

Enemies in the Church

Elder Andy Kuhn

Well, once again provided an opportunity to present a message on rather short notice to the congregation at COPC, I first considered speaking to you about our common salvation. Indeed, in the midst of our journey thru the Gospel of Luke with Pastor Blair, I first considered scratching at the surface of this passage that has been called by some scholars of the past the 5th Gospel, Isaiah 52:13 thru Chapter 53, because that wonderful prophecy written some 700 years before the coming of Messiah so wonderfully describes his ministry, suffering, and eternal glory that indeed every believer should know and extol its deep truths. Martin Luther himself said, "Every Christian ought to be able to repeat it by heart." So, had I taught on this section of the Old Testament, that was going to be your assignment, to memorize Isaiah 52:13 through 53:12 – it's only 15 verses, after all ☺ ... However, to be able to understand the character, the context so that you can be able to draw all the richness that is found within these 15 verses, we would need a series that would last at least a couple of months. And I fear that a meager attempt to give you an even introductory message this morning would be disappointing for you and frustrating for me. All that being said; I would encourage you to add the reading and study of this wonderful passage to your meditation time with the Lord. Intimacy with Isaiah 52:13 thru Chapter 53 will greatly expand your understanding both of Christ's ministry on earth and His rejection by the Jewish leaders that we are encountering in the heart of the study of Luke.

OK, so by now you are probably thinking "I know what Andy is **not** going to be preaching today, so what **is** he going to preach on? After all, did we not all just read this passage together to open the sermon? Well, you might have noted a clue I provided during my opening comments a few moments ago ... I was making an effort to speak to you "about our common salvation" ... but now I feel it necessary to speak to you "appealing that you content earnestly for the faith that was once for all delivered to the saints".

As those of you who join us in the ministry at the Boyington nursing home know, we earlier this year completed a series in this year on the Fundamentals of the Faith, drawn from this resource provided by Grace Community Church, which I believe has also been taught years ago here at COPC ... [Give some example lessons] ... From this series of fundamentals, we learned that Jesus Christ, the glory of God in human flesh, according to John, is full of truth. He is the way, the truth and the life. We know that Jesus said that the truth would set the sinner free from sin and death. The Bible is called the Word of Truth. Jesus said to His Father, "Your Word is truth." And in the Scriptures we are commanded to worship God in truth. We're commanded to obey the truth, to love the truth, to judge by the truth, to speak the truth in love, to walk in the truth and as we learned in John's epistle, to love in the truth. Literally, we are to be engulfed in the truth. That's why the church is called by the Apostle Paul "the pillar and support of the truth." As such, we who are saved are responsible to hold up the truth, including against all the speculations raised up against the knowledge of God. This is a wonderful series for a new Christian, and for someone who may have been in a church for decades but still does not know what, why, or how they believe.

However, as we reached the last lesson in the series, I felt somewhat as Jude described at the beginning of his epistle. We had just spent 13 lessons in the fundamentals of the historical Christian faith, but I also am quite aware that false teachers, such as the Jehovah's Witnesses, also visit the very same nursing home.

As a result of the importance of the truth, the truth is always under attack. That's quite evident from studies of the epistles and other studies as well. All through the millennia since the fall of Adam and Eve, God has been revealing His truth, His saving truth starting with the revelation that a true one would come and crush the serpent's head and provide true salvation from sin, death and hell. And the unfolding of the message of the truth is the real story of Scripture. Of course, all the way along Satan has done everything he could to obliterate the truth, to cover the truth, to hide the truth, to twist the truth to bring about lies and deceptions. One way or another the truth has always been under attack and there are sad, sad realities throughout the history of God's redeemed people, both Israel and the church, great sweeping eras of time when the people of God, so-called, abandoned the truth, lost heart for the truth, lost interest in the truth and failed to contend or fight for the truth.

It has been a long war against God and against His truth in which the devil has engaged and he has employed demons and he has employed men and women. Most effectively he has employed those people who are associated with the truth in some way. The deadliest assaults against the truth come from the inside. This is what we call apostasy. It is a defection; it is a corruption. The most effective attacks against the truth come from those people who purport to know the truth and even to believe the truth. The greatest assaults against the truth don't come from the outside, they come from the inside, from apostates, defectors who name the name of Christ, or once named the name of Christ, and now are the enemies of Christ, who once affirmed their trust in God, belief in God, and affirmed the Scripture and have become the enemies of the Scripture. They're on the inside.

Notice verse 4 of Jude, "Certain persons have crept in unnoticed." Notice verse 12, "These men are those who are hidden reefs in your love feasts, when they feast with you without fear." They're on the inside and they are deadly dangerous because they bring such devastating corruption from their position and their posture inside the church.

Jude is concerned about this issue. He is concerned about the most dangerous corruption that can occur against the truth, and that is on the inside. The long war against God certainly comes from the outside, comes from every false religious system on the planet. Second Corinthians chapter 10 verses 3 to 5 talk about every speculation, every idea, every ideology, every theology, every religion, every philosophy, every viewpoint raised up against the knowledge of God, being a damning speculation. The spiritual war certainly has to be fought against those who attack from the outside. And the long war against God has not just been from the inside, believe me, it's been from the outside, but the most formidable blows against the truth come from the inside. Anyone in ministry will tell you that. The greatest danger to an army is from the inside, traitors, defectors, spies really working for the enemy who are trusted. Jude is concerned about this and he wants us to be concerned as well. He wants to engage us all in the battle for the truth, the long war for the truth. He wants us to be the defenders against the defectors.

And so, the call to us comes in verse 3 in this epistle. "Beloved, while I was making every effort to write to you about our common salvation..." This apparently indicates that he started to write a letter in which he wanted to talk about salvation, a positive letter, an upbeat letter, a celebratory letter in the sense that he was going to celebrate with them the wonders of their common salvation. However, while he was making an effort to do that, it was interrupted and he said, "I felt the necessity to write to you..." and that necessity was a Spirit-inspired necessity, we would all agree, since the epistle is inspired by the Holy Spirit. "I felt it necessary to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith, that you contend earnestly for the faith." That is a strong verb, contend earnestly, agonizomai-to agonize, to fight, to struggle, to battle, to give great effort, to give great exertion. You add the prefix preposition and it intensifies it and it's a good translation "to contend earnestly," or to battle mightily, or to struggle powerfully for the faith. Faith being the body of truth, the word is objective, it's not subjective faith, objective faith. "I had some other things I want to talk about, I wanted to write you a positive letter, but I felt the necessity to write a letter under the compulsion of the Holy Spirit to engage you in the battle, in the fight, in the struggle, in the war against the faith, against the body of truth we know is the Christian faith."

Looking at the big picture further, the beginning of the church age is described in the Acts of the Apostles. The end of the church age is dealt with in Jude which might be called the "Acts of the Apostates". Acts describes the deeds and teaching of men of God, through whom Christ began to build His church. Jude, the last epistle, relates the deeds and teachings of apostates who will do everything they can to destroy the truth until the end of the church. Jude is the only book in the Bible entirely devoted to discussing apostasy all the way out to the end of the church age. So these 25 verses are the vestibule, as it were, to the Revelation. Revelation tells us how Christ comes to bring it all to an end. Jude describes for us the battle for the truth that's going to go on until the very end. And the Apostle Paul in 2 Thessalonians gives us the indication that this apostasy as it gets closer to the coming of Christ, of course, is going to escalate into a great apostasy. He even calls it "The Apostasia" --THE apostasy.

2Th 2:1 Now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered together to him, we ask you, brothers,

2Th 2:2 not to be quickly shaken in mind or alarmed, either by a spirit or a spoken word, or a letter seeming to be from us, to the effect that the day of the Lord has come.

2Th 2:3 Let no one deceive you in any way. For that day will not come, unless the rebellion [apostasy] comes first, and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the son of destruction,

Now this isn't like it's new to us. I mean, you can go back to the first book in the New Testament and the first great sermon that Jesus preached, The Sermon on the Mount, and in Matthew chapter 7 listen to what Jesus said in that sermon:

Mat 7:15 "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves.

Mat 7:16 You will recognize them by their fruits...

Beware of the false prophets. Jesus knew they were already around. They would come in the future against the truth of the gospel. In the sixteenth chapter, verse 6 of Matthew Jesus said, "Watch out, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, watch out, beware." He said it again in verse

11, "Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, they appear to represent Me, they appear to be a part of the Kingdom of God, they appear to be the very spokesmen and teachers of divine truth, beware, their influence corrupts."

And, of course, in the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, when Jesus gave the Olivet Discourse which looks at the future:

Mat 24:3 As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?"

Mat 24:4 And Jesus answered them, "See that no one leads you astray.

Mat 24:5 For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and they will lead many astray.

and

Mat 24:10 And then many will fall away and betray one another and hate one another.

Mat 24:11 And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray.

Mat 24:12 And because lawlessness will be increased, the love of many will grow cold.

and

Mat 24:24 For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform great signs and wonders, so as to lead astray, if possible, even the elect.

Mat 24:25 See, I have told you beforehand.

And Jesus was saying, "They're around now. Beware of them, they're here. They're Pharisees and Sadducees. And they're very dangerous because they say they represent Me and they represent the truth and they believe My Word and they're going to get worse and they're going to get more effective." Jesus said that.

He warned in the other parallel passages in the gospels of the same thing. You come into the book of Acts and in the book of Acts there are tremendous warnings about this same thing. For example, take Paul's warning in Acts chapter 20:

Act 20:29 I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;

Act 20:30 and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.

Act 20:31 Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.

And the Ephesian elders then and our guardianship over the church now means you've got to be aware of the savage wolves who want to infiltrate the church and destroy the truth.

You come in to the epistles, it's the same. You can hear it from the Apostle Paul, chapter 4 of 1 Timothy. The Spirit explicitly says, "In the latter times...that's now...since the Messiah has come, some will fall away from the faith. Pay attention, deceitful spirits, doctrines of demons by means of the hypocrisy of

liars seared in their own consciences with a branding iron, they come into the church." They are demonic in their doctrine. They are devilish in their intentions. They have departed from the faith. They espouse or they purport to believe. They are hypocrites. They have no conscience. They will use you and abuse you. Paul is telling Timothy, "Timothy, you've got to counter this. How are you going to counter this?" He says, "Until I come, give attention to the reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. Take pains with these things, be absorbed in them. Pay attention to yourself and to your teaching, persevere in these things." He engages Timothy in the spiritual battle for the truth. And in 2 Timothy it's the same thing. He writes in 2 Timothy Chapter 3, "Realize that in these last days difficult times will come, dangerous seasons, literally. Men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient, ungrateful, unholy, unloving, irreconcilable," and he goes on with the list. "They'll hold a form of godliness though they have denied its power." They have all kinds of degrees, they purport to be theologians and teachers, they purport to have the secret true knowledge of God, but these men oppose the truth, they have depraved minds and they reject the faith.

And not only does Paul warn about these things but Peter warns about them, I'm not going to read it, 2 Peter, the whole chapter, chapter 2, and most of chapter 3. And John...John warns about them as well. First John chapter 4, "Do not believe every spirit, test the spirits to see whether they're from God because many false prophets have gone out into the world." And 2 John, do you remember this from the reading plan earlier this year? Second John, "Many deceivers...verse 7...have gone out into the world and do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is the deceiver and the antichrist, watch yourselves...watch yourselves."

James even talks about false teachers -- false teachers who go so far as to harm the true representatives of the faith. And, of course, the book of Revelation chapter 2 and chapter 3 talks about false teachers that infiltrate the church. They literally get into the church, according to Revelation 2 and 3, and corrupt the church. They corrupted the church of Pergamos. They corrupted the church of Thyatira. They corrupted the church at Sardis. They corrupted the church as we all know of Laodicea. All the way to the end of the church age, churches are going to have to battle for the truth. And the most formidable war against that truth is going to come from the inside. All of this is prophesied, prophesied, prophesied, and prophesied again. And without Jude's letter, this whole development, I think, would be incomplete.

I could sum it up by quoting a text from **Luke 18:8**, where we will be Lord willing in several months. In Luke 18:8 Jesus said, "When the Son of Man comes, will He find faith on the earth?" When the Son of Man comes will He find faith on the earth? That's an amazing statement. The world has been waiting for millennia for the incarnate truth to arrive. The world has been waiting since the Fall for God to send the true One. The world has been waiting for the truth, and finally the truth comes and the living truth, the Lord Jesus Christ comes and He opens His mouth and out of His mouth comes gospel truth, saving truth, the long-awaited freeing truth.

Jude was written probably a few years after 2 Peter. If you look at 2 Peter, just three chapters, you will see that most of 2 Peter is devoted to apostasy, not all of it, and to false teaching. Some scholars feel that 2 Peter was written to a group of Christians, we don't know to whom, and Jude was sort of the sequel written to the same group. But the point is this, writing in about 68 or 69, Peter says they're

going to come, they're going to come. Jude, very close to that same period, after 2 Peter, perhaps just before the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., writes to say they are here...they are here. They have arrived. There will come mockers, Peter said. There will come false teachers. Jude says they were here over 1900 years ago – and Revelation promises they will be here until the end of the age.

The church needs to know that, folks. We need to be aware of that. You cannot just accept everybody who says they're a Christian, or a Christian teacher, or a Christian theologian. Jude is by no means redundant. It is not just a repetition of 2 Peter, it is a fulfillment of the Gospels and the epistles leading up to 2 Peter. The apostasy has begun and it's going to go and grow until the Lord returns.

Now this book has high value to us today and this is what kept drawing myself (and Blair, I believe) back to it because the apostasy was so serious in Jude's day that he called for this kind of contending for the faith and it's certainly more serious in our day because it's accumulated through all the centuries since that time. It has grown to massive proportions. There was no massive denominational systems in Jude's day. There was no proliferation of quasi-Christian heretical cults as in Jude's day. There was no development of liberalism in Jude's day. There was no mass of fake, phony false teachers who had reached the proportions of influence that those have today in television, radio, literature, and the internet. Today it's so far beyond -- Jude would never even have conceived that you would have an apostate Christianity sweeping the world...sweeping the world as we see today.

Now turn back with me to Jude ... To whom is Jude writing? We don't know. About whom is he writing? We don't know for sure. But look at their lives, and this is what 2 Peter says in **2 Peter 2:10**, "They indulge the flesh in its corrupt desires. They despise authority." Verse 12, "They're like unreasoning animals, born as creatures of instinct to be captured and killed, reveling in what they have no knowledge of." I mean, they're just corrupt. Verse 18, speaking arrogantly, words of vanity. They entice by fleshly desires, by sensuality. They're slaves of corruption, verse 19. Whatever it is that can enslave a man enslaves them...sex, materialism, whatever. And so this is a very important epistle. It's important for you and it's important for me to **engage** in earnestly contending for the faith. As we have said before, Christianity is not a spectator sport.

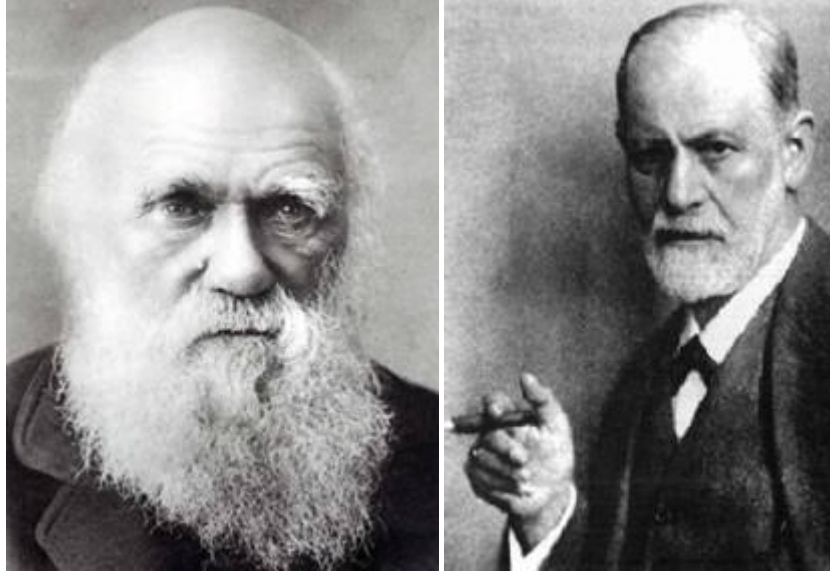
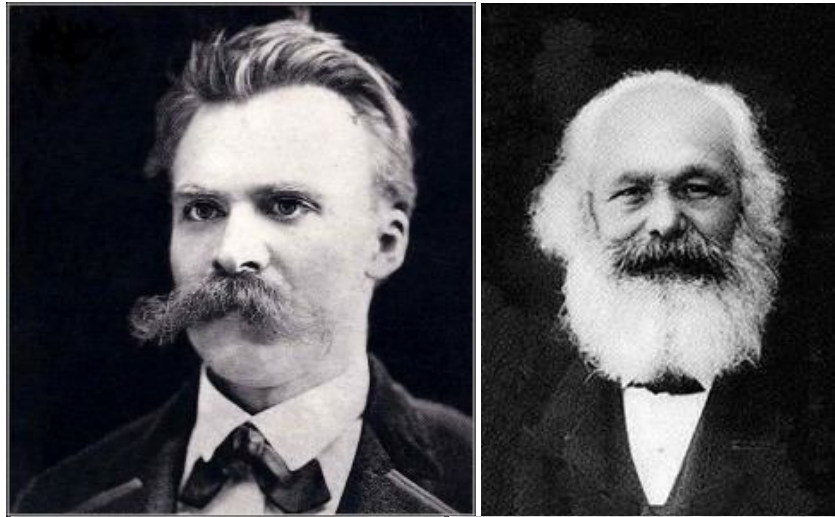
Now let's take a look at the situation with the church in America today... In my family's some 6 years here at COPC, Blair has been faithful on frequent occasion to describe and warn us against many historical heresies that have been exposed and defeated during the Church age – such as Legalism, its opposite Antinomianism, Gnosticism, Arianism, Pelagianism, and other "isms", as well as their modern counterparts or resurgence that threaten the Church today. And I see that with over 100 transcripts on the history, characteristics, and how to combat heresy and heretics, that he has dealt with them in detail during his own series on Jude, available at the church website. I would like to spend the rest of our time today in a very timely application of our text in Jude to some very recent threats to the church today. And let me warn you ahead of time – like the Dr. Luke, and the Apostles Paul and John in Scripture, I will be NAMING NAMES.

As I opened this morning, I mentioned that the greatest assaults against the truth don't come from the outside, they come from the inside, from apostates, defectors who name the name of Christ, or who once named the name of Christ, and now are the enemies of Christ, who once affirmed their trust in God, belief in God, and affirmed the Scripture and have become the enemies of the Scripture. They come from the inside. I believe this can best be given by example.

First, let's look at some 19th century men changed the world into their postmodern, communist, evolutionist, materialist, Narcissistic concept of reality. There are four men – outsiders in our context this morning – that have corrupted civilization and battled Christianity worldwide. The four men who changed the world, not for the better, were Friedrich Nietzsche, Karl Marx, Charles Darwin and Sigmund Freud.

Nietzsche

Marx



Darwin Freud

These fools (a biblical label since they said in their hearts and wrote with their pens that there is no God), were busy 'debunking' the traditional conceptions of both God and man, portrayed humans not as moral and spiritual beings, but as animals or machines who inhabited a universe ruled by purely impersonal forces and whose behavior and very thoughts were dictated by the unbending forces of biology, chemistry, and environment. This materialistic conception of reality eventually infected virtually every area of modern culture, from politics and economics to literature and art. Their founding of the doctrine of secular humanism led to the atrocities of the 20th century – for 100s of millions of deaths of both the born and the unborn.

Albert Mohler, with whom I might not agree on everything, rightfully identifies Nietzsche, Marx, Darwin and Freud as what he calls the "four horsemen" of old atheism. These nineteenth century men have had an incredible impact on modern society as each of them shaped his respective field around his atheistic views: Nietzsche influenced philosophy and is sort of a poster boy today for many postmodernists; Marx changed how much of the world understood society and government; Darwin rewrote the scientific

textbooks and Freud redefined the human mind. It would be hard to find anyone in the Western world who has had more influence on how the culture thinks and lives today than these four men; each of them, including his body of work and influence, was largely the product of his denial of the existence of God.

Now, no one would deny that these men have wreaked incalculable damage in the world, and have greatly increased the corruption of the world system – but they were outsiders, and with the exception of early liberal denominations that were already abandoning the absolute truth of Scripture, were not a major threat to the integrity of the church itself. Each of these men was making a frontal assault on Christianity and most of the church recognized that fact.

Now let's turn from 'outsiders' to some more recent 'insiders' – those more insidious men that Jude was warning the early church about in his epistle. Since we started with four men as 'outsiders', I will present four books from 'insiders'. These four books have been widely distributed and read by Christians from virtually every denominational background before their ramifications and the movements they would spawn were known. They lay error alongside truth, so were considered not to be a threat to churches. Therefore these books then became part of the consciousness of many Christians and churches, and thereby laying the basis for the introduction of significant modern day false teachings that have become part of the landscape of Christendom today.

1. “Surprised By The Power Of The Spirit”, by Jack Deere

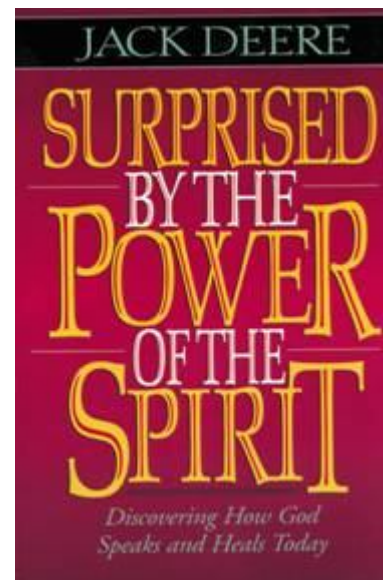
With the COPC's past experience with the charismatic movement, this book might be familiar to some of you.

This book is an introduction to the false teachings of the New Apostolic/Latter Rain (NAR) Movement of the Toronto “Blessing”, Brownsville “Revival” and many other related movements such as the Third Wave and the New Apostolic Reformation. It was read widely by many Christians because of the fact the Jack Deere had formerly been a professor at Dallas Seminary before being dismissed for promoting Arminianism and being ‘slain in the spirit’.

Because I am including this book and its author as false teaching from this pulpit, it is incumbent for me to provide alliteration of that claim. Here is a brief excerpt from an interview with Mr. Deere:

1990 - TOTAL DOCTRINAL DEGRADATION -- At a Charismatic Conference here in the States, where mentor John Wimber and Deere were the speakers, Dr. Deere was questioned in a friendly conversation, as follows:

Questioner: I wonder if you might tell me why you felt my explanation of the Gospel given yesterday was defective. [The questioner had said that Christ died for our sins, was buried, raised on the third day, and that it is this Gospel by which we are saved.]



Dr. Deere: I am not prepared to talk about that.

Questioner: Well, just offhand, what do you think the Gospel is?

Dr. Deere: I am not prepared to make a formal statement about that.

Questioner: Could you tell me informally what the Gospel is?

Dr. Deere: I am not sure.

Questioner: I find that surprising--that you are not sure just what the Gospel is.

Dr. Deere: I used to be just like you--thinking the Gospel was simply justification.

Questioner: Are you saying that the Gospel is more than justification by faith?

Dr. Deere: Yes.

Questioner: What would you add to it?

Dr. Deere: Deliverance.

Questioner: What do you mean by deliverance?

Dr. Deere: Things like demons and healing and...

Questioner: You would add as an essential part of the saving Gospel things like exorcising of demons and healing?

Dr. Deere: Yes.

Questioner: But you are not sure exactly what should be included?

Dr. Deere: No, not yet.

By the way, Mr. Deere has yet to my knowledge to complete his definition of the Gospel, and his faith-healing mentor John Wimber died November 17, 1997 at the age of 63 from a massive brain hemorrhage. Now let's hear from the Apostle Paul:

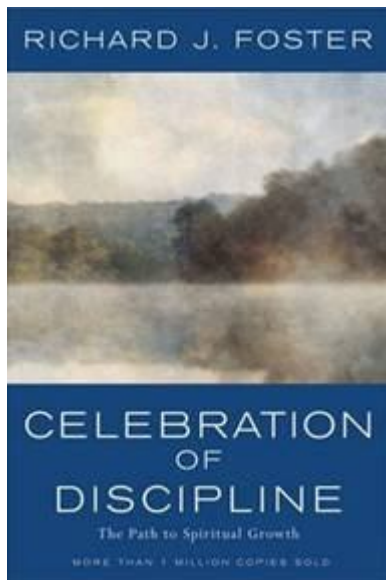
Gal 1:6 I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—

Gal 1:7 not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

Gal 1:8 But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.

Gal 1:9 As we have said before, so now I say again: If anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

2. "Celebration Of Discipline", by Richard Foster



This book was read by countless Christians and introduced them to Catholic and New Age Mysticism, the Emerging Church/Contemplative/Mysticism (EC). This book now lays the basis for the **Spiritual Formation** departments of a majority of Christian colleges.

Written over twenty-five years ago, and proclaimed by *Christianity Today* as one of the ten best books of the twentieth century, the influence of *Celebration of Discipline* is all but incalculable. Foster is a Quaker, so his spiritual life is grounded in the subjective "inner light" presupposition of the Friends. He is highly steeped in the Roman Catholic mystics, drawing from dozens of them for his theology. More than that, Eugene Peterson (author of *The Message*) informs us that Foster has "'found' the spiritual disciplines [in the mystics] that the modern world stored away and forgot" (p. 206). Foster's views are also formed by Quaker mystics and even secular thinking, most surprisingly Carl Jung, the self-confessed demon-possessed psychologist.

Foster's influence on the EC through his organization "Renovare" laid the basis for the contemplative prayer, labyrinth walking, repetitious mantras to empty the mind, yoga, and many other Catholic and Eastern mystical techniques that allegedly are supposed to get you closer to God and "spiritually form" you. Two of the major Christian college and university accrediting agencies such as Association of Theological Seminaries (ATS) and Association for Biblical Higher Education (ABHE) now require a "Spiritual Formation" department and curriculum to be implemented, which should raise a big red flag for biblical Christians.

Listed under "excellent books on spirituality," in some editions of *Celebration of Discipline*, Foster says of Tilden Edwards' book, *Spiritual Friend* that it helps "clear away the confusion and invites us to see that we do not have to live the spiritual life in isolation." And yet, Tilden Edwards, founder of the Christian/Buddhist Shalem Institute in Washington, DC, said that contemplative spirituality was the "Western bridge to Far Eastern spirituality" (*Spiritual Friend*, p. 18). On the Shalem Institute website you can find numerous quotes, references, articles, and recommendations to panentheism, universalism, interspirituality, New Age, and Eastern thought.

In *Celebration of Discipline*, Richard Foster tells us "we must be willing to go down into the recreating silences, into the inner world of contemplation" (COD, p.13.) He goes on to say that the "masters of meditation beckon us." Just prior to that remark, he quotes Carl Jung and Thomas Merton.

Celebration of Discipline has helped to pave the way for Thomas Merton's panentheistic belief system. It has opened the door for other Christian authors, speakers, and pastors to bring contemplative spirituality into the lives of millions of people. The late Henri Nouwen, a popular contemplative who also followed the teachings of Thomas Merton, made a telling statement towards the end of his life:

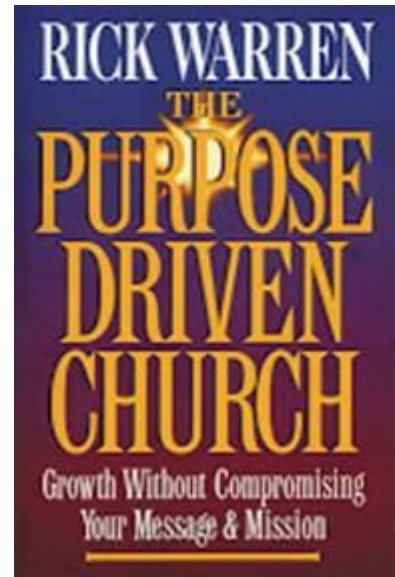
I personally believe that while Jesus came to open the door to God's house, all human beings can walk through that door, whether they know about Jesus or not. Today I see it as **my call to help every person claim his or her own way to God** (emphasis added – Sabbatical Journey, p. 51).

Today, countless ministers and ministries are promoting and endorsing *Celebration of Discipline*. If they really knew what Foster's "celebration" was all about, we think many of them would race away from the teachings of Thomas Merton and Richard Foster and back to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

3. "Purpose Driven Church", by Rick Warren

This one in personal for Paula and myself. As I have mentioned before, we were members of a large non-denominational, non-charismatic church in the Indianapolis area before we moved to Picayune. While at that church, the "small groups" within the church went through the previous book by Warren together – *The Purpose Driven Life*. Once that book was completed, requiring 'clarifications' by the elders on the basic gospel message of salvation, they wisely chose to not complete the next book, which is the subject of the next false teaching from an 'insider'.

Purpose Driven Church has introduced millions of church leaders to seek friendly, the church growth ideas of C. Peter Wagner (Warren's mentor from Fuller Seminary) and Robert 'Schullerism' (another mentor of Warren). He gives pragmatic ways to grow a church and his dissertation explains that he grew the Saddleback Church by going door to door in that community with a survey asking people what they wanted in a church.



A primary fault in Warren's approach is that he emphasizes the pastor's ability to entertain over the pastor's responsibility to speak the truth. On p. 231, Warren argues: "I've heard pastors proudly say, 'We're not here to entertain.' Obviously they're doing a good job at it. A Gallup poll a few years ago stated that, according to the unchurched, the church is the most boring place to be. . . . To the unchurched, dull preaching is unforgivable. Truth poorly delivered is ignored. On the other hand, the unchurched will listen to absolute foolishness if it is interesting.

For Warren, the presentation is undoubtedly to be more important than the truth being presented. The Apostle Paul's priorities, however, were just the opposite—how he preached was not nearly as important as what he preached: For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech, so that the cross of Christ would not be made void. (1 Cor. 1:17) And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, and my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. (2 Cor. 2:1-5) In light of his desire for relevance, Warren's preaching is naturally determined more by His audience than by the Scripture.

If you attend a "Building a Purpose Driven Church" seminar, Warren will teach that the following must occur to transform a traditional church into a dramatic growing church: (1) A contemporary-styled, non-threatening "Seeker Service" must replace the traditional Sunday worship service; (2) The dress must be casual; (3) The music must be contemporary; (4) The message must be only positive so that saved and unsaved alike can feel better about themselves after a message that often mixes psychology and an uplifting Scripture text; (5) Church ministries must be geared to meeting needs, with support groups for depression, eating disorders, infertility, homosexuals' family/friends, post-abortion, and marital separation. Warren scoffed at the idea of passing out gospel tracts or going door-to-door since the typical "Saddleback Sam" is offended by such old-fashioned evangelism; (6) Doctrinal instruction is not given to the church as a whole on Sundays, but is available in sub-groups apart from formal church services; and (7) A spirit of pragmatic compromise must prevail. Warren was trained as a Southern Baptist (he frequently speaks at SBC events), but said, "It really doesn't matter your denomination, folks. We're all on the same team if you love Jesus."

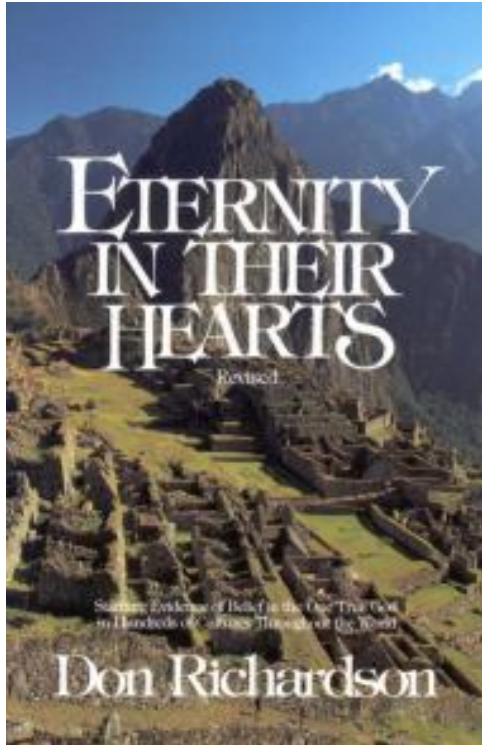
Quite telling is Warren's doctorate dissertation from Fuller Seminary. It is basically the story of how he established his Saddleback church. His mentor for that project was C. Peter Wagner, former head of the NAR, whose books he cites in the bibliography of that paper most often. In writing his book on CG, following in the footsteps of his mentors C. Peter Wagner and Robert Schuller and picking principles from Peter Drucker teachings on marketing, he laid the basis for the modern mega-church "seeker sensitive" movement. In establishing Saddleback he sent out questionnaires door to door in that community asking people what they wanted in a church. He then compiled that information and formed a church based on their "felt needs" (and here I thought the Church was supposed to have the Word of God as its basis!). The mega-church model set forth by Rick Warren may attract a lot of people and money but it is woefully inadequate to the task of preaching the Gospel and discipleship in sound doctrine. That is because the Gospel message and sound doctrine are seen as old methods. C. Peter Wagner put his pragmatic vision for implementing his CG ideas in his first book on CG entitled "Your Church Can Grow - Seven Vital Signs of a Healthy Church".

*"... we ought to see clearly that the end DOES justify the means. What else possible could justify the means? **If the method I am using accomplishes the goal I am aiming at, it is for that reason a good method.** If, on the other hand, my method is not accomplishing the goal, how can I be justified in continuing to use it?" (C. Peter Wagner, "Your Church Can Grow - Seven Vital Signs Of A Healthy Church", 1976, pg. 137. - emphasis in original)*

Wagner's pragmatism laid the groundwork for a whole generation of CG advocates to be more interested in achieving the end goal of large churches and satisfying people's "felt needs" than of remaining true to the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Apostles and following the pattern of the historical church, and as such had done great damage to the witness of the Gospel.

4. "Eternity in Their Hearts", by Don Richardson

This 4th and final book to look at today may not be familiar to many of you.



Richardson introduced Christianity to **Inclusivism** (that people can be saved by general revelation) and inspired Bible translation societies to put the names of supreme beings in the Bible. He got Christians to think that every person has a Divine spark in them (eternity in their hearts) when that phrase is not the correct translation nor context of Ecc. 3:11, because twice as many translations translate that verse as saying, that God "set the world in their heart". Because of his book the worldwide cult of the World Christian Gathering of Indigenous People (WCGIP) was formed.

Richardson's "Eternity in Their Hearts" made its way through many mission organizations under the guise of new missiology, and many missionaries read the book back in the mid 1980s. What is amazing is that book was widely accepted and loved even though the very title of both the first edition and the updated title of the newer editions should have had people put the book back on the shelf.

At the time that book (Eternity in Their Hearts) came out no one really saw the dangerous ideas Richardson was promoting. All they would have had to do was look at the two subtitles of that book to understand the implications. The first subtitle in the 1981 edition read: "The Untold Story of Christianity among Folk Religions of Ancient People." Those who read this book found some interesting cross-cultural ideas but apparently missed the false premise of the book starting with the subtitle. How could Christianity be "among folk religions" where the Gospel had not been preached (Rom. 10:14-15)?

Rom 10:14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching?

Rom 10:15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

At that time Christians who read the book were apparently satisfied that, though there was some questionable material present, it made for an interesting discussion on how to do cross-cultural ministry. The newer subtitle, changed from the 1984 edition, is as follows: "Startling Evidence of Belief in the One True God in Hundreds of Cultures throughout the World." This should have been a red flag for many Christians but then, who reads subtitles? But how could the "One True God" be known to Gentiles who, the Bible states, did "not know God".

1 Cor. 1:21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom DID NOT KNOW GOD, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe.

Gal. 4:8 But then, indeed, when you (speaking to the Galatian Gentiles) DID NOT KNOW GOD, you served those which by nature are not gods.

1 Thes. 4:5 not in passion of lust, like the Gentiles who DO NOT KNOW GOD;

1 John 3:1 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it DID NOT KNOW HIM.

2 Thes. 1:8-9 He will punish those who DO NOT KNOW GOD and do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They will be punished with everlasting destruction and shut out from the presence of the Lord and from the majesty of his power.

Eph. 2:11-12 Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called "uncircumcised" by those who call themselves "the circumcision" (that done in the body by the hands of men)—remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, WITHOUT HOPE AND WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD.

Richardson has a new book where he is now also revealing that he is a neo-Universalist (which he still calls Inclusivism), claiming many will be in heaven where the Bible does not.

HEAVEN WINS: Heaven, Hell and the Hope of Every Person

Who will be saved? Who will be lost?

The past few years have seen the release of several high-profile books, including Love Wins (Rob Bell) and God Wins (Mark Galli), that attempt to clarify what the Bible teaches about the ultimate destiny of individuals after this life. Don Richardson believes the arguments posed by these authors do not account for all the biblical evidence. In Heaven Wins, the bestselling author of Peace Child and Eternity in Their Hearts [both sold on the "Books" link of this site] offers a faith-enhancing, scripturally grounded perspective that changes everything.

Are a majority of people destined for hell, as many Christians assume, or will heaven harvest the greater part of mankind? Could it be that the good news is even better and more expansive than we have dared to hope?

In this new book Richardson comes up with a new class between Exclusivists (those who hold to Christ being the only Way to salvation) and Universalists (those who believe everyone will be saved) which he calls "Inclusivists".

Inclusivism: Whereas Exclusivists regard general revelation as informative only and special revelation as both informative and salvific, Inclusivists, by contrast, regard general revelation as both informative and salvific and special revelation as even more deeply informative and even more effectively and widely salvific! (Don Richardson, Heaven Wins)

In actuality, then, there is virtually no difference between Universalism and "Inclusivism" because according to both systems everyone will be saved based on the "general revelation" they know, which the Bible says everyone knows (**Rom. 1:19-20**). But this knowledge is nowhere in the Bible said to be

“salvific”. In fact, in context, Rom. 1 is talking about the reason why people are NOT saved by general revelation because they long ago abandoned even the knowledge of God (**Rom. 1:28**). What the Bible says about the criteria to be saved has not changed and is everywhere in the New Testament. Jesus Christ made it plain that you must know and believe in Him alone in order to gain eternal life.

John 14:6 Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Acts 4:12 Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.”

This “Inclusivism” then constitutes a denial of a core doctrine of the Faith: “Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.” When a person teaches otherwise, such as Richardson, and denies any one of the core doctrines, he is to be considered a heretic and rejected (**Rom. 16:17, Titus 3:10**).

So in closing today, we have looked briefly at 4 different ‘insider’ threats to the Christian faith, brought by wolves in sheep’s clothing, which can become much more difficult to discern than threats from ‘outsiders’. We could easily include 10s, probably 100s more. And of course, each one of these original books have spawned dozens of other authors, leaders, and movements that spread like tentacles from the roots. So the warnings throughout Scripture, and typified in the Epistle of Jude, are indeed extremely relevant for us today.

Here is a note from one of Blair’s messages on Jude in 2006:

Now many people in the modern Church do not view heresy or spiritual apostasy as being a big deal. Sound Biblical Doctrine is viewed today by many people and even by many leaders as being kind of “in the way”; a “troubling” and cumbersome aspect of Church life and something that is somewhat important- but certainly nothing to emphasize. In fact one of the most popular statements that can be made today is for someone to say that Doctrine is not nearly important as personal relationships.

I guess the biggest applause that I ever heard given to anyone in any Church was when a visiting Evangelist said that the trouble with the modern Church was its Doctrine and the best way to have a real move of God is to throw Doctrine out the door. I couldn’t disagree more.

In my own research, I have found that Bible knowledge is at its lowest ebb since the Church was founded in the Upper Room some 2,000 years ago. And I see that as being deeply and profoundly disturbing and in fact I see that as being one of the signs that we are living in the last days. Lets’ read **2 Timothy 4:1-5**:

1 I charge thee therefore before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom;

2 Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

3 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;

4 And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables.

5 But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry

Let me close with some additional wisdom from CH Spurgeon, citing Isaiah 59:

Isa 59:5b ... they weave the spider's web...

Isa 59:6 Their webs will not serve as clothing; men will not cover themselves with what they make. Their works are works of iniquity, and deeds of violence are in their hands.

See the spider's web, and behold in it a most suggestive picture of the hypocrite's religion. It is meant to catch his prey: the spider fattens himself on flies, and the Pharisee has his reward. Foolish persons are easily entrapped by the loud professions of pretenders, and even the more judicious cannot always escape. Philip baptized Simon Magus, whose guileful declaration of faith was so soon exploded by the stern rebuke of Peter. Custom, reputation, praise, advancement, and other flies, are the small game which hypocrites take in their nets. A spider's web is a marvel of skill: look at it and admire the cunning hunter's wiles. Is not a deceiver's religion equally wonderful? How does he make so barefaced a lie appear to be a truth? How can he make his tinsel answer so well the purpose of gold? A spider's web comes all from the creature's own bowels. The bee gathers her wax from flowers, the spider sucks no flowers, and yet she spins out her material to any length. Even so hypocrites find their trust and hope within themselves; their anchor was forged on their own anvil, and their cable twisted by their own hands. They lay their own foundation, and hew out the pillars of their own house, disdain to be debtors to the sovereign grace of God. But a spider's web is very frail. It is curiously wrought, but not enduringly manufactured. It is no match for the servant's broom, or the traveller's staff. The hypocrite needs no battery of Armstrongs to blow his hope to pieces, a mere puff of wind will do it. Hypocritical cobwebs will soon come down when the besom of destruction begins its purifying work. Which reminds us of one more thought, viz., that such cobwebs are not to be endured in the Lord's house: He will see to it that they and those who spin them shall be destroyed forever. O my soul, be thou resting on something better than a spider's web. Be the Lord Jesus thine eternal hiding-place.