: What is Good and What is Not?*, Grand Rapids MI (Kregel Publications, 1998) 63.

they seem to be bringing to their patients/clients. This is why it is crucial that we test the spirits (1 John 4:1) because “Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness”(2 Corinthians 11:14-15). It is urgent that anyone who is involved with these deceptive healing practices renounce them and trust their whole lives to Jesus Christ alone.

Reiki as a False World Savior

We are told that Reiki can even be the source of universal peace:

Q. Can it be used to help groups of people or even global crises? A. Yes, this is one of the wonderful benefits of Reiki and is why it is such a wonderful technique for the new millennium. It allows individuals and groups to do something positive about the challenging situations we see on the news involving so many people all over the planet. Reiki can be used to reduce suffering and help people anywhere in the world. On our Reiki web site at www.reiki.org we list major world events to send Reiki to. As more and more people send Reiki to help the world heal, we will move quickly to a world of peace and harmony.”¹⁶

This would seem to fit under the category of an anti-Christ (1 John 2:18) for surely Reiki is promising to deliver to the world what only Christ can bring. “For there is no other name [than Jesus] under heaven to men by which we must saved”(Acts 4:12). Jesus alone is the hope for the world.

Deception

As with anything of the devil, deception is involved. For Satan is a “liar and the father of lies”(John 8:44). In the hospital setting, these forms of healing are offered to patients unfamiliar with their background. Patients are vulnerable because of their conditions and being in pain. Anything that promises to reduce pain seems good.

However, if one is concerned and asks questions, he is often given non-threatening and vague answers that do not really describe what these “healing modalities” are really about.

For instance, in the *Holistic Nursing Practice Journal*, Mega Mease, who heads The Center for Advanced Energy Therapeutics Reiki Volunteer Program at University Medical Center, Tucson, Arizona said in an interview with William Lee Rand, the founder of the International Center for Reiki training:

¹⁶ <http://www.reiki.org/FAQ/Questions&Answers.html>

We use [Reiki] symbols, but not openly in front of the patient. We leave our personal stuff behind by clearing ourselves before we enter the hospital. Next, we clear the hospital from a private space and draw the symbols on our hands before beginning our shift. Dependent upon each volunteer's training, he or she may also visualize and intone the symbols as the day progresses.¹⁷

Mega Mease further explains:

We do not speak in metaphysical terms [aura, chakras] because this can create an immediate block of acceptance by those unfamiliar with the terms . . . When working in a medical environment it is essential to keep the explanation simple and mainstream as possible.¹⁸

Warning

It is unfair (to say the least) and deceptive to approach vulnerable patients who are in pain and offer them these therapies while purposely withholding information and misleading them into thinking these “therapies” are harmless. We urge Christians, in fact all people, to “have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them”(Ephesian 5:11).

¹⁷ Mega Mease & William Lee Rand, *Holistic Nursing Practice*, September/October 2011, p. 236

¹⁸ Mega Mease & William Lee Rand, *Holistic Nursing Practice*, September/October 2011, p. 236

The following article reproduces a copy of the letter that Steve Lagoon (in behalf of Religion Analysis Service) sent to Arnold Murray's ministry (The Shepherd's Chapel). In a phone conversation, Arnold Murray's son, Dennis Murray, promised a written response to this letter.

However, shortly after receiving the letter, Steve Lagoon received a call at the office of Religion Analysis Service from Dennis Murray stating that the Shepherd's Chapel ministry would not honor their word, and had decided not to answer the letter as they had previously promised. The reader is free to decide for themselves why Arnold and Dennis Murray of the Shepherd's Chapel chose to go back on their word.

The Shepherd's Chapel
Mr. Dennis Murray
PO Box 416
Gravette AR 72736

Dear Mr. Dennis Murray,

I was privileged to speak with you on the telephone on February 27th and I want to thank you for your kindness and generosity, and your commitment to answer my concerns about the teachings of the Shepherd's Chapel (hereafter *SC*) in writing. It was my intention to follow up our conversation with this letter much sooner, but I was greatly affected by the tragic death of my 17 year old son in an automobile accident. I apologize for the delay.

We at Religion Analysis Service often receive inquiries about your father and the teachings of the SC. It was decided that we would research your ministry and put together an article for our ministry's journal which is called *The Discerner*. In doing research for that article, I came across several articles that were critical of the ministry of the SC. I also became acquainted with your own website. I was most interested in your doctrinal statement (*Our Statement of Faith*), and especially the article written by your father (*In Answer to Critics by Pastor Arnold Murray*) in which he seeks to answer some of the criticisms leveled by "Christian Research" organizations. I am organizing this letter to you around the format of your father's *In Answer to Critics*.

In the first paragraph of your father's *In Answer to Critics* he says that "since 1991 several so called 'Christian Research' organizations have willingly quoted each other's falsehoods and labels, without direct research, until they are blindly printing outright lies." He (hereafter *PM* for Pastor Murray) also said at the end of paragraph three that,

“Now let’s take a look at some of the usual points of criticism that some of these so-called ‘Christian Research’ people seem to steal from one another in their rush to reproduce lies against myself and the Shepherd’s Chapel.”

I am sorry if your father has been victimized by shabby scholarship in the past, and I am determined that my article will be fair and balanced, while still tackling the tough criticisms that have been leveled. I know from past experience how easy it is for researchers to be inaccurate, and mischaracterize someone’s teachings. By working directly with you, I hope to clear up the misunderstandings that are out there, and provide sound information to our readers.

In the second paragraph of *In Answer to Critics*, PM relates his involvement as a veteran of the Korean War. We honor his service to our country, and thank him for his part in protecting the freedoms we now enjoy.

In the third paragraph PM states, “I believe many of the inaccurate perceptions of what I teach at the Shepherd’s Chapel could be resolved quickly if those interested would simply request our ‘*Statement of Faith*’ which has been freely available for many years.” I want you to know that I have studied the *Statement of Faith* and *In Answer to Critics* very carefully, and yet they do not seem to alleviate the criticisms that have been leveled. It is not for want of effort that I arrive at this conclusion, for I have personally viewed many hours of the television program, and listened to many of the cassette tapes.

The first topic your father addresses is under the title “*The Trinity or Godhead*.” The critics charge that the SC does not affirm the doctrine of the Trinity, but rather, affirms a Modalist view of God. At this point it is important to define terms. By the doctrine of the Trinity I mean; that the Bible reveals that there is only one God (monotheism), and yet within the nature of this one God there are three eternal personal distinctions (usually termed persons) called the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The three (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) share the very nature and essence of God, but carry out different roles and functions within the being of God (the Godhead).

For example, the Bible teaches that the Father loves the Son, sends the Son and so forth. It also says that the Son loves the Father, that He obeys the Father (John 16:12-13), that the Son sends the Holy Spirit (John 15:26), that the Father sends the Holy Spirit (John 14:26), that the Holy Spirit obeys the Father, and that the Holy Spirit intercedes to the Father (Romans 8:26-27).

This distinction of the persons existed not only after the Son became incarnate in Jesus Christ, but also before (John 1:1-3, 6:38, 17:5). This in brief is the doctrine of the Trinity believed by the historic Christian church, based solidly upon God's word.

As to Modalism, it is defined in this way: There is only one God (monotheism), but within the nature of this one God, there is only *one* person. How this is so is explained in two different ways depending on which type of Modalism is in view.

One type is that commonly called Sabellianism which teaches that the three persons (the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit) are just different manifestations or roles, of the one divine person. In other words, God played the role of Father in creation, the Son in redemption, and now "plays" or "manifests" himself as the Holy Spirit. The divine person plays these roles successively, and not simultaneously.

The second type of Modalism I call the Noetian type. It is the most prominent view among Modalists today (i.e. the United Pentecostal Church). It teaches that the Father and the Holy Spirit are not two separate persons, but just two different titles or names of the one divine person. They then teach that at the incarnation, this one divine person (the Father/ Holy Spirit) took on human nature and it is only the human part of Jesus Christ that is called the Son. In this view, Jesus Christ himself is all at once the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit (the Father/ Holy Spirit being the Divine part of Jesus, and the Son being the human part).

I took the time to define these terms so as to avoid misunderstandings. That said, it certainly appears that the *SC* denies the doctrine of the Trinity (as defined above), and instead teaches a doctrine of the Godhead roughly equivalent to the second Modalistic view defined above.

For example, many articles quote *PM* as follows:

You have these yo-yo's that will say, "Well I want you to think of water (sic) and ice" and so on, various gases or so forth, or then they'll say, 'I want you to think of a 200 watt bulb, and a 150 watt bulb, and a 50 watt bulb.' Well they're all the same wattage, friend. So why not just simplify it instead of playing stupid games, and understand there are three offices of the Godhead. Like this little lady said. She said, "To my husband I am a wife, to my children I am a mother, that's my office. To hundreds of third graders I am their teacher and have been down through the years. That's a different office; none of them the same, but I'm still the same person." I like that. It's simple and to the point (The

Shepherd's Chapel, broadcast June 4, 1991).

Another quote often repeated is that God "Gots (sic) three offices he serves" (The Shepherd's Chapel, Broadcast May14, 1991).

These quotes are clearly Modalistic as defined above. These types of statements along with the fact that your '*Statement of Faith*' does not affirm the doctrine of the Trinity make it appear that the SC's teachings are rightly classified as anti-Trinitarian and Modalistic. In your response then, it is important to clarify the actual view of the SC.

The second area that PM addresses in *In Answer to Critics* is the issue of whether the SC teaches that men can become "little Gods." PM states, "Also, I have never taught that men were little gods. It would be a lie for someone to say so. I do teach all souls were created by our father."

Although the statement is vague and unclear, it appears to verify the charge that the SC teaches that all people were created directly by God *before* they were created (Adam and Eve) or born *into this world* (everyone else). The following quotes from the SC program support this conclusion: "Do you appear as your soul appeared in the world that was? (Tape #146). "We always were with Him [God] until you were born into this earth (Kenites, Tape #436).

Along the same lines, it appears that the SC teaches that the earth had been populated before the creation described in Genesis 1:2 and following, and so the six days of creation described in Genesis One are really a re-creation or "reconstruction" of the earth after it had been judged and destroyed by God. In this view there is a "gap" between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, which gap is believed to be a long period of earth history (the so-called Gap-theory). As I understand it then, the SC believes that mankind had preexisted on this earth in some form before the creation of Adam and Eve.

I accept the statement by PM that he has not taught a little gods doctrine. However, how does the SC answer the charge that teaching that all mankind has existed before coming into this world is not supported by Scripture?

For example, the verses that PM appeals to in support of this idea such as Jeremiah 1:5 and Ephesians 1:4 do not show that we preexisted our existence here on the earth, but rather merely shows God's foreknowledge of all things: past, present, and future. The fact that "He knew us" before we were born, even before the foundation of the world, does not mean that we existed then. It just means that God can know the future through the use of His foreknowledge and omniscience. The Apostle Paul speaks to this idea when he said "the God who. . . calls

things that are not as though they were” (Romans 4:17b).

The Psalmist declared “But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD’S love is with those who fear him” (Psalm 103:17). Because of God’s omniscience, God has always “known us,” that is, He has known about us. But just because God has always known us, doesn’t mean that we have always existed. If that were the case, mankind would be co-eternal with God, a logical impossibility.

The Gap theory has been around a long time, but has never gained common acceptance because it is a theory looking for evidence, and finding little. While the idea itself is not impossible, it is not the plain and straightforward meaning of the text. The arguments regarding the Gap theory are detailed and beyond the scope of my research here, but I refer your attention to an article by Russell Grigg entitled “From the Beginning of Creation: Does Genesis have a Gap”! which can be found at the following web address: <http://creation.com/from-the-beginning-of-the-creation>

However, I have this question; If it is true that we have existed before our present births on earth, can you tell me where we were before being born?

The next area that *PM* addresses in *In Answer to Critics* is the subject of racism. I take *PM* at his word that the *SC* is not racist in the sense that it promotes hatred of any race. However, it does appear that the view of the origin of the races taught by the *SC* is both unbiblical and easily compatible with supremacist tendencies. But in fairness, I want to make sure that I accurately understand the view of the *SC* in this regard.

Therefore, I am going to give my understanding of the *SC*’s teaching on the origin of the races of mankind. As best as I can determine the *SC* teaches that there were two different creations of “man.” The first is described in Genesis 1:26-28, and is the creation of some (including blacks), but not all of the races. The second creation of man is described in Genesis 2:7-25, and this was the creation of Adam and Eve (and their descendants).

If this accurately reflects the teaching of the *SC*, doesn’t it conflict with Romans 5:12-19 which describes how sin has been passed onto all mankind through Adam? Likewise, how does such a view explain the apostle Paul’s statement that “From one man [Adam] he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth” (Acts 17:26)?

The next subject heading in *In Answer to Critics* is entitled *Serpent Seed*. Now it seems pretty clear that the view of the *SC* is that in the Garden of Eden, Eve had physical sexual relations with the serpent

who is of course, the Devil. The result of this is that Eve became pregnant with Satan's child who when born was named Cain. Then it is claimed that the descendants of Cain are known in history as the Kenites, and they have been a constant thorn in the side of God's people. Furthermore, some critics have stated the *SC* teaches that Eve was also pregnant with Abel at the same time that she was pregnant with Cain, Adam being the father of Abel. I would like to clarify if that is actually your teaching.

Following from the above, the Kenites are not only antagonistic to God's people, but they are actually imposters pretending to be the real Jewish people. In other words, those in Israel today are not real Jews, but rather are Kenites inspired by Satan to deceive the nations. Furthermore, those who are the real Jews, the real chosen people of today, are those of white stock, primarily residing in Europe and North America.

If this is the view of the *SC*, please answer the following questions. Why do you reject the opinion of most scholars that there was more than one group of people called Kenites in Scripture (for instance, see "Kenites" in the Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, MI, 1963, p.463)? However, if we operate under the assumption that all the Kenites mentioned in Scripture are indeed wicked hybrid descendants of Cain (and Satan), why are they so frequently presented in a positive light in the Scriptures?

For example, Judges 1:16 records that Moses was married to a Kenite woman, and yet there is not the slightest alarm raised in the Bible about it. The same verse says that the Kenites peacefully co-existed with "the men of Judah" without any indication that this was a problem (as you would expect if these Kenites were the offspring of Satan). In Numbers 10:29-33, Moses pleads with the Kenites to help the Israelites as they travel, which the Kenites decide to do. The passage expresses no concern about the danger to Israel at the hands of these alleged hybrids of Satan. In Judges 4:11-24, the account describes the heroic action of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, in killing Sisera and helping to strengthen the Israelites. 1 Samuel 15:5-6 states that "Saul went to the city of Amalek and set an ambush in the ravine. Then he said to the Kenites, 'go away, leave the Amalekites so that I do not destroy you along with them; for you showed kindness to all the Israelites when they came up out of Egypt.' So the Kenites moved away from the Amalekites." Again, does this passage even hint at the wickedness of these Kenites?

Also, if Eve's eating of the fruit meant that she had physical sexual relations with the Devil, then what about the fact that Adam also ate of

the fruit (Genesis 3:6)? Does this mean that Adam engaged in physical homosexual relations with Satan? The passage also describes Adam as being present when Eve partook of the forbidden fruit. Does this mean that Adam stood by and witnessed Eve's "encounter" with Satan?

The next section in *In Answer to Critics* is entitled "Exclusive Messenger." *PM* denies ever claiming or even thinking himself to be "God's exclusive messenger for this era." This is good, but I would appreciate a clarification on this subject. Does the *SC* recognize as true Christians, those who do not agree with the teachings of the *SC*. In other words, is it necessary to accept the teachings and/or leadership of *PM* and the *SC* in order to be saved?

The final section in *In Answer to Critics* is entitled "Doctorate of Religious Education." In this section *PM* says, "It is true that I have a policy of not publicly stating where I earned my doctorate. . ." So we can infer from this that *PM* does indeed have an "earned doctorate" and not an honorary degree, or no degree at all. Now I personally don't think one is required to have formal credentials in order to have an effective ministry for the Lord. Such has often been the case, D. L. Moody being a prominent example.

Nonetheless, it seems to me that by withholding the information about his educational background, *PM* is doing more damage to his ministry than being open and forthright would do. For example, why was *PM* willing to reveal his involvement in the military? Wasn't he worried that critics would judge him by his association with the military? In other words, it seems inconsistent to reveal some information, and withhold other information. Certainly, there are some things that a man has a right to keep private, but his educational background is not usually one of them.

Dennis, I want to thank you again for taking the time to respond to this letter. It is my hope that it will help in clarifying the issues for all involved to the glory of God!

Steve Lagoon

It has now been ten years and we have yet to hear even the slightest response from Arnold or Dennis Murray or any representative of the Shepherd's Chapel. Though this letter has had some circulation on the internet, we are now publishing it for the readers of The Discerner.

BOOK REVIEW

A Wonderful Deception: The Further New Age Implications of the Emerging Purpose Driven Movement.

by Steve Lagoon; Author: Warren Smith

Publisher: Lighthouse Trails Publishing

Published: 2009 Pages: 229

A Wonderful Deception is a follow-up book to Warren Smith's earlier book entitled *Deceived On Purpose: The New Age Implications of the Purpose-Driven Church* published in 2004. Warren Smith states that he "was formerly involved in the New Age movement" (back cover) which gives him insight into the movement.

On page 33, Smith states that "Richard Abanes quickly characterized my book [*Deceived on Purpose*] as 'one of the worst 'apologetic' related books to ever gain popularity in the Christian community.'"

In the interest of full disclosure, I shared Richard Abanes' opinion about the book. I was so concerned about the book that I wrote a lengthy rebuttal to it pointing out its many weaknesses. My concern was that Rick Warren was being unfairly tarred and feathered. It was fine to criticize him, but I felt Smith's work was very poorly reasoned.

In many ways, the criticisms of Rick Warren mirror the earlier criticisms leveled against evangelist Billy Graham. Most of the criticisms that Smith levels against Rick Warren are about the company that Rick Warren keeps. Smith is concerned by all the New Age leaders that Warren works with, and indeed in *A Wonderful Deception*, Smith amply proves his case that Rick Warren has many alarming associations with false teachers.

As I have stated, the same concerns were raised against Billy Graham. He was vilified by conservative fundamentalist and evangelicals for his association with liberal Protestants, Jews, Roman Catholics, and even prominent Faith teachers (who most considered frauds). They cried, "How can Graham work with these unbelieving Jews and liberal Christians who deny the Bible and fundamental Christian truths? How can he work with those with a gospel of works in the Roman Catholic Church? How can he embarrass Christians by working with the fraudulent faith healers?"

Billy Graham's answer was that his concern was for the salvation of souls for Christ. In the end, Graham's supporters suggested, though

Graham openly worked with such groups, this gave him an open door to millions of souls who might not otherwise have been open to his evangelistic crusades. Each of us can make our own judgment about whether Graham's compromise of association with false teachers was worth the opportunity to reach millions with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Likewise, it is a fair question to ask if Rick Warren has gone too far in his association with New Age teachers.

What I can say is that Warren Smith has vastly improved as a researcher and writer. In my opinion, *A Wonderful Deception* is much better than *Deceived on Purpose*. Though there are still some criticisms that I don't agree with, yet for those who want well-researched facts concerning Rick Warren's New Age associations, I can heartedly recommend this book.

Smith clearly shows the profound influence Robert Shuller has had on Rick Warren. If that's not troubling enough, Smith also shows Rick Warren's connection to other New Age pop psychology gurus such as Bernie Siegel, Ken Blanchard, and Norman Vincent Peale.

The impression I have is that Rick Warren moved in these circles as he was moving forward in his ministry. But along the way he has become more conservative, but just can't seem to separate himself from these questionable teachers. I believe that Rick Warren needs to take a stand for orthodox Christian truth and separate himself from these New Age gurus he seems so enamored with. Warren Smith deserves credit for exposing Rick Warren's troubling New Age connections.

QUIZ:
American Politics and Wars
for Patriotic Christians

1. Who was the Father of the Constitution?
 a. George Washington
 b. Benjamin Franklin
 c. James Madison
 d. Thomas Jefferson

2. Author of the “Star Spangled Banner” was
 a. John Philip Sousa
 b. Francis Scott Key
 c. Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
 d. Nathanael Hawthorne

3. The Civil War began with
 a. Murder of John Brown
 b. A fiery speech on states’ rights by John Calhoun
 c. Homestead Act of 1862
 d. Attack on Ft. Sumter

4. Which battle happened first?
 a. Bull Run
 b. Antietam
 c. Gettysburg
 d. Vicksburg

5. Foremost leader of the women’s suffrage movement was
 a. Betsy Ross
 b. Clara Barton
 c. Susan B. Anthony
 d. Louisa May Alcott

6. Assassinated James Garfield
 a. Charles Guiteau
 b. John Wilkes Booth
 c. Leon Czolgosz
 d. Benedict Arnold

7. Who said: "Don't Give Up the Ship!"
___ a. Captain John Paul Jones
___ b. Admiral Chester Nimitz
___ c. Captain James Lawrence
___ d. Admiral George Dewey
8. Leader of the American Expeditionary Forces in WW I was
___ a. John "Black Jack" Pershing
___ b. George Marshall
___ c. George Patton
___ d. Douglas MacArthur
9. Which happened first in World War II ?
___ a. Allies invade Italy
___ b. Bataan March
___ c. Allies invade France
___ d. A-Bombing of Hiroshima
10. The merciless bombing of Belgrade was ordered by
___ a. Bill Clinton
___ b. Jimmy Carter
___ c. Ronald Reagan
___ d. Gerald Ford

Answers:

1. (c); 2. (c); 3. (b); 4. (d); 5. (a); 6. (c); 7. (a); 8. (c); 9. (a); 10. (c).

Personal Notes on the Articles:

Please feel free to email us at info@ras.org or call us at (612) 331-3342 if you have any questions or comments.

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